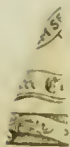


THE
LIFE
AND
WORKS
OF
JEAN
LÉON
GERÔME.





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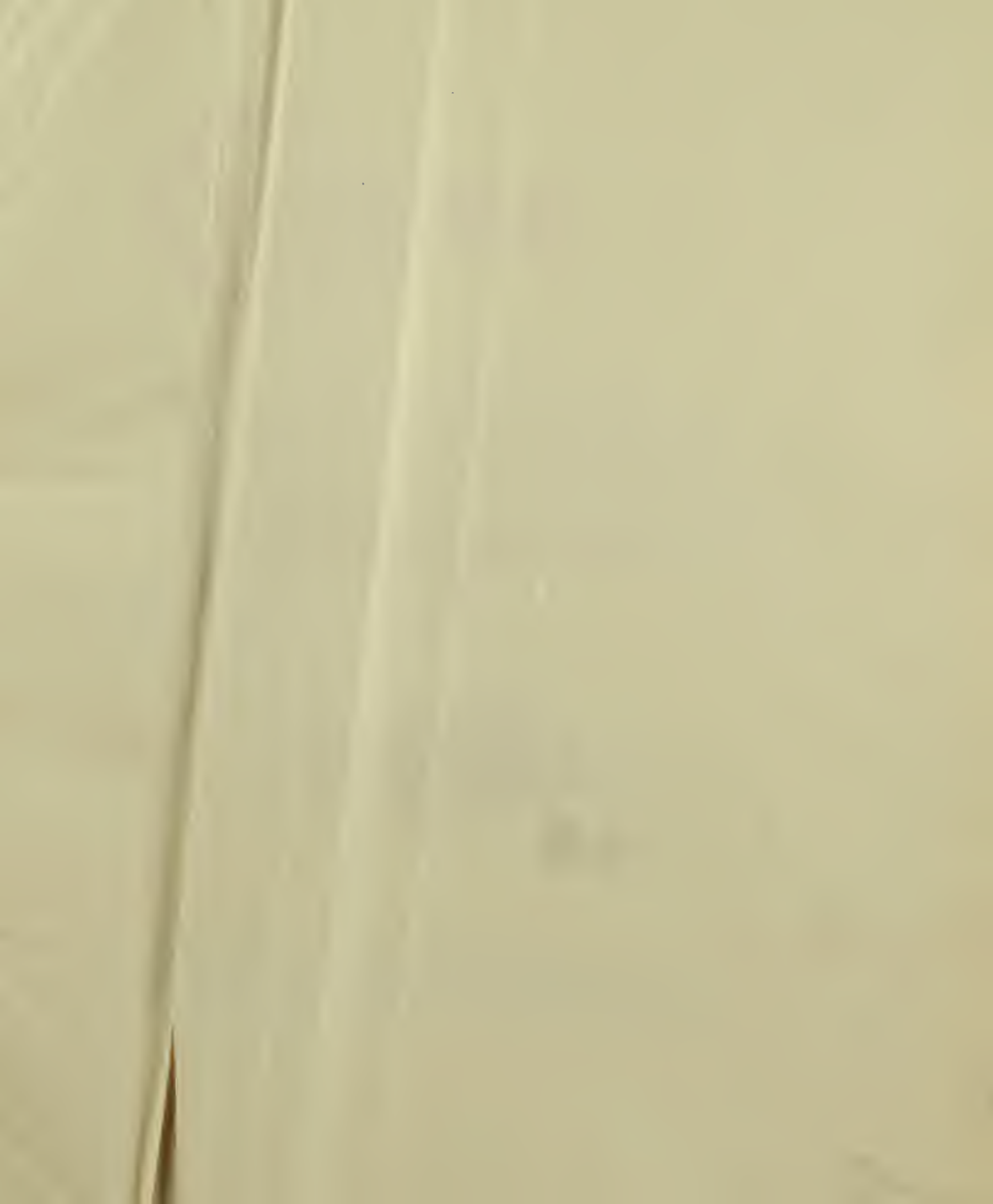


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GÉRÔME





JEAN LÉON GÉROME

1889

GÉRÔME

*THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JEAN LÉON GÉRÔME. BY FANNY FIELD HERING.
FROM AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES AND LETTERS BY THE ARTIST HIMSELF,
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS. INCLUDING A
PORTRAIT OF GÉRÔME, NINETEEN FULL-PAGE PHOTOGRAVURES, AND
TWENTY-FIVE FULL-PAGE PHOTO-PROCESS REPRODUCTIONS OF HIS
PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE, TOGETHER WITH FIFTY PENCIL-DRAWINGS,
MADE ESPECIALLY FOR THIS BOOK BY GÉRÔME, AND EXECUTED BY BOUS-
SOD, VALADON & CO., SUCCESSORS TO GOUPIL.*



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RADWAY, N. J.

INTRODUCTION.

THE pleasure of associating my name with that of Gérôme led me to accept impulsively the flattering proposal that I should contribute to this work some expression of my feeling toward him. Now that I think seriously of what I have undertaken, the first thing that occurs to me is that the author should be thanked for her earnestness and spirit in making the production of this work possible and in inducing Gérôme to give us now his own history of a life so filled with artistic interest.

There is in his art, apart from its elevation and virility of style, that which ranks him in my mind with the Greek artists. So much so, that I feel he would have taken his place in the everyday life of Athens; I involuntarily imagine him in all the joyous contrasts of the blue skies and superb architecture, sharing the brilliancy and nervousness of Athenian life when the Parthenon was built. It seems to me that this feeling represents the unexpressed thought of many of his admirers.

Since an early winter of our Civil War, when, as a boy, I stopped evening after evening at Goupil's window on Broadway and adored Gérôme's *Death of Caesar*, my admiration for him has never wavered, and to be called upon, after nearly thirty years, to give expression to my feeling under these conditions, and to add one more wreath to his laurels, is an enviable opportunity.

AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS.

PREFACE.

I AM asked to write a preface for a book which treats only of me and my works, and to present it to the public. I feel peculiarly embarrassed, the more so that I am ignorant of the art of writing; but as I wish, above all things, to please the author, I yield. However, I question whether a preface is really necessary; ordinarily one does not read it, and I think a good work can very well dispense with it. Thus, then, dear reader, if you will take my advice, turn these first pages and go directly to the book.

This volume is written in English, and I am unacquainted with this language,—consequently I can express no opinion about it, but I have my fears that the friendship which unites me to the writer has placed a bandage over her eyes, and that the estimate herein found is too eulogistic and far above my poor merits.

I wish only to give my general impressions about contemporaneous art, after having cast a glance at preceding epochs. Everything is connected and bound together in the arts as elsewhere, and one is always the son of somebody.

The Vanloos, Simon Vouet, Jouvenet, etc., had passed away; David had come. He created a new school, that is to say, another manner of seeing and feeling. This painter of great talent and of great will had considerable influence upon the artists of his time. He wished to lead back art to the antique, long since abandoned, but, unhappily, he drew his inspiration from the works of the Greek decadence instead of going back to Phidias and his predecessors. The *Apollo Belvedere*, and *Diana, the Huntress*, necessarily led him to the *Rape of the Sabines*, and *Leonidas at Thermopylae*, works which are cold, without character, without movement, and without life. On the contrary, when he gave expression to his individuality, he painted portraits of the first order, and a picture, *The Coronation of Napoleon*, which is a work of great beauty, and does honor to the French School.

After him, M. Ingres, after a profound observation of antiquity, revived more healthy and exalted ideas. He was the undisputed chief of that Classic School which, during long years, contended with the Romantic School, whose most illustrious representative was Eugène Delacroix. This struggle took place not only in the plastic arts, but also in literature, Victor Hugo being there the high-priest. By the side of these two opposing forces another power made its way; this band of artists and men of letters received the title of the School of Good

Sense. Paul Delaroche and Casimir Delavigne belonged to this party. The contest was hot and the harshest criticisms were not stinted on either side: each violently attacking the other, which in turn did not spare the opposing party. A blow for a blow, an eye for an eye, was the device of the combatants. This epoch was disturbed, but gave evidence of an extraordinary vitality, and extremely powerful works in every genre were the result of these epic conflicts. In these times, one believed; one possessed the sacred fire. Art was a religion and artists had faith; faith, that enormous power that can move mountains.

This pleiad of men of merit shed a dazzling light, and this epoch need envy no other, for science, literature, music, all the arts had as representatives men of eminent talent, who shone with incomparable brilliancy.

It would perhaps be useful to review the long list of these different celebrities, and the catalogue would be very curious and interesting. The nineteenth century is and will remain one of the great epochs of the world; it has made a giant stride in advance, and for a period of fifty years the achievements easy to be enumerated have been stupendous; for it is in our day, to cite only the principal discoveries, that photography, chloroform, electricity, the telephone, etc., have been utilized and that we have employed steam to annihilate distance. Steam is the connecting link between nations. We behold only the *début* of these things; but the way is open, it is fertile, and we ask ourselves where human genius will pause and what our sons will see. This little digression concluded, let us return to the plastic arts.

Toward the year 1848, the French School, taken as a whole, had not that power of expression which it has since acquired; in the main it was rather weak, and this no doubt was owing to the primary studies having been neglected; it is austere and profound studies that make great painters and great sculptors; one lives all one's life on this foundation, and if it is lacking one will only be mediocre. Just as a good breeder feeds his colts with oats in order to make of them strong, sturdy horses in the future, so young artists should be nourished with the marrow of lions, and led to the purest springs to quench their thirst.

From this somber mass, composed of artists who possessed only a secondary merit, several brilliant personalities stood out in relief, luminous meteors, who caused the other artists who revolved in their orbit to appear still more dull. Since then the *École* has perceptibly improved, has strengthened in its manner of seeing, feeling, and reproducing; it forms a more powerful, more homogeneous whole, a more imposing *ensemble*. Unfortunately, the number of painters, and consequently of worthless ones, has increased beyond all measure; it is because painting is now a matter of commerce; formerly the profession did not secure a

man his bare living—to-day it has become a paying thing; it is only the sculptors, nowadays, who die of hunger. But this is owing to complex causes and it is to be feared that these reasons will always exist.

For some years the sentiment which governs art productions has been completely changing, and the works of men who in their time had many admirers, are, for the moment, entirely unfashionable and despised. I think that this is very unjust to these artists, formerly great, and that they are not treated with the respect due to them, but it has been thus since naturalism was invented.

Now, there may be good in naturalism (and I am of those who observe with interest all these diverse manifestations, because, on the whole, movement is life); nevertheless, I avow, it seems to me we are a little too near the earth; and, for example, one can see in an exhibition of two thousand pictures many canvases well painted and of a truthful and striking appearance, but in this total you may deem yourself fortunate if you run across two or three works which appeal to your heart and your soul. They have abandoned themselves to realism, to commonplace and indiscriminating realism; the letter has killed the spirit, and poetry has fled to the heavens.

Formerly, French artists had undisputed precedence over foreigners, when they executed pictures where research from the plastic side, and the portrayal of ideas, simply comprehended and clearly, powerfully expressed, constituted the basis of the work; now they are devoted to the picturesque, which is more convenient and easy. The last Exposition demonstrated that in other countries beside our own there are excellent artists in this style.

From the picturesque we have advanced to the strange, from the strange to the bizarre, from the bizarre to the fantastic; one would say that a gust of madness was sweeping over our heads; where are we going to stop?

But these mannerisms will not long be able to usurp a place in the *École*, and I am not unduly anxious; for that which distinguishes us, the foundation of the French character, is perspicacity and good sense.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "J. Germain". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned at the bottom right of the page.

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LIFE AND WORKS
OF
JEAN LÉON GÉRÔME

Whoever would fully understand the work of Gérôme, unequalled, since the days of Leonardo da Vinci, in its marvelous comprehensiveness, must know him not only as painter, sculptor, poet, savant, and teacher—but as a *man*. When that king of critics, Théophile Gautier, announced the début of the youth of twenty-three in the memorable words, "Let us mark with white this happy year, for a painter is born to us! He is called *Gérôme*. To-day I tell you his name, and I predict that to-morrow he will be celebrated!"—even he, with his acute perception and prophetic eye, could not have foreseen and measured the heights to be attained by the boyish "*chief of the néo-grecs*," or that, forty years later, almost overburdened with decorations, titles, and laurels, lavished upon him by all civilized nations, he would be acclaimed the most eminent representative of high art of this nineteenth century.

Nor does Gérôme's experience confirm the ancient adage, too often true, that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country." For he has received from the French nation the highest tributes at her command, by the hands of king, emperor, and president of the Republic, successively interpreting the will of an appreciative and grateful people. Men illustrious in poetry, science, and *belles-lettres* proudly claim him as comrade and *confrère*, he counts only friendly rivals among his brother artists, and the most captious of professional critics are hushed to an admiring silence before the symmetrical beauty and power of his achievements, while for thirty years an ever-increasing throng of ardent students, from all climes and countries,—notably our own,—have pressed around him, eager to follow in the path which he has trod and in which he still leads them, steadily striving after more perfect realization and expression of truth and beauty.

A thorough study of the life and works of this artist, who justly bears the title of *Master*, in its fullest sense, leaves one penetrated with wonder, admiration, and loving reverence. At an age when another would think of little save well-

earned repose and tranquil enjoyment of a world-wide fame, behold this veteran of sixty-seven, with surpassing vigor and delicacy of conception and execution, still giving to the world masterpieces, in both painting and sculpture, any one of which would confer immortality on its creator. The most esteemed authorities who can legitimately claim to form and direct public opinion have again and again borne witness to the remarkable breadth and dignity of Gérôme's art. From them we shall gain a fuller appreciation of his attainments, a deeper insight into his aims. The Master's own words, too, while betraying the unaffected modesty characteristic of truly great natures,—will reveal to us a nobility of conception, an energy of achievement, a loftiness of aspiration, and a passion for the truth, as genuine as they are rare. Add to these transcendent qualities the profundity of a scientist, the imagination of a poet, a perception trained by years of travel and research, and a skill that triumphs over all difficulties of technique—fuse and blend the whole by the white heat of that gift of the gods, the unquenchable fire of genius, and we have Gérôme, the artist, fitly described by an eminent writer in the London *Athenæum* as "the august leader of the French school, in whose hands, more than in those of any one else, rest the noblest traditions of a great and learned school."

Before entering upon a careful consideration of Gérôme's vast achievements in all their captivating detail, it is desirable to take a rapid survey of his work as a whole, especially comparing the opinions of the most illustrious critics among his own countrymen, whose broad and scholarly training inclines them to be exacting to the verge of severity, and whose judgment is therefore of inestimable value and weight to those who desire to study these fascinating creations in their many-sided but harmonious entirety.

His productions naturally group themselves into several distinct classes, which draw their inspiration from the *Antique*, the *Orient*, *Modern History*, and the realm of *Fantasy*—the latter finding its themes anywhere in the wide region that lies between ancient mythology and our ultra civilization.

Among the pictures in the first group which display the highest artistic qualities, combined with the science of the savant and the historian, we may number the *Combat de Coqs*, *Anacréon*, *A Greek Interior*, *Bacchus and Love*, *Age of Augustus*, *Ave Caesar, Imperator!* *King Candaules*, two presentations of the *Death of Caesar*, *Phryné before the Areópagus*, *The Two Augurs*, *Socrates seeking Alcibiades at the house of Aspasia*, *The Comedians*, *Cleopatra and Caesar*, *Pollice Verso*, *The Circus Maximus*, and *The Last Prayer*, otherwise known as *The Christian Martyrs*.

We may not dwell here on the varied beauties of these masterpieces, in which we find poetic ideality and historical accuracy, classic simplicity and wealth of decoration, dramatic intensity and religious resignation, humor, pathos, satire,

philosophy, action, repose, the joy of life, the majesty of death! And all crystallized in a beauty of form that can only be modeled by the hand of the greatest master of draughtsmanship in the world.

It seems almost inconceivable, yet there have been critics of limited perceptions and faulty education who have ventured to *reproach* Gérôme for the archæological erudition displayed in many of his pictures! I fancy that most of us will agree with Gautier, who pronounces it "one of the most interesting provinces of painting, while always remaining within the conditions of art, to resurrect a vanished civilization and evoke the image of things forever gone from sight."

It is to be regretted that there exists no reproduction of one of the most important examples of Gérôme's power in this direction, namely: The *Age of Augustus*, an imposing canvas nearly thirty feet square which adorns the walls of the National Museum at Amiens. The condition of art in France, at the time this picture was painted, has been well described by Alfred de Tanonarn, a thoughtful observer and able writer.

"One is astonished [he says], and with just cause, that our *painters of history* have remained so far below the level of our *historians*. Historical painting, far from reflecting the splendors of written history, becomes more and more obscure. How explain so sad an inconsistency?

"In the first place, we must lay the blame for such a state of things on the slight education of the greater number of our artists. Their only care being to become acquainted with the material secrets of their art, they forget to prepare themselves with a stock of ideas. They are mill-stones which have no wheat to grind, and which turn in a vacuum—a very fatiguing exercise for those who perform it and for the spectator. Assuredly, to represent an animal, a tree, a flower, there is need of correct judgment, a poetic spirit, and a skillful pencil; but to attack historic genre, entirely different arms are necessary. Above all, beware of thinking that it will suffice to have vague, incoherent, and badly digested ideas, which you have received at the moment of commencing your canvas. He who would take his first lesson in fencing an hour before presenting himself for the encounter, would run no trifling risk! It pleases you to execute a scene in Roman history; will you hastily read some translation of a passage in Titus Livius or Tacitus? You will thus only obtain a work without character and without depth. You should have lived long years in close intimacy with your personages. One succeeds more easily with the portrait of a man whom one sees every day; one can only represent, in their striking reality, the nations and heroes with whom one has become familiar through study and reflection. Here science is not the enemy of inspiration, since, on the contrary, inspiration cannot spring forth where there is no science. In a word, if, in order to paint religious pictures, one must *believe*—to be a historical painter, one must *know*. And so much the more to-day, since the progress of history has rendered us more exacting toward

painters, and when we are inclined to demand much of them, they are able to give us but little.

"If the artist possesses sufficient instruction, another obstacle presents itself to him. History, it is true, has in our day been treated in a superior manner; but there exists no moral bond, no common thought, among our historians. Each one of them interprets events a little after his own fancy. The painters of history do not work differently. They scarcely follow anything but their individual caprice, and often they stray away, without perceiving it themselves, from historic genre and fall into pure fantasy.

"Finally, *romance* occupies a no less important place than history in the present literature. It has lately touched upon questions that seem the most foreign to it; it aspires to everything. It has been in turn religious, philosophical, and social; lugubrious, fantastic, and humorous; maritime and rural, sentimental and satirical, aristocratic, bourgeois, popular. It has traveled through all epochs of history and to all the corners of the earth. It has penetrated all the mysteries of the heart and all the recesses of society. In a word, the romance has become the favorite distraction of well-to-do people, and the intellectual pasture of the lower classes. Now, it is the painting of genre which, in the domain of art, corresponds to the romance in that of literature. It addresses itself to the same tastes, to the same appetites. The painters of genre have then multiplied among us in proportion to the novelists. They have increased rapidly; they have invaded every domain, excusing themselves for thus lowering the level of art by the necessity of pleasing the crowd. This excuse is not valid, save for feebly endowed minds.

"The artist who has the consciousness of his strength does not consult, with servile anxiety, the inclinations of the multitude; he interrogates himself. He should not *follow* the public, but *lead* it. It is for him to command, not to obey.

"Gérôme merits then, more than any one, serious consideration and thoughtful attention, since he has endeavored to fertilize a field become sterile by dint of having been cultivated.

"Devout worshiper of *la grande peinture*, he is worthy to enter into the temple and to serve the divinity. It is then with pleasure that we devote to him this study, in which our aim is to consider him, above all, as a painter of history, although he has shown his powers in almost every genre.

"The young artist acquired at Rome that taste for Latin antiquity which he has always preserved, since the most important pictures executed by him up to the present moment (1860) are borrowed from the Romans. Far be it from me to complain of this; I am not of those who say:

"Who will deliver us from the Greeks and the Romans?' In the first place, the imagination will never free itself from the remembrance of these two nations whose destinies have been so glorious. Besides, they offer to the painter, as guides and supports, literary geniuses of the first order; and it is no despicable advantage to be able to draw one's inspirations and images from writers such as Herodotus or Thucydides, Titus Livius or Tacitus. One must not however adopt one nation to the exclusion of all others. The artist is a traveler, who should



THE BOY AFTER THE RAIN

roam through history as through a vast domain, and not choose any country where he will elect to remain forever; he should go everywhere and live nowhere. A journey through Egypt is the complement of every voyage having for its aim a profound knowledge of antiquity. It is in Egypt that the civilization of the pagan world commenced; but it vegetated there, slowly and silently; it only manifested itself in its expansive energy among the Greeks and the Romans; Greece explains itself by Egypt, and Rome by Greece."

This able dissertation was evoked by the exhibition, at the Salon of 1855, of the *Age of Augustus*, in which the artist has grouped around the throne of the deified emperor types of all nations and epochs, displaying in striking measure the knowledge and skill which drew from the distinguished Charles Blanc, one of the immortals of the French Academy, and former director of the Beaux-Arts, the opinion that "Gérôme, among other merits, has not his equal in the art of particularizing races, and of transforming into powerful types the most profoundly individual physiognomies." He further characterizes this canvas as "a vast and noble work."

In the introduction to the "History of the Works of Théophile Gautier," a valuable and eloquent treatise by the Vicomte de Spoelberch de Lovenjoul, — we find the following well-merited tribute: "Let us acknowledge, without fear of exaggeration, Théophile Gautier is, in our estimation, the most perfect French stylist of his age and perhaps of all time. No one has known better than he how to say precisely what he wished to say, and his pen reproduces the most intangible nuance, the most fugitive impression, with an absolute perfection."

In the absence, then, of any pictorial reproduction of the *Age of Augustus*, it is doubly a matter for congratulation that Gautier was so impressed by the lofty ambition and extraordinary learning shown in this composition, that he devoted to it ten pages of an inimitable critique, — itself a picture glowing with color, — which we give in full, regretting profoundly, in this case as in all other citations in this volume, the loss of the more exquisite shades of phrasing inseparable from every translation, however conscientious and sympathetic.

When we remember also that Gérôme spent more than two years of arduous labor on this canvas, and finished it before he was thirty-one years old, we may easily comprehend the astonished admiration of these older minds before the profound acquirements of a comparative youth.

It was of the section devoted to the Fine Arts at the Universal Exposition of 1855, that Gautier wrote:

"Most of the masters at this great Exposition have done nothing save to place again before eyes which had not forgotten them, the most perfect canvases among their glorious works. One would say that, having arrived

at the middle of this century in which they were born, they wish, on this supreme occasion, to force the world to recognize their title to nobility and their right to be inscribed in the *livre d'or* of painting; but very few of these magnificent pictures are contemporary with the present era. M. Gérôme, who is young, through honorable modesty, has not thought fit to draw upon his recent masterly productions, which we should have seen again with pleasure: the *Combat de Coqs*,

L'Intérieur Grec, *Bacchus et l'Amour*, *Le Temple de Paestum*, *L'Idylle*, etc. Everything that he exhibits appears for the first time. He, like many others, might have contented himself with an assured success in remaining within the limits of a pure, fine, and graceful talent; but, seized with a nobler ambition, he has risked an immense composition on a gigantic canvas.

“His *Age of Augustus* is a valiant effort, which we trust will find more imitators; such noble daring is too rare—youth, nowadays, is too prudent; M. Gérôme deserves this praise, that he is seeking, with all his might, beauty, nobility, and style; in fact, all the qualities of serious art, and that he often attains them. He has made a genuine historical picture, in the lofty sense in which this word was



formerly understood, and he merits the chief place in the new generation. A page of Bossuet has inspired the artist with the idea of his composition. We shall quote it, at the risk of giving to our prose the doubtful luster which the neighborhood of pure gold imparts to copper:

“The remnant of the republic perishes with Brutus and Cassius; Antony and Cæsar, after having ruined Lepidus, turn one upon the other; the entire Roman power is found upon the sea; Cæsar gains the battle of Actium; the forces of Egypt and the Orient, led by Antony, are scattered; all his friends abandon him, even his Cleopatra, for whom he sacrificed himself. . . . Everything gives way before the fortune of Cæsar; Alexandria opens to him her gates, Egypt becomes a Roman province; Cleopatra, who despairs of being able to retain it, kills herself, after Antony; Rome holds out her arms to Cæsar, who, bearing the name of Augustus and title of Emperor, reigns sole master of the entire empire; he conquers, in the neighborhood of the Pyrenees, the Cantabrians and the rebellious

THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS
OR
THE LAST PRAYER

1860 TO 1883



Asturians; Ethiopia sues for peace; the Parthians, terrified, send back to him the standards taken from Crassus, together with all the Roman prisoners; India seeks his alliance; the power of his arms is felt by the Rhaetians, whom their mountains could not defend. Pannonia recognizes him, Germany fears him, and the Weser submits to his laws. Victorious on land and sea, he closes the Temple of Janus. The whole universe lives in peace under his rule, and Jesus Christ is born into the world.'

"The canvas of Gérôme is not unworthy this sublime page and can serve as an illustration for it. We shall try to describe, as well as words will permit, the appearance of this vast composition, which embraces an entire century and a whole world in a synthetic form. Against a sky of placid azure, untroubled by a single cloud, is outlined the Temple of Janus, with its pediment surmounted by the *quadriga*—closed for the third time since the foundation of Rome; in the background can be seen, in the haze of the distance, the ramparts and towers of the Eternal City. The soft and luminous serenity of an apotheosis floods the upper portion of the canvas, giving an idea of peace, repose, and happiness. Before the Temple, Augustus, deified, is seated upon a throne of gold, supported by a pedestal of granite, on which this inscription is engraved in lapidary style and lettering: '*Cæsar Augustus, imperator, victor Cantabrorum, Asturum, Parthorum, Rhaetorum et Indorum, Germanie, Pannoniæque domitor, pacificator orbis, pater patriæ.*'

"Cæsar Augustus has the nude torso of the great gods of Olympus; a white drapery covers his thighs and knees; the victor's crown encircles his brow; a scepter is in his left hand, while with the right he leans on the shoulder of a figure of *Rome*, personified by a beautiful helmeted woman, clad in a short red *chlamys*, a shield on her arm, and holding reversed the point of a useless lance twined with laurels, a symbol of peace acquired by victory.

"Near the emperor one perceives the statuette of Jupiter Capitolinus and the eagle drawing near to the master with an air at once caressing and respectful.

"The countenance of Augustus—calm, majestic, radiant—is of a noble character; like the immortals who know everything, his eyes regard nothing, and his lips are closed in an immutable half-smile. A human Jupiter, he needs but to knit his brows to win the world; his body, whose smooth contours give no prominence to the muscles, betrays a virile but thoroughly intellectual power, which has nothing of the sturdiness of the athlete; the defects of nature have disappeared; the flesh has become marble, and the man, God. In the midst of this immense composition, Augustus, immovable and pale, has the appearance of a statue worshiped by a prostrate universe. The figure of Rome is no less happy. She alone dares to lean against the throne in a pose of familiar and superb grace. She is at home in this glory, and the splendors of the apotheosis illuminate without dazzling her. She regards Augustus as does a wife her beloved husband; Rome and the emperor, do they not form, indeed, a divine couple? Her figure, noble, pure, and firm, attests an eternal youth and justifies the meaning of her mysterious name.

" At the right angle of the pedestal stands young Tiberius in a white toga and *prason* mantle. Beneath the juvenile charm of his features profound and sinister thoughts reveal themselves, and one divines a precocious satiety presaging the monstrous debauches of Caprea.

" Behind Tiberius are massed, in attitudes of respect and admiration, the men of state, senators and consuls, among whom one recognizes Agrippa, the founder of the Pantheon ; Mæcenas, whose ancestors were kings ; Marcellus, that hope of the world, whose premature death inspired the singer of the *Æneid* with such eloquent verses.

" To this group corresponds that of the poets, the *litterateurs*, and the artists ; the gentle and melancholy Virgil, pressing to his bosom—as if to indicate that beautiful thoughts come from the heart—the *chef-d'œuvre* which he desired should be burned after his death ; Horace, so lyrical, so witty, and so wise in his feigned intoxication ; Propertius, Tibullus, Livius, Vitruvius—a sculptor with his chisel, an actor with his mask ; everything that makes up a great age, such as the age of Pericles or Augustus ; the age of Leon X. or of Louis XIV.

" On the marble steps of the monumental staircase which leads from the square in front of the temple to the second plane of the picture, is stretched out the body of Julius Cæsar, assassinated ; Brutus and Cassius, the Orestes and Pylades of this political murder, have already descended several steps, and are starting for Philippi, where the die is cast which seals the fate of the Republic. Brutus still grasps his poniard, and seems troubled by the tender reproach '*Tu quoque, mi fili!*' Cassius, his hand shading his eyes, seeks to pierce the veil of the future.

" Cleopatra writhes on the body of Antony, charming even in her agony, and meriting, by the undulating curves of her beautiful figure, the title of the 'Serpent of the Nile,' given to her by Shakespeare. The Egyptian *pschent* encircling her pure Greek head causes her to be instantly recognized beside the herculean body of her lover. Each enemy forms a step of the throne of Augustus.

" At the foot of the staircase throngs a kneeling, prostrate crowd, which kisses the steps touched by the buskins of the emperor, throws flowers, and waves palms ; from the furthest ends of the then known world the nations hasten to make act of submission. Here are Indians from the banks of the Ganges, crouched in poses of idols upon an elephant, a heavy massive animal with a ladder on his flank by way of a stirrup. Their bronzed skin, their odd weapons, their monstrous fetiches, mounted on the ends of long lance-staves, like standards, recall the battles of Darius and Alexander. Vanquished by the Macedonians, they are now subdued by the Romans, as later on they will be by the English.

" Behind the Indians comes a *sère*, representing the extreme Orient ; by his shaved head, and fantastically flowered robe, it is not difficult to recognize the ancestor of the Chinese ; he brings, in tribute, a coffer filled with silk tissues. A Parthian restores the eagles taken from Crassus—Rome could never have been defeated ! A woman from Central Asia, in almost savage costume, pushes before her two children, infantile Roman citizens ; a Greek, with casque, cuirass, and

cnémides, acclaims the divine Augustus ; a Gaul, clad in the skin of a wild beast, - whose open jaws form a crest above his head, - makes his way joyously toward the throne.

"We mention only the principal figures, for the crowd is great, and no gaps are visible on the well-filled canvas.

"On the other side, to counterbalance the elephant and his burden of Indians, advances a file of dromedaries, with Arabs perched up aloft, draped in their white burnous and carrying, as weapons, bows and bucklers ; Egyptians, with their sphinx-like countenances ; Numidians, preserved till now from the yoke by the nearness of the desert, but whom the power of Augustus has reached even in the midst of their sandy wastes ; an aged sovereign of some fantastic kingdom of Transoxiana, or Chaldea, approaches sullenly, supported, as it on two living crutches, by two demi-nude slaves - the one yellow, the other black. He wears strange weapons : a scepter decorated with plumes, a robe of brocade, a crown with golden points. And with his silvery beard flowing in great waves, and his air of river-god or magian, half-idol, half-monarch, he seems some fabulous apparition from unknown regions. Lictors and soldiers of irresistible muscularity drag along by the hair captives of both sexes - personification of the rebellious provinces obliged to submit to superior force.

"Apart from all this movement stands a personage with a reddish beard, clothed in miserable rags, which make a blot on all this luxury ; he must be a Jew, -perhaps the father of Ahasuerus. A purse of leather and an inkhorn hang at his side ; his only weapon is a walking-stick, and he regards vaguely this procession of natives who despise him and whom he is to survive !

"Let us return now to the center of the composition, forced as we are to neglect a thousand ingenious and characteristic details ; but a picture is read at a single glance - the lines are spelled out one by one.

"Before an altar where the acolytes have just sacrificed a bull, over the gray embers and charred bones of the holocaust and the withered leaves of crowns and garlands, shines a luminous group, sheltered by the wings of an angel. The little child has just been born ; he wails while Caesar triumphs, his only courtiers the ox and the ass !

"The confused presentiments of Virgil are accomplished. As he has said in his prophetic verses, a new order of ages is beginning :

" *Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas ;
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo ;
Jam redit, et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna ;
Jam nova progenies cælo dimittitur alto.*

"In order to emphasize more forcibly the contrast between the pagan and the Christian world, between the world of matter and that of mind, the painter has borrowed from the Gothic art his naïve grace, his modestly restrained poses, his infantine timidity, for his figures of the Holy Virgin, of St. Joseph, and the child Jesus. He has introduced into his grand antique bas-relief an engraving on wood of Albert Dürer.

"The upper zone of the painting where the apotheosis is taking place has the serene immovability, the harmonious rhythm, the balance of line of a *fronton* of white marble, sculptured in the façade of a temple; the lower zone presents a strange swarm and tumult of people and costumes, in which there is more liberty of caprice.

"M. Gérôme excels in ethnographic paintings, as he has proved by a frieze for the vase commemorative of the Exposition; no one seizes more perfectly than he the distinctive characteristics of a race, or renders them with a surer touch. Here he had to represent nations, the greater part of which had disappeared without leaving any traces, or lived only on some medals or fragments of sculpture; and when archæological science failed him, he has had recourse to his ingenious imagination, and invented savage Rhetians, Parthians, Hindoos, and Germans of the most likely barbarity. This part of the picture assembles the most curious details of arms, jewels, costumes, coiffures, and physiognomies; nothing is commonplace nor made at a venture. Everything is the result of infinite thought and research.

"In beholding this beautiful canvas, where Augustus, deified and radiant, is isolated on a throne of gold at the top of a white staircase, whose first steps are bathed by waves of barbarians, — having near him only a young warrior unarmed, — the idea occurred to us that the god had too great a number of worshipers; that their hordes were moving forward, massing themselves, and becoming more and more aggressive and savage, and that soon they would submerge this luminous platform where, in the golden and blue atmosphere, smile Peace, Poetry, and Art.

"We do not know if M. Gérôme had this idea, but it springs up naturally at the sight of these tranquil groups, beneath which foams and surges the rising tide of barbarity, checked only for a moment. Rome will always be '*the city,*' *par excellence*, but St. Peter will replace Cæsar, and the Roman Empire will disappear.

"The composition of the *Age of Augustus* is of high philosophical import; it satisfies the mind and arranges itself happily upon the canvas; the drawing of the nude figures and the draperies displays style, knowledge, and strength; unfortunately the color is a little thin for so large a canvas, which needs to be more *empâtée*—better nourished, so to speak. The artist has wished to remain sober and pure; and in an atelier, doubtless too small, he has probably not sufficiently taken into consideration the demands of perspective in a picture of these dimensions."

After a minute and critical survey of this memorable Salon, Gautier again returns to Gérôme's noble work and, with increased admiration, declares it to be no "mediocre glory for a young artist thus to achieve a place among the acknowledged masters, who are supported by a past filled by renowned creations"; and adds, "The *Age of Augustus* will rank as one of the *great* canvases of the Exposition."

This superb eulogy from such a source deepens our regret that this masterpiece has never been photographed or otherwise reproduced for the benefit of art

collections and students. In this, as in all Gérôme's pictures representing not only absolute historical facts but the social conditions and customs of bygone ages, as well as in the great mass of those taken from Oriental life, this artist reveals his extraordinary pre-eminence as a figure painter. At an early age he recognized the fact that an absolute mastery of the contour and anatomy of the human body is essential to the expression of the noblest forms of art. Working in the atelier of Delaroche, where Greek antiquity received the most profound consideration, and almost exclusively absorbed the attention of the students, the young artist, with eye and mind ever on the alert to discover and supplement his weak points, realized that *Nature* was the great fountain-head of truth and beauty, and applied himself with rigorous conscientiousness to the more difficult study of living models. He discovered for himself the truth repeatedly and forcibly emphasized by Philip Gilbert Hamerton,—one of the most gifted and able among English art-critics,—namely, that "the serious study of the naked figure is the only possible foundation for *great* figure painting."



Indeed, one need only examine the various schools of art, from those of Ancient Greece to the leading modern academies, to find everywhere this fundamental law recognized and taught. The greatest of German critics, the immortal Goethe, appreciated and continually enforced it. His opinions on this point are admirably summed up in a striking review of his "Verschiedenes über Kunst," from the pen of the accomplished Théophile Gautier, *fils*.

"The æsthetics of Goethe [he writes], the principles which he professed in regard to the plastic and glyptic arts, are condensed in this species of appendix. Stripped of all artifice of style, laid down as laws rather than counsels, we recognize that they are written by this intellectual Jupiter enthroned upon the Olympus of German art; and it is not only his omnipotence, the despotism he imposed on all branches of art which has gained for him this title of Olympian; it is also, and above all, the *nature* of his principles and his artistic tastes.

"Goethe is essentially pagan; he everywhere glorifies antiquity, not only in his literary works but in these detached and, so to speak, scientific fragments

which we are now considering ; we find here a mass of notes on Greek vases, medals, and engraved stones ; he follows up attentively all productions, all creations, all memoirs having reference to antiquity. When the excavations were begun on a large scale at Pompeii, he described in detail the paintings and objects discovered there ; he was conversant with everything that was published, in *all* languages, on the subject of his predilection ; it was he who authenticated the paintings of Polygnotus and Philostratus. It appears that this love of antiquity, of pure art, was innate with Goethe, and radiated from his entire personality. . . . He placed art above everything ; he wished that it should be a star, to shed its light over all our actions, all our productions, like the beautiful Attic sun gilding with its rays the inimitable marbles of the Acropolis, the lines and contours of which it has not wearied of caressing for centuries. By the high position he occupied at the court of Weimar, which the Grand Duke Charles Augustus had made the intellectual capital of Germany, Goethe was in a position to efficaciously patronize the arts and to lead them in the direction he desired. While giving his counsels to artists, and principally to sculptors, to whom antique art furnished more themes than to painters, he indicated at the same time to sovereigns, and personages influential by their position or their fortune, the means of favoring the development of art and the subjects which should be chosen, as much in the interest of the artists, as for the advantage of those who patronized them, and for the promotion of public taste. He would have liked to see, for example, the vases, columns, temples, and obelisks, in promenades and parks, replaced by statues and, principally, busts. 'The most beautiful monument of man,' says he, 'is *man*. A beautiful bust is preferable to all the architecture of our gardens, and it is the best monument one can raise in remembrance of a great man, a relative, or a friend. One should not too exclusively occupy sculptors with insipid allegories, or historic groups and statues, where art is always restrained by exigencies of every nature. No one should be astonished to see in some council-chamber, or any other official locality, a group representing Venus and Adonis, or some subject drawn from Homer.'

"But if Goethe is so passionate an admirer of antiquity, it must not be concluded, therefore, that he admits *only antique* subjects ; his lofty intelligence would grasp too well the faultiness of this method, which has produced among us the deplorable school of David ; and this last example, perhaps, inspired him to avoid the breakers on which too exclusive a doctrine would have dashed him. He counsels one to simply study *Nature*.

"On *fête* days [he says] let the young artist go to watch the peasants dance ; let him study well their movements and their poses ; let him clothe the young girl with the tunic of a nymph ; let him lengthen the ears of his peasant and, if needful, give him cloven feet ; if he has grasped Nature well, and known how to suitably modify her corporeal forms, while carefully preserving the movement, no one will suspect the quarter whence he has taken his models and they will swear that he has copied from the antique.'

"Have we not here the entire explanation of *the antique*, and does not the secret of this inimitable perfection lie in exact and scrupulous observation not

of what is ugly, but of the beautiful in *Nature*? Is it not also the province of art to gather together beauties scattered here and there, and combine them in a harmonious whole, an *ideal model*, whose movements can be infinitely varied, but whose *forms* should be always reproduced, thus avoiding the indelicate and the grotesque. Harmony is what makes the power of the antique, and Goethe recommends it everywhere and unceasingly.

"There exist in Nature [he says] many things which separately are beautiful. But *genius* consists in finding the point of contact by which they can be attached to each other, and a masterpiece thus be produced. There is not a shrub nor a tree to which one cannot *add* a value by means of a rock, a pool of water, or a horizon skillfully arranged. It is the same in regard to the human form and all animated beings!"

"When Goethe recommends the study of Nature, it is not of *inanimate* nature that he speaks; it is not of landscape, on which he dilates but little; still less of still life, which he does not so much as mention. Nature, for him, is *man*. Man, according to him, includes everything; and the knowledge of man, far from being a limited physiology, comprehends the study of all the arts and all the sciences.

"Man [he says] is the most elevated, the unique object of the plastic arts; to understand him, and in order not to go astray in the labyrinth of his construction, a universal acquaintance with organic nature is indispensable. The study of inorganic bodies, as well as of physical and chemical phenomena, is not less necessary to the artist, who should know their theoretical principles. The human form cannot be understood by the simple inspection of its outward surface; the interior must be uncovered and fathomed, the connections and correspondences observed and the differences estimated; those mysterious portions of the being which are the base and foundation must be compared and understood. All this must be done if we wish to get a clear idea of this wonderful object which moves before our eyes in the waves of the vital element."

We find the same ideas in a masterly essay by Charles Blanc, who writes as follows:

"After having admired the universe, man comes to contemplate himself. He recognizes that the human form is the one which corresponds to the mind—that, regulated by proportion and symmetry, free by movement, superior through beauty, the human form, of all living forms, is the only one capable of fully expressing thought."

Gérôme, as we have said, apprehended this truth at the very beginning of his career. On his return to the atelier, with perceptions broadened and sharpened by a year of indefatigable study at Rome, where he had sketched indiscriminately landscape, architecture, animals, and figures—he felt more keenly than ever his pressing need of practice in drawing and painting from the nude. He set himself to make a life-size study, and the result was the *Combat de Coqs*. To

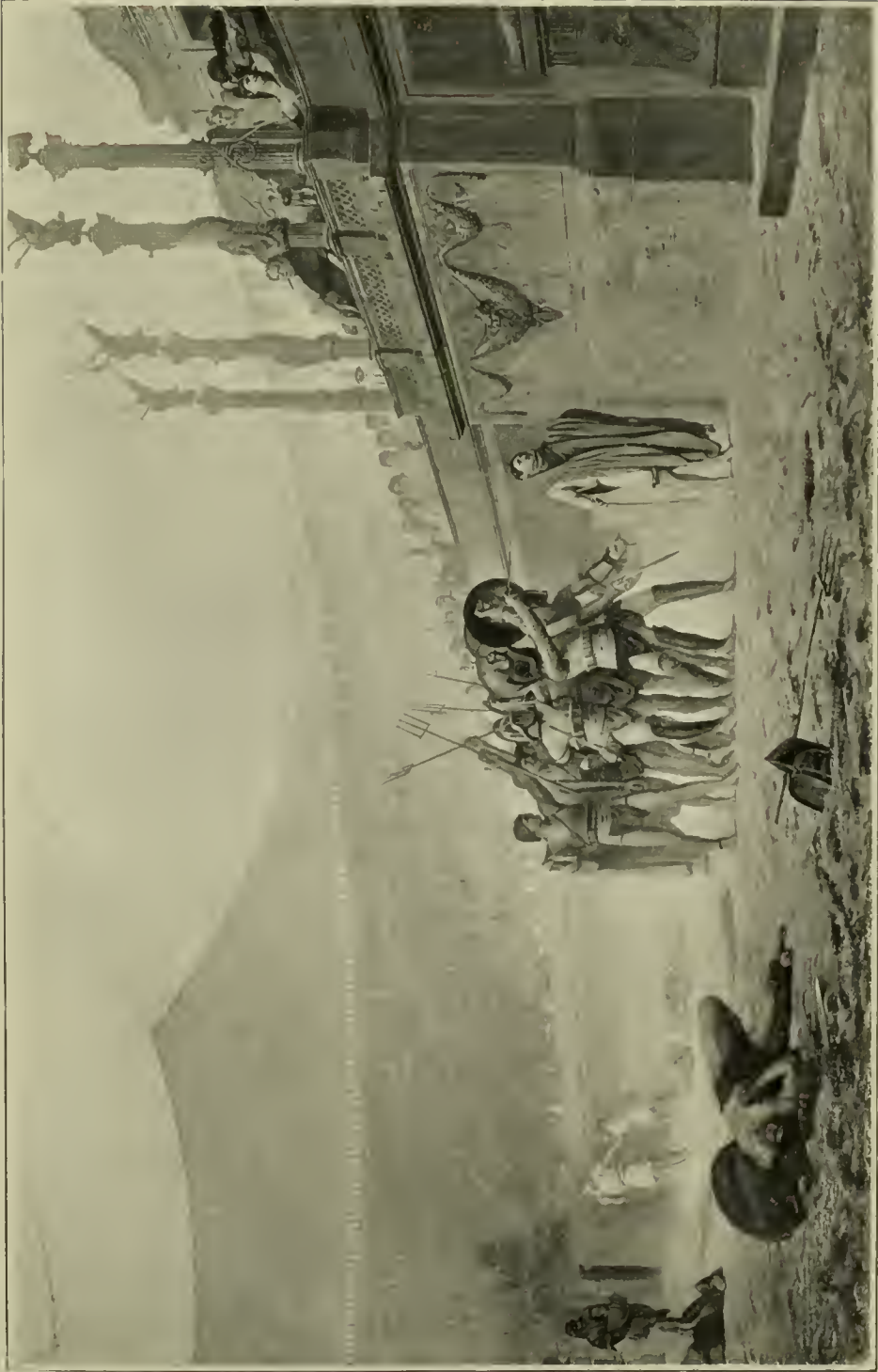
him it was only a study and, in his already severely critical estimation, an unsatisfactory one. But the trained eye of Delaroche instantly perceived its amazing qualities of verity, originality, and elegance of style, by which an everyday incident in that epoch of Greek life was elevated into the domain of classic art. At his express command, and despite the trembling protest of the young neophyte, the canvas was sent to the Salon of 1847. It was accepted and, though placed twenty meters above the line, where hung Couture's imposing *Decadence of the Romans*, and Delacroix's famous *Shipwreck*, the simple *study* carried off a medal, was bought by the French Government, and assigned a place among the Immortals in the Gallery of the Luxembourg. It was this first picture which attracted the attention of Gautier, who warmly praised its "delicacy and exquisite distinction," and pronounced it "a composition no Master would disown."

Our attention has several times been drawn to another criticism of this same picture. It reads as follows:

"The subject was thus early in his history characteristic of Gérôme, who has shown a decided preference for incidents in themselves horrible, or morally repulsive."

This extraordinary accusation, the shocking injustice of which is evident to any student of Gérôme's works,—is found in a volume entitled "Modern Painters and their Paintings," by Sarah Tytler. We should accord it only the silent contempt it merits, were it not that the book is designed, as we see emphasized in the preface, "for the use of schools and learners in art." To say the least, it is discouraging to take up, in this enlightened age, a treatise with this aim, and realize that so marked a narrowness of apprehension exists in a mind that presumes to guide and teach others. We prefer to believe it the result of ignorance of the subject treated, rather than rank it with a like judgment of that inimitable philosopher and moralist, Balzac, who, even after posterity had begun to estimate, at their real value, his stupendous merits, still found detractors to cast upon him what Gautier trenchantly denominates as "that hackneyed reproach of immorality, last insult of powerless and jealous mediocrity, as also of pure stupidity."

Hamerton also, keenly realizing the hurtful influence of illiberal criticism, deploras the *ignorance*, which in reality is the chief cause of the "difficulty with which people, not familiar with the naked figure, come to sever the ideas of nudity and immorality"; and adds: "If writers who are destitute of pictorial perceptions, yet have a command of language, become for some reason warmly interested in a discussion about artists, they are able to do considerable harm, because they combine the ignorance and willfulness of infancy with the combative skill of trained intellectual method."



AVI CESAR!

We heartily agree with Mr. Hamerton, and are content to offset the opinions of this class of self-styled critics, as superficial and incompetent as they are detrimental to the progress of true art, by the judgment of so learned and world-renowned an authority as Alexandre Dumas, who writes of Gérôme :

“A serious talent, and of an elevated order ; an artist who looks at his art nobly and who devotes to it his existence—every instant, every thought ; one *breathes freely again* before such works as his ; above all, when, like us, one has sighed, ‘Alas ! the standard of art is being lowered !’”

Or to quote the words of that other distinguished immortal, the eloquent and gifted director of the Comédie Française, Jules Claretie :

“Gérôme can, with good right, treat these antique subjects and vivify them with his art, so sober, so chaste, so pure.”

And again :

“His art is like his person, like his intelligence ; everything which bears his signature, be it bronze or canvas, sketch or marble, is true, vigorous and distinguished, like himself. In a word, Gérôme is a thoroughbred.”

And it is with peculiar satisfaction that we hail the advent of an American writer like Mrs. C. H. Stranahan, who, in her “History of French Painting” (published by Scribner in 1888), has made the most valuable contribution in the English language to the art literature of our day. It is a volume that might well be used as a text-book in all art academies, and that certainly should have a prominent place in every public and private library. Although one may differ with some of the author’s conclusions, the work reveals broad and thoughtful study, combined with a fine capacity for criticism, and a literary style remarkable for grace, lucidity, and vigor. We take pleasure in quoting freely from Mrs. Stranahan’s admirable book.

In opening her study of Gérôme, she says :

“The artistic qualities of Gérôme have been the subject of much discussion. His rare endowments are a study of great interest. He is an Orientalist of so *intime* a treatment that that alone would suffice to render him eminent ; he has executed great historic works, that singly might make his fame universal ; he is so learned a painter of the antique, that a close study of this department of his work produces a sense of amazed wonder in view of the underlying knowledge necessary to afford his significant touch of *motifs*, by which he introduces us into family circles and enables us to chat of everyday affairs with the heroes of one and another period ; he has applied to incident the classic treatment, and originated a new style, the refined and graceful *néo-grec* ; he has, even at the time when he was one of the closest of Nature’s students, made harmony of line so

prominent a part of his work, that in the difficulty of assigning him to any *one* class of painting, it has been suggested by Strahan that he be termed 'a sculptor of canvas'; he has attacked and conquered some of the most difficult problems of art execution—such as uniting the most finished treatment with great rapidity of movement (as in *The Runners of the Pasha*; "the catching of a motion" as it were, by instantaneous photography); the greatest success of fore-shortening (as in the flat level of Caesar's dead body and that in the *Execution of Marshal Ney*), and difficulties of design are flung broadcast in his works."

Referring to some of the scenes in which Gérôme simply relates, without comment, a historical fact, such as the exposing of the heads of the rebel beys before the Mosque of El Assaneyn, or where he depicts an everyday scene in the slave-market, leaving it to tell its own pathetic tale, Mrs. Stranahan speaks



of the truthful portrayal of the "indifference of familiar custom," adding:

"Many critics feel that some expression of the revolting impression made by these heads, would, but for the coldness of the artist himself, have crept into this picture. But besides being subordinately

a correct representation of the national characteristics, is not the effect sought, the emotion of horror, which also has its *reverse* side, *sympathy*, greatly enhanced by the picture's supplying no comment on itself, which would, indeed, be wholly superfluous! This reticent flash of an instant of facts, left to tell all there is to say, is peculiarly Gérôme's. This and *The Slave Mart*, with others of this artist's works that are severely criticised by sensitive judges as of a harsh coldness, become, in their full suggestion, of a nature to produce deep feeling, a thrilling sensation of anger or pity for the wrong depicted. This power is inherent in the wide gamut across which the antitheses represented in them sweep—in the contrast to the absence of all feeling, of such extreme provocatives to feeling. The effect, where, as with Gérôme, the scene is given with no strain of fact, but by simply the revelations of an instant, is thrilling. It is the significant point of these subjects, the one on which, we may conjecture, their selection hinged, and evinces a keen appreciation by the artist of the means of exciting emotion. It is also illustrated most powerfully in that selected moment of the *Duel after the Masquerade*, when

Death, grim and relentless, not as a mask easily thrown off, comes among the masqueraders at their invitation, and the victor, in the character of a chief of the Iroquois, and his second, forgetting that he is Harlequin, turn indifferently away, leaving the pallid victim, with his mask of Pierrot dashed aside, to die in the arms of his second, dressed as the Duke of Guise. The horror here is again doubled by the antithesis. Through and through it, in all the contours, in the attitudes, even in the back of the receding victor, is apparent the significance, which Gérôme's patient study of nature can so well express. In all his works may be traced this clear, direct, epigrammatic presentation. Truly his pictures are but 'reports' of scenes, acts, incidents; but in his hands they completely escape becoming a purely literary art. He simplifies them into the presentation of the essential and significant verities, and unconcernedly leaves them to impress as they may. But well may he be confident of the effect, for with his penetrating feeling, which is a something too susceptibly perceptive to be denominated mere ocular vision, and his wide sweep of the gamut of significant expression, he always touches the exact keys."

Returning again to "la belle France," we find in *La Galerie Contemporaine* a masterly review from the pen of Émile Bergerat, known to all the world as "Caliban," the witty philosopher of the Paris *Figaro*, and still more highly esteemed as poet, dramatist, and art critic, worthily wearing in the latter capacity the mantle bequeathed to him by his intimate friend and kinsman, "le grand Théo," as Gautier was familiarly called.

After brief reference to the wealth of knowledge and imagination displayed in the pictures which he places under the head of "Fantaisies," Bergerat continues:

"Scenes from Oriental life form the most considerable portion of Gérôme's works; the numerous voyages of the artist furnish him with an inexhaustible quantity of picturesque themes, which find their fountain-head in his great powers of observation. But the paintings devoted to the restoration of the antique are those which, taken all in all, are dearest to the master; it is through them he awaits his meed of fame, to them that he has confided the survival of his name. His expectation will not be deceived on this point. Under this head can be found canvases that exhale beauty like a page of Tacitus or Juvenal.

"I wish in the beginning to emphasize this truth; that which gives Gérôme his superiority over most of his rivals, and establishes his very distinct personality, is his incontestable erudition as a man and an artist. He has innate tact and taste; but he nourishes them with fruit from the tree of science. It may appear stale and behind the times thus to boast of qualities of a literary order in a painter, and to praise him for being well informed regarding the subjects he treats; but ever since I began to look at and study pictures, it has not yet been demonstrated to me that a profound knowledge of the subjects portrayed is hurtful to their execution. Truth merits research among the graphic documents and literary monuments of history as well as among living and contemporaneous models, and

the farther we advance in the path of progress, the more will art be tinged by science, and the more will it adorn itself with the colors of knowledge."

We leave for a moment these paintings, which revive so skillfully the conditions of life in the time of Pericles and the Caesars, and turn to those which are drawn from actual observation during Gérôme's many voyages—especially in Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Russia, Italy, Algeria, Morocco, and Spain. When we find that by actual count we have nearly two hundred canvases which may be denominated "Pictures of Travel," we come face to face with the impossibility of giving any adequate *résumé* of the artist's bewildering achievements in this direction. His numerous and well-filled portfolios of sketches—which till now have been for the most part "sealed books," save to a few intimate friends—reveal the source of these truthful and vivid reproductions of life in these picturesque and fascinating countries. We congratulate ourselves again that a morning spent by Gantier in Gérôme's studio, over these very portfolios, inspired this gifted writer to embody his impressions in a delightful article, entitled, "Gérôme; Pictures, Studies, and Sketches of Travel," from which we quote the following pages, that will in a measure reveal to us the broad and solid foundation on which this Master-Artist has reared his *Temple Beautiful*.

"The countries where Islam reigns are entirely virgin, in point of view of art. The fear of idolatry caused the promulgator of the Koran to proscribe the representation of the human figure. In this respect, Mahomet imitated Moses; although the Bible speaks of the heads of the cherubim at the corners of the Ark of the Lord, and of the oxen upholding the sea of brass, the exception only confirms the rule; the idea of the unity of God could easily have been forgotten by uncivilized nations, scarcely freed from polytheism and the worship of fetiches, always prone to confound the image with the idea it symbolized; this necessary law perhaps suppressed sculpture and painting,—in a word, all the plastic arts,—and the genius of the Orient was obliged to fall back on architecture, ornamentation, arabesques, and an ingenious *mélange* of colors; the living world was closed to man, and dogma—a dogma moreover, rigorously followed—deprived him of Nature. While the Occident, under the beneficent influence of Catholicism, — (we say *Catholicism* and not *Christianity*, for Luther and Calvin are as detrimental to art as Mahomet), — was expanding in marvelous creations, and counting its painters and sculptors by hundreds, the Orient was combining and arranging mathematical lines, in a thousand ways, for the decoration of its alhambras, scarcely daring to introduce flowers into the labyrinth of broken lines and long legends of cufic letters which form the background of Arabic ornamentation. They had architects, algebraists, physicians, musicians, and poets, but no *artists*, in the sense in which we use this word to-day.

"However, the Orient produces, in its land beloved of the sun, the most beautiful races, the purest types; and the human clay, less altered by civilization, seems here to retain the still visible imprint of a divine hand.

"It has preserved, at least partly, the drapery, a noble garment which plays around the form without concealing it; it has the privilege of elegant and severe attitudes, which our scanty clothes render impossible. Since several centuries, all this wealth is lost; and more—under jealous veils, and behind the gratings of harems, are fading away, mysterious beauties, leaving neither trace nor souvenir; roses, whose perfume can only be conjectured, since they have blossomed only for the master; heads as exquisite as any Raphael could have designed; bodies as perfect as any Phidias could have modeled! Singular anomaly!

"One cannot hope that the countries dominated by Islamism will renounce their peculiar civilization to embrace the ideas set forth by our own; but what is forbidden to the faithful may be permitted to the unbeliever.

"Until now, *art*, wholly absorbed by the Greek ideal, has not troubled itself about this immense world, peopled by unknown races, by unused types, and which could refresh, by new subjects, its exhausted inspiration.

"The Occident, in the time of the crusades, only brought back from Africa and Syria ideas in regard to architecture and ornamentation; if the Saracen influence is visible in the art of the Middle Ages, and if the mosques have lent their minarets and even their crosses to Gothic chapels, one does not perceive that the statuary and painting of these epochs have been modified by acquaintance with, and study of, these Oriental types. The representations of Moors and Saracens in bas-reliefs and miniatures are works of pure imagination. Later, Jean Bellin made a journey to Constantinople and reproduced, with the dry and patient fidelity which characterizes him, figures, costumes, and monuments, whose *strangeness*, doubtless, struck him more forcibly than did their *beauty*, and which had no effect on art.

"The Orient, from its picturesque side, was discovered, or rather invented, by Victor Hugo, toward the year 1828; the *Occidental-Oriental Divan* of Goethe had not yet been translated; and even had it been, the French people would not have understood its mysterious poetry; but the '*Orientales*' (of Hugo) produced a dazzling effect: this blue heaven traversed by white storks, this glittering sun, these streams of gold and precious stones, these pachas leaning on tigers, these resplendent sultanas with their shining blond tresses, languidly raising their eyelashes stained with k'hol; these palms powdered by the wind of the desert, these cities with their metallic domes and minarets of ivory stretching up into the azure, these files of camels swaying their long ostrich-like necks against a ruddy horizon, all this poetry, as dazzling as the light, as intoxicating as hasheesh, caused a vertigo of admiration—above all, among the painters. Soon Decamps headed the Turkish patrol through the streets of Smyrna, Marilhat started for Egypt, and Eugène Delacroix came back from Morocco; later, other artists joined the caravan where Félicien David beat the drum. However, we must say that, in spite of many masterpieces, the Orient was rather reproduced with its strange landscape, its singular architectural forms, its brilliant carnival of costumes and its varied wealth of color, than studied as to the sculptural beauty of its types. Marilhat, more of a landscape than a historical painter, has peopled his admirable canvases with purely episodic figures; Decamps has often only seen in

his Turks, his Zeibecks, and his Arnauts, a brilliant or somber spot to be brought into relief against the chalky masonry of a white wall, although he proved by his *Supplice des Crochets*, and his *Bazar de Smyrne*, that he was able to reproduce Oriental types in all their purity. Delacroix expressed, with rare power, the African character, but sought rather for color and movement than for lineament in Nature. Théodore Chasseriau, who seemed endowed with a mysterious instinct in painting exotic races, saw only *French Africa*, and, better than any one else had done, he depicted the narrow, oval face; the languishing, parted lips; the melancholy black eyes, shadowed by long, painted lashes; the delicate nose with sensitive nostrils, the round arms and dainty hands, the statuesque limbs and feet, the voluptuous attitude, and all the rhythm of the bodies swaying beneath strange, floating draperies.

“His *Jewish Women of Constantine* astonished one like a dream; he would doubtless have penetrated farther into the land of the sun, if Death had not suddenly covered him with its shadow, for he cherished the longing and desire to see these beautiful countries, as if they had been an absent Fatherland.

“Gérôme has made the pilgrimage dreamed of by Théodore Chasseriau. He has seen Cairo, that capital of the East, that city of caliphs, where Saracen art shone with such vivid brilliancy while the West was still plunged in uncouth barbarity. He has roamed through the winding streets bordered by houses with overhanging stories and latticed *moncharabys*, shaded by striped awnings or rush mats, with here and there a slender palm opening its leafy fan against the blue of heaven, or the minaret of some mosque stretching up, encircled by its brackets of balconies. He has followed this crowd, composed of all the types of the Orient, from the Arab of noble race and the stern Wahabite, to the negro with his bestial features; from the Arnaut, with the nose and eye of the eagle, to the placid fellah, with the face of an Egyptian sphinx; this crowd which separates under the lash of the *courbach* before the horse of the Bey, accompanied by his *sais*, and which draws back against the wall so as not to touch the wife of the *cafi*, passing like a phantom in her domino of taffetas, with her face covered by a mask of black horse-hair, and chiding the negress who carries a child in a red *tarbouch* and jacket embroidered with gold.

“The young artist, accompanied by several friends, has ascended the Nile in one of those *cangues*, whose commodious and picturesque installation makes the journey through Egypt a veritable pleasure-trip. Photography, carried to-day to the perfection we all know, exempts artists from copying monuments and public buildings by its absolutely faithful proofs, to which a happy choice of a point of view and moment of reproduction add a great value of effect. Therefore it was not to this point that Gérôme directed his efforts; his masterly studies as a painter of history, his talent as a draughtsman, refined, elegant, exact, and yet full of style,—a particular perception, which we can well call ethnographic, and which will become more and more necessary to the artist in this age of universal and rapid locomotion, when every tribe on this planet will be visited, in whatever distant archipelago it may conceal itself—all this qualified him, better than any

GOLGOTHA
"IT IS FINISHED"

1868



other, to represent this simple detail which modern explorers of the Orient have neglected, till now, for landscape, public structures, and mere color—I mean, *man!*

“Gérôme has kindly permitted us to examine the contents of his portfolios, and to study, one by one, these pencil sketches, taken on the wing; rapid notes gathered from real life, without preparation, without arrangement, without system—with genuine abandon and a charming familiarity. What pleasure to surprise talent thus *en dèshabillé!* to be initiated into the impression of the artist in the very moment of Nature’s inspiration; into his thought, translated, or rather crystallized, by several characters in shorthand! We love dearly these scribbings,—words, which later are made into phrases in the pictures finished at leisure.

“Besides, the slightest of Gérôme’s sketches are drawn with a touch so firm, so pure, so precise, and so finished in their carelessness, that one wonders what *can* be added by further labor!

“The artist traveler has made numerous pencil portrait-studies of different characteristic types; there are fellahs, Copts, Arabs, negroes of mixed blood from Sennaar and from Kordofan,—so exactly

observed that they could be used in the anthropological treatises of M. Serres,—drawn in so masterly a manner that they will make a success of any picture in which they find a place.

“The fellahs and the Copts have not changed since the time of Moses: such as you see them on the frescoes of the palaces or tombs of Amenotepeh, of Toutmes, and of Sesourtasen—such are they to-day. We find always the large, flat face, with the rounded cheek-bones, which seems to have retained, like the Sphinx, the mark of the blow of Cambyses; the strange eyes, with the outer angle raised and accented by a touch of antimony; the slightly flat nose, making a defective profile; a mouth like an enormous cage, while on the sensual folds of the lips rests a mingled grimace and smile, which imparts an indefinable expression unknown in Europe. The *chachias* and *burnous* which envelop these strange physiognomies, cause them to resemble mummies partly unswathed, and with the face uncovered.



"The Arabs are distinguished by the nose, an eye like a bird of prey, the more Caucasian structure of the head, and the openness of the facial angle; the negroes, in their gaze of animal placidity or childish heedlessness, scarcely betray an intelligence as opaque as their skin is dark; their flat nostrils and thick mouths can inhale with impunity the flaming blast of the desert, even when laden with the imperceptible dust raised by the *khamssinn*.

"Several women, persuaded by a *bacchich*, timidly lift their veils and display a sleepy, mournful beauty, of the phantom-like order peculiar to the women of the East. . . .

"The camel—that strange animal who seems, with the elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the giraffe, and the ostrich, to have survived the great forty-day deluge, and to have remained upon the earth as a specimen of the monstrous zoölogical furniture of the primitive world—has been studied by our traveler from all sides; its behavior, its fore-shortening, its attitudes when on the march or in repose, kneeling, ruminating, dreaming, licking its chops, showing its teeth, stretching out on the ground its enormous neck, or fanning, with its long lids, an eye as soft as that of a woman, the only beauty of this antediluvian deformity. The artist has reproduced with extraordinary care the humps and callous hide, the awkward dislocations and warpings, so to speak, of this fantastic animal, as well as the unexpected silhouettes traced by this irregular bundle of bones on the white sand or the blue sky. In these sketches one can distinguish perfectly between the heavy pack-camel and the slender *mahari*, which is to the former what the English thoroughbred is to a common dray horse.

"We should never finish were we to describe the infinite number of details gathered together on these loose sheets. Great undulations of ground, clusters of date trees, masses of doum palms, *sagghyehs* whose wheel raises and tells the little rosary of pots; cafés, okkels, camping-grounds, corners of pyramids; the broken profile of the Sphinx, vases of antique contours, doors of mosques—everything that the chance of travel offers that is new and interesting to an eye that knows how to see, a hand that knows how to reproduce.

"Among the sketches in colors, we notice three which are to be finished for the coming Exposition [of 1857].

"The first represents the two colossi of Medinet-Abou, rising from the midst of the plain at the foot of a mountain which they fairly dwarf. Never has ancient Egypt, with its frenzy of genius for the creation of enormities, cast a more tremendous defiance in the face of Time; should the shoulders of this planet quiver in an earthquake, she might succeed, perhaps, by dint of repeated shakings, in cracking the granite epidermis of the giants she upholds, but she could never overturn them. The last cataclysm of the world will find them in the same spot, corroded, exhausted, wrinkled, disfigured, but always immovably seated in that everlasting and impassible pose—the open hands resting upon the stony knees—the rugged heads, sculptured by thunderbolts, turned toward the infinite.

"Behind these colossi, or rather these mountains in human form, a sterile ridge—powdered and baked for 6000 years under a burning sun—throws

cascades of light from its rugged steeps over its blue crevasses ; the heaven stretches out its cloth of indigo, covered with a film of warm, sandy mist. At the foot of the stony monsters, —one of which is the famous Memnon, whom the ancients heard chanting the approach of Aurora, and who was rendered forever voiceless by a reparation ordered by the Emperor Hadrian,— in the immense shadow which they cast, a caravan has halted, seeking shelter from the intense heat ; a man, perched upon a camel, does not reach as high as the toes of these prodigious statues.

“The effect of this picture is most thrilling; the Orient is not here daubed with *mine de Saturne* tints, in which it is too often painted; it has the subdued light, the ardent pallor, the tones of iron at a white heat found in the real countries of the sun.

“The second canvas shows a company of recruits marching in the desert. An Arnaut, with his gun passed behind his neck like a stick, advances at the head of this procession of unhappy creatures, who, with manacled wrists, coupled and chained together like convicts, exhibit the most frightful despair : their feet kick up the fine dust as they stumble along, their brains boiling and seething under a devouring, implacable sun.

“On the shifting sand, white as pulverized sandstone, the spongy feet of the camels have left large impressions ; the wind has traced, as if on the water, capricious designs, effaced and renewed without ceasing ; it is almost as sad as the *Russian Soldiers*.—amusing themselves at word of command!—so much admired at the Universal Exposition.

“The third, and perhaps the most beautiful sketch of all, represents Arnauts at prayer in a room whose walls have for their sole ornament a collection of guns ; several persons are standing, with their feet close together and the palms of their hands turned up in an attitude of worship ; on the border of a narrow carpet, an old man with a white beard, standing a little to the front, recites the *suras* of the Koran, to which his companions listen with religious rapture. In the foreground is a row of *babouches*, shoes or *savates*, a peculiarly Oriental detail which the artist has had the boldness not to omit, and which does not in the least disturb the gravity of the composition. A rising smile dies away at the sight of these types, so pure, so noble, so characteristic ; of these attitudes, so beautiful in their simplicity ; of this assembly, which does so well what it does !”

A fitting continuation of these masterly pages is furnished by a fascinating essay on “Gérôme and his Work,” from the pen of Frederic Masson, one of the most graceful and vivid writers of modern times. He gives us an alluring glimpse of the ideal life during Gérôme’s first sojourn in the land of the sun, which we shall amplify when we describe in detail the artist’s adventures during this trip and subsequent ones through Upper Egypt, Arabia, and Syria.

“What the pen cannot describe [says Masson] is the loving sweetness of these piercing eyes, the look of resolution and virility which is the predominating

characteristic of this physiognomy; the will to undertake and press onward expressed by the whole personality. He would willingly have been one of those indefatigable explorers, who, endlessly journeying, risk their lives to see something new; one of those who, to contemplate unknown stars, go to where the earth gives way under their feet. To seek, to attempt, to undertake, this is what is necessary to their existence *not to dream!* Their intellects, exact and keen, demand facts, not phrases. A search for the truth is Gérôme's uninterrupted occupation. It is this conscientiousness in research which binds together all his work. It is the same when he reorganizes the sports of ancient Rome; when he represents the dramas of modern history; when he depicts the life of the Orient, and, finally, when, in the midst of these landscapes he knows so well, he places some national figure, such as Bonaparte, whose strange physiognomy and frame, almost ascetic in their meagerness, he delights to render, at the moment when 'his imperial star arises in the East!'

"To rest himself after immense efforts, Gérôme started for Egypt. It was the first of those voyages which have exercised so keen an influence on the painter, and which, leading him by the picturesque toward the modern, have enabled him to reproduce, in so inimitable a manner, the scenes and characters of that Orient which is being each day more and more encroached upon by European customs and manners.

"Gérôme seems born for these distant voyages to which one must bring vigor of body and decision of mind. Always up, always alert and indefatigable, he commands the caravan with an authority which no one contests. The first to rise in the morning, he superintends the departure; then, erect in his saddle, he keeps going through the long hours, smoking, hunting, tracing with rapid stroke in his sketch-book a movement or a silhouette. Scarcely arrived at camp, behold him commencing a study—neither rain nor wind having the power to move him from his camp-stool. Then, the palette carefully wiped and the brushes thoroughly cleaned, what a delightful companion at the table under the tent! What animation, what good-humored appreciation of the nonsense of the younger ones; what frank gayety and willing remembrance of former jesting. And through this Gallie humor, which has its flavor of the soil, this wit peculiar to the *comté* where he was born,—how one perceives the man of high intellectual culture, who has read much, and who knows how to read! Who, for his intimate friend and soul's companion, has chosen that other joyous spirit, the immortal author of "La Ciguë" and the "Elfrontés" —Émile Augier!

"It was no play to visit Egypt in 1856. It is true that one did not then meet there those hordes of tourists who spoil the landscape and disfigure the monuments! Ancient Egypt was still itself after the convention of Alexandria; several old soldiers of the empire alone represented the European element. Reform had not yet got the better of old manners nor of ancient customs. The fellah, in the rigidity of his attitudes, preserved the hieratic aspect of statues of basalt. The Nile, where steamboats were unknown, was enlivened by whole nations of birds so tame that they were scarcely disturbed by the slow passage of the light boats (*cangues*). The river full of fish, the banks stocked



PIRRYNE BEFORE THE AREOPAGUS.

with game, perpetually changing scenery, brightened by the vivid coloring of the inhabitants, — over all a delicious blue sky, — and four gay companions, loving with an equal love painting, hunting, and fishing — what a joyous existence ! And how easy to picture Gérôme living thus for four months, going by easy stages from Damietta to Philæ. Then coming back to Cairo and installing himself in a palace, cordially placed at the disposition of the travelers by that glorious Soliman Pacha whose incredible romance has lately been described in a charming volume. There were four months more of study and labor, from which resulted those pictures that, in the work of Gérôme, best reproduce the vivid impressions of the things he has seen."

Another great critic and traveler, one of the most eminent of French Orientalists, the distinguished Maxime Du Camp, writes of these Oriental silhouettes :

"Just as Meissonier is able to portray an entire epoch in one figure, so M. Gérôme is expert in particularizing a certain race in a single person, especially in miniature, for his painting, which is almost too delicate for a large composition, becomes more exact and elaborate in proportion as his canvas is limited. He, himself, an intrepid traveler, of a keen, vigorous temperament ; an impressionable character ; a penetrating intellect ; circumspect, delicate, and quick to seize points on the wing—has the air of a *palikare*, and one is quite surprised that he does not wear the Greek cap and *fustanelle*. No one has gone farther than he in his observation of the appearance, the manners, and customs of the Egyptians of Cairo, the Jews of Palestine, the Russians of the Crimea, and the modern Greeks. He has studied them with a rare acuteness and conscientiousness, and while examining into the smallest details, he has not failed to grasp the essential features of the Oriental races.

"One can perhaps object that M. Gérôme's touch is a little dry, and his coloring often too sharp ; but when Time shall have laid its powerful *patine* on his canvases, they will be harmonized into soft and deep tones. And what is more, they will have the very appreciable advantage of not losing in growing old, for they are finished in the highest possible degree."

We may here pause to consider a point which has been much harped on by a certain class of critics, who, for the most part, are theoretically and practically ignorant of the A B C of the art they attempt to criticise, and distinguish themselves only by a blind adhesion to certain doctrines promulgated by a certain would-be school of art. These oracles affect to deny Gérôme the title of *great artist*, on the score that he is not what they understand as a "colorist."

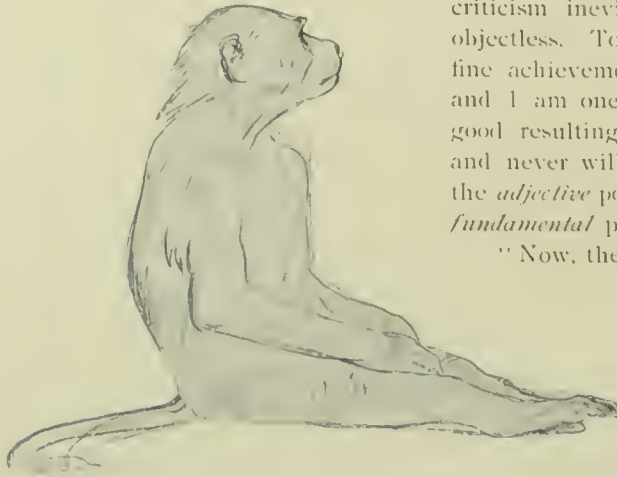
We are not desirous of entering into a controversy on this point. "*Chacun à son goût*," says the old proverb, and, as Gérôme very quietly remarked in his early youth, "the public will be the judge."

Real art-lovers have sufficiently shown their appreciation by securing his masterpieces often while still mere sketches on the easel, and disputing eagerly

the possession of those which have several times changed hands at public sale. Time, that supreme judge, has proven the intrinsic and ever-increasing value of his art, based on true and noble methods. We cannot refrain, however, from quoting one or two authorities, whose lucid and trenchant opinions on this vexed question of "What constitutes a *great* artist?" are well worth our attention. Says Bergerat, in the able treatise before cited :

"If the name of painter, and the reputation of being a good painter, is to be appropriated only by workers in color, and if a pumpkin well represented ought, in public estimation, to equal in value the School of Athens, of Raphael, we

must renounce serious consideration of this manifestation of human genius, and criticism inevitably becomes sterile and objectless. To be sure, naturalism is a fine achievement of modern intelligence, and I am one of the first to glorify the good resulting therefrom ; but it is not, and never will be, in art, anything save the *adjective* power of talent, of which the *fundamental* power is the *idea*.



"Now, the word 'idea' comprises also its culture, and the culture of the idea is science, or what is otherwise known as acquirements. I believe no more in the ignorance of genius than I do in the

inconscience of beauty. The gift is nothing if it ends only in promises and hopes, for Nature rebels against inaction of forces, and the most fertile ground grows fallow and sterile, even in the full sunlight, if it is not plowed up and sown. If any one declines to admit that the operation of the intelligence by which a man succeeds in conceiving and realizing a grand ethnographic scene, such, for example, as the *Pollice Verso*, is of a superior intellectual order to that which impels M. Vollon to choose a *motif* from still life, one might as well declare that a bee-hive, the construction of which is admirable, is as admirable as St. Peter's at Rome. As well give instinct the precedence over intelligence ; as well proclaim the public inutility of those conservatories of the beautiful called libraries and museums.

"Further, those who are endowed with a sensibility of the retina, as exceptional as it is unconscious, act most thoughtlessly in endeavoring to confine the art of painting to the reproduction of the physical phenomena of lights and colors. Their presumptuous theories have produced impressionism

and *tachism* (or blotching). Must we then conclude that man, nude or clothed in brilliant stuffs, is, in reality, only a dab of color, whose form confounds itself with the atmosphere? What becomes then of the expressive power of painting? To what sense does its eloquence appeal, and in what terms does this language, stripped of its alphabet and its style, speak to the human intelligence? Gérôme must have asked himself all this, when the critics have adjudged him guilty of a crime in not being specially born what they are pleased to style a *colorist*. He must have thought that the art he practiced must be the lowest of all the arts, if one is not to include the qualities of observation, picturesque design, and composition in making a picture. Here, indeed, lies his natural superiority: not a painter of the present age can compose a picture as well as he—the greatest among them not excepted. Gérôme has the sentiment of unity and order: with him the scene is always complete and completely treated: each item is placed on its own plane of interest and co-operates proportionately to the general effect of the scene to which it contributes.

"A great and rare quality, with which poets are generally more liberally endowed than painters, and which, under the name of *goût* (an expression inadequately rendered in English by the word *taste*), remains the dominant quality of the Latin race. Education does not suffice to give it, whatever one may think, and I do not see wherein it is so common and inferior to the gift of color! We must take care not to go astray, nor to lead the public astray; a bit of good painting is not necessarily a picture; one has not made a poem because one has written a fragment. Those who rebel the most against the teaching of the *École* are perhaps not capable of treating intelligently a single one of the subjects submitted to its artists in the competitive examination. Now, it seems to me that to be incapable of a thing proves one to be inferior to those who are capable of it. Perhaps there exists a *tachiste* who has conceived in the depths of his soul a composition superior to the *Pollice Verso*, but this *tachiste* has not yet revealed himself. 'Tis a hard task to make a picture, as it is a difficult affair to make a book! This is only too true. Gérôme has signed a vast number of canvases which merit the name of *picture*—a title formerly imposing, and which was not lavished, as it is to-day, on the merest daubs of venturesome colorists!"

The correctness of Bergerat's analysis and judgment must be acknowledged by all thoughtful students and practical artists. The same ideas are ably set forth in a volume devoted to "Art and Artists" by the well-known painter and critic, Charles Timbal. In a charming preface to this series of essays, written by the Vicomte Henri Delaborde, perpetual secretary of the Academy of Fine Arts at Paris, we find Timbal described as a "painter familiarized with all the secrets of practical art, and a connoisseur in the best sense of the term."

In his study on Gérôme, Timbal says:

"It is the custom to place each artist in a camp where he will be, according to his valor or to chance, the standard-bearer or a simple soldier. Some, whether

they desire or resist, will belong to a group of colorists—others will be ranged among the draughtsmen. To speak truly, Gérôme cannot be confined to either of these classifications; without being one of those who, by temperament and without effort, multiply the vibrations, varieties, and harmonies of tones, he sees things as they are, and shows himself a colorist in his own manner; and his brush, in rendering a modified reflection of the exterior brilliancy of things, does not in the least alter the rigorous reality. Let one examine without prejudice any one of his small canvases: those where he makes the waves to shimmer in the twilight, or this other, flooded by the midday sun,—a street in Cairo in the shadow of its high walls, or the circus, sheltered by the purple velarium,—the torso of Cléopatra or the Almée, and the gladiator in the arena, wiping off his bloody sweat; the professional man, remembering his own studies, will readily recognize the truth of these reproductions, and also the teachings of nature and of light.

"Although Gérôme has to-day attained the moment of life in which the artist seems to have nothing to demand of the gods save to preserve intact the gifts he has received from them, he has not passed the age of progress. . . . Those who have examined, with clear perceptions, the later works he has produced, have observed without difficulty the broadening of his manner—the firmness of his touch from the first, and the new richness of his *pâte*. The artist marches abreast of the taste of to-day, but in the measure of his *personal* taste. The inventor needed not to show himself more ingenious; the painter has become more of a painter! . . . How many masterpieces, applauded yesterday for their powerful effects, their novelty, and the richness of their contrasts, have to-day become gloomy canvases, from which all the beauty has disappeared owing to the inexperience of the artists. The pictures of Gérôme, painted with a discreet and prudent hand, have little to fear from the effects of time, and they will probably present themselves to the judgment of the future in all the freshness of their original creation, when of rival works there will remain but a blackened image, exhausted and compromising."

But Gérôme is as little disturbed by the clamor of the hostile camps of which Timbal speaks, as he is unspoiled by the admiration of zealous followers. We have in our possession a letter from his intimate friend, the late lamented Émile Augier, to his other beloved companion, Alfred Arago, the mere mention of whose names calls up recollections of talents which are the pride and joy not only of the *intime* and choice circle of which they were the center, and to which Arago is still fortunately spared, but of the glorious company of illustrious artists and *littérateurs* who congregate in that modern center of art life—Paris.

In this letter, sparkling with wit and caustic observation, we find the following graphic note on Gérôme, and his relation to *la critique*:

"A special characteristic of Gérôme [says Augier] is his profound indifference to the railings of the journals. He pursues a very good system to avoid being irritated by them—he does not read them! And if he sees a friend wax

furious under harsh criticism, he tranquillizes him by that celebrated *mot* of an amiable actress: "It gives them so much pleasure and it costs me so little!"

We must not conclude, however, that the artist considers himself beyond criticism; on the contrary, no one has more frankly or freely desired the opinions of his fellow-workers, few of whom have approximated the unsparring severity we find in his self-criticism, among the autobiographical notes which we shall transcribe in full. Of the honest and impartial judgment displayed in these simple yet eloquent records of his life, Bergerat writes:

"Do you know many artists endowed not only with enough mind and character, but sufficient talent to write of themselves lines such as these? For my part I know nothing more noble than this model confession, which has deeply moved me and inspired me with undying respect for the Master."

This spirit of strict self-criticism, amounting almost to austerity, was a marked trait, even in early youth, as evinced by an episode of his first year in Rome. He was painting, in the Forum, that superb landscape which stretches away from the Capitol, beyond the ruins of the Coliseum, across the Campagna to the foot of the distant mountains. The study was finished in an incredibly short space of time, and in a manner that evoked unanimous praise from his master and fellow-students. But Gérôme, distrusting so easy a triumph, and saying to himself, "What has been done so quickly *cannot* be worth much!" deliberately scraped the day's labor from the canvas and repainted the scene with greater care.

This little anecdote reveals the quality of the artist, who, while professional critics are occupied with their discussions as to the respective merits of the various methods of seeing and reflecting nature, steadily pursues his way toward his ideal; his mind wholly concentrated upon his work, — his motto, like that of Apelles, being *Nulla dies sine linea*, — he labors on tranquilly, conscientiously, and confidently, yearly adding to a lengthy list of masterpieces, which betray new depths and beauties of conception and execution, and impart additional luster to an already imperishable fame.

As long ago as 1860, De Tanonarn wrote:

"What Gérôme has achieved up to the present moment is but the *preface* of a beautiful book. We await the volume, but if, contrary to all expectation, it does not come, the preface itself will count as a book!"

What would he think could he remite and contemplate the achievements of more than forty years of ardent, unceasing toil! How choose among the gems in this dazzling *rivière* of jewels collected from the most precious mines of the Old World! Let us yield ourselves to the sway of this potent magician, who trans-

ports us by a wave of his powerful hand from idyllic Greece to the brilliant courts of France; from the crowded Coliseum of Ancient Rome to the solitude and desolation of the Arabian desert, and back to the glowing tulip gardens of Holland; from sunny Spain, where every day is holiday, and a skillful *toréador* is acclaimed by a joyous populace "King of the feast," to the melancholy banks of the Danube, where, under the crushing despotism of Russia, even "recreation in camp" is rigidly enforced, and the sting of the knout compels the song that is often strangled by a sob; from the thronged and picturesque streets of Cairo to the isolated fastnesses of the Convent of Sinai, with a glimpse of the awful tragedy of the Hill of Calvary!

He invites us to walk with Dante on the banks of the Arno, or watch Rembrandt bending over his etching plate; to listen with cynical Voltaire to the royal flute-player of Sans Souci, or enjoy the discomfiture of cardinal and courtier at the breakfast table, where the playwright is the equal of the king; to follow Bramant and young Raphael into the Sistine Chapel, whither they have stolen to see the immortal frescoes in the absence of the master, or to join Diogenes in his search for an honest man!

Now he guides us into the wilderness, and shows us the encampment of the French Legions in the desert. The cloudless blue of the sky, scintillating with heat, is softened toward the horizon by smoky vapors, through which mountains are faintly outlined. Over the sandy plains masses of troops march and counter-march, so far away that clash of saber and blare of trumpet do not disturb the profound silence that envelops, as with a mantle, the majestic figure which dominates the scene. Preserving, in spite of mutilation, a marvelous expression of grandeur and repose, the Sphinx rears its massive head, and regards, with a calmness born of absolute knowledge, the vain struggles of a pygmy world. The lesser Sphinx, on horseback, himself an incarnation of will and force, mutely demands of the Oracle the secret of his future. In vain. The steady gaze passes over even *his* head; on—on—doubtless beholding the snowy steppes of Russia, reddened with blood and the light of conflagration; the wounded eagle, trailing his broken wings over the field of Waterloo; a lonely rock, at whose base the sea makes incessant moan! There is no warning, no sign! Kismet!

Again, the wilderness the master loves so well. How like and yet how unlike! Here is the low-lying coast of Africa, with drifts of finest sand blown by the breath of the *khamsinn* into fantastic mounds, from which peep a few scorched and scanty tufts of herbage and the ragged edges of brown, barren rocks. Motionless, as if hewn from the rock on which he sits, a tawny-maned monarch of the desert, with proud, unflinching gaze, steadily regards the dazzling splendor of the setting sun, which is sinking slowly to the horizon, its flaming tints mirrored in the glassy surface of the Mediterranean. What weird and potent charm

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BONAPARTE BEFORE THE SPHINX

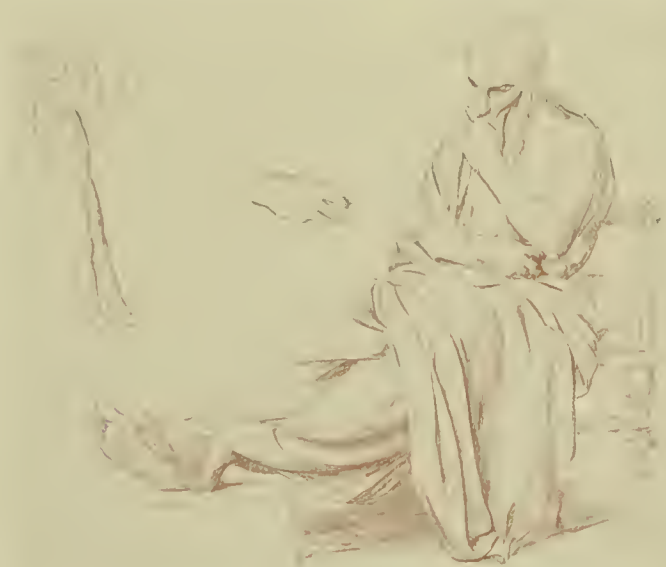
1886



is here! What stillness, solitude, vastness! And in the majestic figure of the royal beast what condensed life and power! We are forcibly reminded of a brief but graphic description of the artist himself, from an article by M. de Belina, which appeared lately in a Paris Art publication.

"A superb head with mane tossed back, a lion who paints other lions, and one scarcely knows which has the prouder glance, the painter or his model!"

What true lover of art does not wish to know more of the artist than can be divined even from creations so eloquent as these? Who would not eagerly seize



the opportunity to stand face to face with so rare a personality and grasp the hand whose touch is more potent than that of Midas? Thanks to a generosity only to be met with in truly great natures, the humblest student is always sure of a courteous welcome to the master's ateliers. A genuine love for art is the "Open! Sesame," before which the heavy oaken doors that bar the entrance to the *portecochère* of his spacious hotel on the Boulevard de Clichy swing back, revealing a cool, flagged court, with a background of green ivy, which clammers luxuriantly over the high wall at the bottom of the yard. Several fine hunting-dogs lie in the kennels, and spirited horses neigh and stamp in the adjacent stables, for Gérôme is a passionate lover of animals, an accomplished horseman and ardent sportsman, who fears neither wind nor weather. "*Beau cavalier, chasseur adroit,*" says Claretie of him.

Glass doors, hung with soft Persian stuffs, lead into the antechamber on the *rez-de-chaussée*, which is guarded by a bronze horse and cavalier, one of the early works of Prémiet, the great sculptor.

The sunlight filters through a stained-glass window and falls with kaleidoscopic effect on Minon, a large Persian cat, who has often served as model to her master, and who, rousing from her siesta on a long, enameled casket, which contains a costly *narghiléh*, lazily opens one eye and blinks an amiable *Bonjour*. Rare curios from foreign lands are scattered here, as throughout the whole mansion, with lavish hand, but the attention is instantly caught and fixed by an exquisite figure in the whitest of Carrara marble. It is his wonderful *Omphale*, which, in the Salon of 1887, was the center of attraction in the garden of the Palais de l'Industrie.

Pure, pensive, passionate—the perfection of form and expression—she leans, in the attitude of the Farnese Heracles, upon the club of that vanquished hero, who has succumbed to the power of the tiny God of Love almost hidden under the folds of the famous lion-skin. On the lips of the beautiful Queen of Lydia rests an expression of mingled triumph and longing, as if she were not quite sure of her power to retain her captive lover.

Near the windows that front on the Boulevard are Gérôme's two superb greyhounds, modeled in red clay by himself, in affectionate remembrance of his faithful companions now gone to the "happy hunting-grounds." They also frequently posed, and are to be found in several well-known pictures, among others, in *The Sentinels of the Camp* and *The Return from the Chase*.

Hamerton says: "I would rather have a leash of hounds by Gérôme than by any other painter I know."

A massive cobra, with red, shining scales, coils itself into the newel-post of the heavy balustrade which guards the marble staircase. A *Salve* in blue faience is sunk in the carved woodwork, and the walls of polished marble are covered with priceless Japanese bronzes, masks, and plaques, up to the fourth story, which is reserved by Gérôme for his studios and private apartments.

Every footfall is deadened by the thick Turkish carpet, and the soft cooing of a dove, that is nestling in the vines which shelter the half-open window on the top landing, seems only to accentuate the stillness in the large atelier, the door of which usually stands ajar.

Following hard on the whirl of the electric bell comes a cheery "*Entrez!*" in a voice which, once heard, is never forgotten. The master stands before an easel, looking inquiringly toward the door; but palette and brushes are instantly laid aside as he recognizes old friends and advances with both hands cordially extended. The salutation is brief, but the intonation dispels at once all fear of

intrusion, and courteously waved to a seat on the wide divan, ample opportunity is afforded to study *le grand peintre* at home.

An oval face, crowned with a profusion of fine, snowy hair, brushed well back and up from the noble forehead; heavy, black eyebrows, overshadowing deep-set brown eyes, whose glance, sometimes clear and piercing, searches the soul, or half veiled by long lashes—warm, dreamy, mysterious—seems to behold things of beauty far beyond all common powers of vision. An aquiline nose, with nostrils slightly curved and dilated, giving him a strikingly valiant air. A sweeping moustache, now just touched with gray, partly conceals the melancholy droop of thin yet ruddy lips, whose almost feminine sensitiveness is relieved by the firmness of the chin and the superb, antique contour of throat and neck, at once strong and delicate. This admirable head well surmounts an erect military figure, whose every movement, however, betrays a grace doubtless inherent in this *tempérament du Midi*, the mother of Gérôme having been a thoroughly Spanish type. For although the province which proudly claims the master as its own has been part and parcel of France since the time of *Louis Quatorze*, it was originally settled by the Spaniards and remained for a long time under their dominion.

As we chat, a charming model, artistically draped in Oriental robes, comes from the inner atelier where she has been posing, and comfortably bestows herself in a great armchair, one snowy foot, half thrust into a *babouche* of red morocco, swinging carelessly to and fro. Unmindful of our undisguised admiration, she falls to examining her taper finger nails, now and then glancing shyly at the clock, as if wishing us away. Finally, weary of following the conversation, she drops into a light slumber, smiling as she dreams, and disclosing a double row of pearly teeth.

Walking up and down his spacious ateliers, where he has assembled the richest and rarest accessories of his *métier*, the master discourses of his art with an eloquence and ardor which reveal the source of the magic power he exercises over all who come in contact with him. We listen, at once charmed and tantalized, for it is well-nigh as impossible to remember this impromptu lecture,—this marvel of criticism, comparison, and instruction,—as it would be to reproduce the energetic, sparkling, vivid manner of delivery.

“ You permit me to smoke ? ”

Answering our hasty gesture of assent with a smile, he proceeds to fill his pipe, and, lighting a match, resumes his walk and his talk, till his fingers are burned. With a good-humored “ *Peste!* ” he lights another, which goes the way of the preceding one, this time absolutely unheeded, so profoundly is the orator lost in his argument. We wait for a pause—and then, softly, so as not to disturb his train of thought :

“ But you do not smoke, *Monsieur!* ”

"Ah, no! that is true! It is a habit! I have always smoked more *matches* than *tabacco!*"

The pipe still unlighted, he takes up his discourse in a different vein, keenly satirical but always good-natured, in which one detects not only the man of the world but the philosopher and sage. An acute sense of humor produces often the most contagious gayety, but there is always a strong undercurrent of melancholy, profound, even somber; intensified in later years by the loss of many of his dearest friends, among others Émile Augier, and the painters Gustave Boulanger and Alexandre Protais, to whom he was deeply attached. A most indefatigable worker, and sought after in society as few men of his epoch have been, Gérôme still always finds time for his friends, especially such as are sick and suffering. Protais often spoke of his devotion as something unequalled, and surprising in a man who had innumerable claims on his attention and who has sometimes been mistakenly judged to be cold, reserved, and exclusive. In truth, for months before the death of Protais, Gérôme, though himself weakened by severe illness, made a daily visit in all kinds of weather, before nine o'clock in the morning, to the quiet apartment where the great military painter was closely confined by an incurable and distressing malady of the heart—cheering the invalid by his sympathy, and diverting him by his ever ready and genial wit. During several of these brief morning calls he succeeded in sketching the patient sufferer, and has thus preserved to the world a striking likeness of the great artist, whose character was ideal in its nobility, integrity, and unflinching self-sacrifice. Of his death, which occurred in February, 1890, Gérôme wrote: "It has affected me more deeply than I dare avow even to myself."

As is his wont, he seeks solace from this and other irremediable sorrows in unceasing application to his work, putting into it all the force of the emotions that are driven back upon themselves by an irresistible destiny.

That time has not needed to alter, but only added new depth and intensity to his noble nature, may be seen from the following pencil-sketch taken in the year 1860:

"It suffices [says de Tanouarn] merely to glance at the portrait of Gérôme, such as he is represented to-day, to form a sufficiently exact idea of the character of this artist. It is an energetic and vigorous nature, endowed with a marvelous will-power and an indefatigable activity. Gérôme is improvisation and action incarnate. He conceives and executes quickly; he writes and walks quickly; he eats quickly, and his comrades in the atelier declare that he sleeps quickly! Here is no wastefulness, no lounging, no indulgence nor compromise with idleness. He leads abreast several works at a time, without mingling or confounding anything, like the young Morphy, who plays eight games of chess at a time without making an error. To rest himself, Gérôme only changes occupation, passing from one work to the other. . . ."



THE TWO AUGURS.

"He is not in the habit, however, of ignoring those laws of etiquette or politeness, from the observance of which the most exacting society very willingly exempts artists and poets; he never forgets to return a visit nor to reply to a letter, but his painting loses nothing in consequence. He has traveled much, and it has not prevented him from producing much. In a word, it would seem that for him the hours multiply and lengthen themselves, while for others they vanish, while they are occupied in reflecting *how they will employ them!*"

"His atelier is situated in Notre Dame des Champs, in a sort of aristocratic hive where other painters have lodged themselves. Everything reveals the spirit of order and regularity of the master. One observes a noble and severe simplicity; some bits of armor, some curiosities brought back from his travels, but few pictures—yet no ornament foreign to art. It is here that Gérôme works, while chatting with his visitors, having his model posed at a great distance, for he is extraordinarily far-sighted. His conversation is animated, inspiring, spirituelle, and gay. He banters good-naturedly without ever wounding. As he is very learned, he touches with ease all topics and seems a stranger to none; he captivates the attention without difficulty and retains it without an effort.

"By the superiority of his mind and the penetrating firmness of his character, Gérôme exercises a great influence over the persons who live near to him. He becomes naturally a *center*, around which less powerful individualities group themselves. He will be, sooner or later, the head of a school, if in the present state of art such a thing is still possible.

"In his college days he was the organizer and the soul of all the sports. While with Paul Delaroche, when all the pupils agreed to work together in the evenings Gérôme's little chamber was always chosen as the place of reunion. In 1848, when the pupils of the École des Beaux-Arts had to elect a captain of the staff, their choice fell on Gérôme, who acquitted himself of the duties confided to him in true military fashion; for he delights, and is very skillful, in all bodily exercises, above all in hunting. He never fails to pay a yearly visit to his father, and to devote himself to his favorite sport with the activity and enjoyment characteristic of him. . . . Gérôme's reception of any one, although at first a trifle reserved, is of an exquisite kindness; his manners are admirably distinguished, and he would be a model of a perfect gentleman for Englishmen. His wit is sometimes a little sharp, but his comrades boast of his kindness and generosity, and his readiness for every service he can possibly render, whether obeying the instincts of his heart or following the inspirations of a superior mind, which would deem itself wanting in self-respect in not acting on every occasion with absolute nobility.

"Such is the *man* whose character we have sketched. He is worthy, as one can see, of the *artist*; there does not exist here one of those distressing contrasts which are the joy and triumph of vulgar and vicious mediocrity."

This of the man of thirty-six! Twenty-four years later, Claretie writes:

"Gérôme is sixty years old! One can scarcely believe that he has passed *forty!* He still retains his intrepid look of an Arnaut. Physically and morally

he is upright and inflexible—a fascinating type of an artist, chivalric and resolute. . . . Gérôme remains at sixty what he was at thirty-six; as young, as vigorous, as active, as responsive, vivid, and sympathetic. A charming conversationalist, gay, pensive also underneath his exquisite humor, respectful of his art, frank and loyal, adored by his pupils, a professor who teaches the young the rare and oft-neglected virtues—simplicity, study, and unremitting labor. In a word, a noble example of a master-painter of the nineteenth century—the soul of an artist with the constitution of a soldier; a heart of gold in a body of iron!"



The same precious testimony is borne by Masson, whom we have before cited. He says:

"Gérôme's work, already immense, and which his robust health will permit him to augment for a long time,—very diverse in its expression,—is *one*, in its sincerity, its continual research, its passion for the truth. This preoccupation is evident in all his representations of antique life, as well as in the subjects drawn from the Orient. One of the few defenders to-day of high art, he has exercised over modern painting a grand influence. An entire school has sprung from his exquisite and spiritual pictures; an entirely distinct one, without avowing it, from his greater compositions. Gérôme has had in our time imitators without number, but he has had a still greater number of pupils, of every shade of opinion and artistic tendency, in whom he has inculcated his passion for nature and for truth.

"At the *École des Beaux-Arts*, by the liberality of his mind, the rectitude of his judgment, and the openness and breadth of his comprehension, he has rapidly become the best beloved, the most ardently followed, of all the masters. None better than he, with his infinite goodness and delicacy, knows how to estimate a work, to discover its qualities; in short, to *evolve an artist*. None performs his duties with more of equity and conscientiousness; none has fewer prejudices or decisions made beforehand; none is better capable of doing justice to his adversaries. The master quality of Gérôme is, everywhere and always, *sincerity*."

We can well believe that the loving patience and infinite tact exercised by this honored teacher and head of the greatest School of Art of modern times, is deepened by his ever-present remembrance of the time when he, also, was a student, struggling with the poverty, ill-health, and disappointment which are often the portion of those who consecrate themselves to the service of that most exacting, but most glorious mistress—*Art!*

Hence it is with peculiar interest that we turn back to the beginning of this remarkable career and trace, step by step, the steady advance of the "infant prodigy of Vesoul."

Jules Claretie, whose knowledge of men and things is as profound as his writing of them is incomparable, justly observes :

"That which interests us above all, in the life of illustrious men, is their origin, their début, the first blossoming of their talent. When an artist has covered himself with glory, one writes his biography with the mere titles of his works."

We are fortunate, therefore, in being able to receive our impressions of Gérôme's earliest artistic life from himself. We shall, in translating his notes, endeavor to retain, to as great a degree as possible, the picturesque simplicity of this brief but precious autobiography, of which Gérôme writes :

"I send you the notes which I promised you, but fear you will not find them interesting. My life has been, above all, a life of work, of incessant labor—consequently monotonous for the public! I have had but little to do with the affairs of my time, except in regard to all that pertains to the Fine Arts. It is rather a collection of dates, jotted down years ago, than biographical information that I send you. Has it any value?"

In this simple, unaffected, candid record, where years of patient study and toil, physical privation and suffering, disappointment, defeat, and final triumph are disposed of in a single line, we find the same indomitable spirit of perseverance to which the master owes his present high position, the ardent aspiration which still impels him onward and upward, the courage, conscientiousness, integrity, and modesty which pervade his entire life and work. Mark, too, the sprightly humor with which he recalls his natal day, the 11th of May, 1824 :

"To prevent seven cities from disputing in the future the honor of my birth-place, I certify that I first saw the light of day in Vesoul, a little, old Spanish city. No miracle took place on the day of my birth, which is quite surprising! The lightning did not even flash in a clear sky! The century was then twenty-four years old. Rome and Sparta had been discarded like tattered and bloodstained garments, and the French people reposed, like a bird, on the elder branch, which, six years later, was to break under it. The Son of Saint Louis was already meditating those famous *ordonnances*, which were to have so legitimate a success.

"I was born of parents without fortune, living by their labor. My father was a goldsmith. He gave me the regular collegiate education—much Latin and considerable Greek, but no modern languages, which I have always regretted, for the little Italian I acquired later has been of enormous service to me in my travels. At the age of sixteen I was Bachelor of Letters. I had had some

success in the drawing-class, and my father, who went to Paris every year on business, brought me, as a reward, a box of oil-colors and a picture by Decamps, which I copied fairly well; to the great satisfaction, at least, of the persons who surrounded me, who, let us confess, were entirely ignorant of artistic matters!"

Gérôme has alluded to the downfall of Charles X., whose reactionary policy eventually provoked the revolution of July, and finally culminated in his dethronement. His brief reign was conspicuous not only for political agitation, but for the open revolt in art circles of the romanticists against the iron traditions of the then dominant classicists. A protracted and bitter struggle between the old and new methods resulted in the evolution of the classic-romantic school, of which one of the most noted leaders was Hippolyte (Paul) Delaroche, destined to become the teacher and intimate friend of the young Gérôme, who, at the age of ten years, was already making portraits of his comrades and neighbors, whose naïve and unqualified admiration fortunately did not awaken his vanity nor render him less attentive to the instruction of his first professor of drawing—a pupil of David and an artist of considerable talent.

"By a happy fortune," says Gérôme, in his notes, "a childhood friend of Monsieur Paul Delaroche had just settled in my native city. He induced my father to send me to Paris, where I finally arrived with a letter of introduction to my future teacher (Delaroche). Like a sensible and prudent man, my father allowed me to begin my studies in painting, thinking that if his expectations were not realized, I was still young enough to embrace another profession."

"The trade of a goldsmith," remarks the painter Timbal, "is, even in the provinces, closely allied to art. Thence, no doubt, a more willing indulgence of the venturesome inclinations of the budding artist—an indulgence not without merit: for, at this time, painters sold their pictures with difficulty, if they succeeded in selling them at all, and a vocation for art not unreasonably alarmed prudent parents. Let us avow to the praise of the father of Gérôme, that he was the first to give pledges to the unknown. In presenting a box of colors to the head scholar in the drawing-class at the College of Vesoul, he was setting fire to powder!"

"I entered then the atelier of Delaroche," continues Gérôme, "where I remained during three years. Rather mediocre studies—shattered health, nervous system greatly irritated; but, in spite of all, I made efforts and worked my best. My student companions, whom I scarcely ever left, were Daméry, Picou, and Gobert—later on, Hamon also. The first promised well—gained the *Prix de Rome* while very young, and sent back two very remarkable nude figures; but he was attacked by a mortal illness that swept him away in the prime of life. The second, with an admirable intellectual and physical organization, a Raphael-

esque temperament, and a truly extraordinary facility of invention and execution, drowned himself, so to speak, in a bath of alcohol; he is now but the shadow of his former self. The two others have fulfilled the promise of their youth."

Commenting on this period, Timbal says:

"The atelier of Paul Delaroche at that time held the first place among the schools of instruction. The state patronized none. The master, in all the *éclat* of his renown, exercised over his pupils an authority which admitted of no discussion. But Gérôme had already seriously reflected, and he accepted the yoke without hesitation. Moreover, more than one affinity, and, despite difference in age, a certain similarity of character, quickly established a sympathy between him and his master. Delaroche treated with marked attention this young man with the intelligent, resolute face, this indefatigable and soon skilled worker. There was some merit in distinguishing one's self in this great battalion—among which shone Daméry, Picon, Jalabert, and Hamon, whose reputation already extended beyond the four walls of the atelier.

"In a brief time Gérôme became a sort of chief among his comrades, who recognized his unique qualities, and submitted to his influence; he lived for three years in this circle. But, alas! the atelier is not always the peaceful sanctuary of study. Tranquillity becomes sometimes antipathetic to the age of imagination, in which quality these sixty young people were not lacking. All did not employ it in the same manner. They would work for several hours and all went well, but then came moments of repose, dangerous moments, during which their repressed spirits broke through all restraint. Then certain traditions are hard to efface; that of hazing (*des charges*) was still greatly honored, and it furnished occasions for many practical jokes. The inventors found an extreme pleasure in this form of amusement, more so than the strangers passing through the Rue Mazarin or the Quai Conti, with whom they were continually in conflict. Rumors of these disturbances finally reached the ear of the master, who was intensely displeased. The offenders seemed repentant, promised to do better, and recommenced their pranks the next day. Let those who are without sin throw the first stone at these unruly ones. Unhappily, a sad accident changed into a tragedy the comedy which had so long fatigued Delaroche, who, indignant at the death of a new pupil (who perhaps fell a victim to the severe annoyances attending his admission), closed his atelier and summarily dismissed innocent and guilty without distinction. During this time Gérôme was at Vesoul."

The hapless student here referred to was the subject of a practical joke somewhat more elaborate than those usually conceived by the thoughtless but not ill-natured band of mischief-lovers in the atelier. For some pretended offense, he received a mock challenge, which he accepted in good faith, the meeting taking place with all the solemnity that should accompany an affair of life and death; but he subsequently discovered, while lying ill of a fever that had threatened him for some time, that he had been duped, the pistols having been charged only with

powder! In his weak state, he magnified what had been intended only as a harmless *plaisanterie* into a deliberate and deadly insult, and fell into a violent rage, seriously aggravating his illness, the fatal termination of which was mourned by none more deeply than by his comrades, who had only expected to enjoy a hearty laugh together with the victim of their unlucky jesting.

Gérôme, as we have said, was at this time fortunately on a visit to his parents at Vesoul. He writes:

"It was in the third year of my studies that, on returning from a vacation, I learned of the closing of the atelier and, at the same time, the news that M. Delaroche had placed us—Picou and myself—in the atelier of M. Drölling; two blows (*deux tuiles*) at a time! I went immediately to find my dear master and told him that, satisfied with his instruction, I should not dream of seeking elsewhere; that I lived well enough at Paris on my little annuity and consequently could exist at Rome, whither I desired to follow him!"

The truth is that Gérôme had less than a dollar a day to defray *all* his expenses—rent, food, fire, clothes, use of atelier, colors, canvas, models, etc. He often recurs to these days of privation: "The happiest of my life. *Ma foi!* I was rich. There were others that had nothing absolutely nothing! And I have seen days when, if we could scrape together *forty* sous to dine *five* of us, we thought ourselves fortunate." Some of his friends who knew him intimately, at this "happy" time, have testified that his purse was always at the disposal of those who had "nothing," and that the "shattered health" of which he speaks was due in great measure to privations, self-imposed, that he might be able to assist his less fortunate comrades.

He continues in his recollections:

"At the age of eighteen, therefore, I was in Italy. I did not deceive myself in regard to my *études d'atelier*, which were in truth very weak. I knew nothing, and therefore had everything to learn. It was already something to be well posted as regarded myself—'*Γνώσι σταντόν*'—(know thyself)—a good thing! I did not lose courage; my weak health improved under the influence of the good climate and life in the open air, and I set to work with ardor; I made studies in architecture, landscape, figures, and animals; in a word, I felt that I was waking up by contact with Nature. This year was one of the happiest and best employed of my life, for at this time I was assuredly making real progress. I watched myself closely in my work, and one day, having made a study rather easily, I scraped it entirely from the canvas, although it was well done, so much did I fear to slip on the smooth plane of facility. Then already I was, and have remained, very severe toward myself. I am my most merciless critic, because I do not delude myself in regard to my work. As to the self-styled critics, their approbation and their raillery have always found me indifferent, for I have

THE GLADIATORS

(SCULPTURE—BRONZE)

1878



always had the most profound contempt for these vermin, who prey upon the bodies of artists. . . . One day Nestor Roqueplan, who was the equal of his *confrères*, told me that one thing was evident *I did not show sufficient deference to the critics!* I replied to him, 'I have talent or I have it *not*. If the first is true, you critics may find fault with and demolish my pictures as much as you please; they will defend themselves, and the public will be the judge. In the second case, unmerited praises will not render my works



better, and no one will be entrapped by these lying snares. Moreover,' I added, 'whatever may be my lot, in the present or in the future, I have firmly resolved never to *pay the claque!*' This conversation created a coldness between us."

In a characteristically humorous preface to the essay from which we have already quoted, Bergerat rallies the master good-naturedly on his frankly expressed aversion to critics *en masse*:

"Never believe any one who tells you that Gérôme loves art-critics [writes Bergerat gayly], for he simply execrates them! A writer on art is for him the dried fruit, *par excellence*, of art or of literature, whichever you please. I confess here that in our first interview he did not mince matters in giving me his opinion on this point, from whence I conclude he is not very proud of the race! It is, nevertheless, rather singular that the artist should owe his precocious celebrity to one of my *confrères*. It is true the latter possessed, in addition to his critical capacities, an undisputed genius as a poet and novelist, and that he was called

Théophile Gautier. My relationship to him is certainly the sole cause why I was not received with a volley of stones by the painter of the *Combat de Coqs!* And truth compels me even to declare, that, exception once made in my favor, I found myself in the presence of the most charming, *spirituel*, and learned man that I have ever had the good fortune to meet among the large family of painters. I imparted to him the object of my visit, which was to *biographize him alive* in *La Galerie Contemporaine*—no more nor less than if it concerned an artist for whom I professed a very sincere admiration, and whom I considered one of the glories of contemporaneous art! He burst into a laugh and went over to his secretary, from a particular drawer in which he took an exceptionally good cigar and offered it to me. ‘I give them only to my friends!’ he remarked, and it was thenceforth understood that he would not treat me as a *critic!* His two greyhounds, which till then had held themselves aloof, perhaps only awaiting a sign from their master to reduce me to a state of pulp, now drew near, joyously wagging their tails, and one of them curled himself up to sleep at my feet.

‘Bless me, yes! there are critics and critics, just as there are *fagots* of all qualities. It is clear that an artist of Gérôme’s ability, for instance, has a right to consider as both presumptuous and incompetent the bachelor of letters who, without acquired knowledge or previous study, takes it into his head to determine the merits of an art of the very elements of which he is ignorant. It is also evident that the same Gérôme might justly feel offended at being called a Miéris, junior, by Burger, *if* Burger passed for a recognized authority in art matters; for the comparison is unjust to the later master, and betrays both prejudice and partiality in the judge. But, on the whole, if the painter has Théophile Thoré *against* him, he has Théophile Gautier *for* him, and to be able to offset the taste of the former by that of the latter, should, it seems to me, afford ample consolation. Besides, with all due deference to the master, if the *critic* did not exist, the artists would be obliged to invent him solely in their own interests. The personal harm writers on art are able to inflict is more than compensated for by the service they render to the cause of general instruction. And then, as *Figaro* would say in regard to the infallibility of a critic, how many painters are there who are qualified to exercise the profession? If we serve only to soften the brotherly judgments of the artists among themselves, and to act as ‘‘mattress’’ between the different schools, we should still play a useful rôle. This is what I was thinking about while watching the blue spirals of smoke from Gérôme’s cigar disperse themselves in the atelier.

‘‘When I write the folio of which I dream, on the *utility of art-critics*, it is understood that I shall dedicate it to Gérôme! and among the overwhelming proofs which I shall give of this utility—amounting, indeed, to indispensability—is that of having been able, thanks to the institution, to publish this biographical study of the master!’’

We, who have enjoyed and profited so greatly by Bergerat’s admirable writings, are only too ready to admit that at least criticism such as *his* is

"indispensable," and to recommend his essays, with their profound learning underlying all the sparkle of fanciful wit, as a model for *la critique*, as a profession.

We left Gérôme in Rome, where he remained one year, working with tremendous energy under the eye of his watchful and sympathetic friend and master, storing his mind with varied knowledge and developing surprising facility, especially in drawing. He would doubtless have been content to pursue these delightful studies in so charming an *entourage*, but the parental ambition was scarcely satisfied by the assurance of his general progress, however real. The *Prix de Rome* offered by the French Government was, at this time, hotly contested, and naturally attracted the attention of the prudent father, who repeatedly urged his son to enter his name as a competitor for this much coveted prize, which guaranteed to the winner five years' instruction at the Villa Medici, the entire expense of which was borne by the state.

In order to comply with the conditions of the competition, it was necessary to be an actual student in some atelier of repute in Paris, and Gérôme, obediently yielding to his father's desire, quitted Delaroche and returned to place himself under the instruction of Gleyre. We have heard it stated that he found the comparison unfavorable to his new master, but, with his usual delicacy, he has refrained from expressing himself on this point. The fact remains, however, that he stayed only three months in his new atelier, and then joyfully rejoined Delaroche, who had returned to Paris, working with him on a celebrated picture now in the museum at Versailles. Gérôme refers in his notes very briefly to this period :

"On my return from Italy I entered the atelier of M. Gleyre. Three months of study—nude figures. I then worked for nearly a year at the first draught of a picture which occupied my master (Delaroche) at that time. I refer to the *Charlemagne Crossing the Alps*. Then, as my father still desired it, I attempted the *concours* for the *Prix de Rome*. The sketch was well received, the painted figure rejected. Decidedly I needed to draw and model the nude. It was with this intention of *study* that I painted my first picture, *Jeunes Grecs Faisant Battre des Coqs*. I dreaded the Salon, and feared rejection, and it was owing solely to the advice of the *Patron* that this canvas was sent there. Although badly placed, the picture had a very great success, unquestionably an exaggerated success, which astonished no one so much as the author!"

Commending Gérôme's resolution to perfect himself in drawing from the nude, De Tanouarn remarks :

"In this he acted very wisely, and furnished an example which young painters would do well to imitate. The majority of them hasten to execute pictures before becoming sufficiently versed in drawing. Now *drawing* is the

soul of all the plastic arts. Without it, other qualities, however brilliant they may seem, are only a deception, the effect of which will inevitably fade away before long."

Of the young artist's successful début, Timbal writes as follows :

"The Salon of 1847 ought to have left some traces in the memory of those whom age condemns to remember it, but how many remain to-day who can recall it? *Grande ævi spatium!* Since then many illustrious ones have descended into the tomb or into oblivion. . . . At that time, one man reigned supreme in the department of criticism. His incomparably skillful pen was a scepter, a dreaded scepter—whose caresses were longed for and whose blows solicited; neglect alone was feared. Happily, Théophile Gautier was good, and he exercised his power with benignity. . . . Like an astronomer, he was devoted to his search for stars; his joy was never so great as when, in the mass of canvases under which the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the masters in the Louvre were yearly hidden, he succeeded in discovering some nameless one, some victim unjustly hoisted by the administration to the height of the frieze. The more obscure the corner, the more openly did the protection of the patron assert itself, and the more ardent was the revolt against the ignorance or the ill will of the judges."

He then refers to Gautier's description of Gérôme's first picture, which brought him at one bound into public notice, adding : "The great critic was not deceived either in the value of the work or the merit of the artist. The *chief of the néo-grecs*, ignorant of the onerous title with which he was so soon to be decorated, revealed in his first effort his wonderful naïveté and his already consummate skill of execution."

De Tanouarn also delightedly praises this first effort, saying : "In this sphere (the *néo-grec*) he showed himself graceful without affectation, simple without barrenness, and learned without pedantry."

We cannot do better than to transcribe in full Gautier's criticism, which aroused so universal an attention.

"Let us congratulate ourselves that the jury, apparently through inattention, has admitted a charming picture, full of delicacy and originality, by a young man of whom we hear for the first time, and who, if we are not mistaken, has just made his début; we allude to *Les Jeunes Grecs Faisant Battre des Coqs*, by M. Gérôme. This subject, apparently trivial, has, under his fine and delicate handling of crayon and brush, taken on a rare elegance and exquisite distinction; it is not, as one might think from the theme chosen by the artist, a canvas of small dimensions, as is usual in similar fancies. The figures are life-size, and treated in an entirely historical manner. Great talent and resources have been necessary to raise so episodical a scene to the rank of a noble composition, which no master would disown. Beside the pedestal of an exhausted fountain, where a marble sphinx shows its disfigured profile, surrounded by the luxuriant vegetation of a



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warm country, arbutus, myrtles, and oleanders, whose metallic leaves stand out against the azure of a placid sea, separated from the azure of the heavens by the crest of a promontory—two young people, a youth and maiden, are engaging in combat the courageous birds of Mars.

“The young girl leans upon the cage which contains the warlike fowls, in a pose full of grace and elegance. Her beautiful, tapering hands are crossed and charmingly disposed; one of her arms lightly presses the budding breast, and the bust has that serpentine curve so sought for by the ancients; the foreshortened limbs are skillfully drawn; the head—crowned in exquisite taste by a coronet of blond hair, whose fine tones contrast softly with the skin—has a childish delicacy, a virginal sweetness; with lowered eyes and mouth parting in a smile of triumph—for her cock appears to have the advantage—the maiden regards the struggle carelessly, sure that her wager is won.

“Nothing can be more beautiful than this figure, whose only covering is a fold of white and yellow drapery, held in place on the sloping contours by a slight purple cord; this grouping of tints, very soft and very harmonious, admirably sets off the warm whiteness of the young Greek’s body.

“The youth—whose locks are adorned with a hastily twined wreath of leaves plucked from the neighboring bushes—is kneeling and bending toward his cock, whose courage he endeavors to stimulate. His features, although reminding one perhaps a little too much of ‘the model,’ are drawn with remarkable skill; we can see that he is utterly absorbed in watching the phases of the combat.

“As to the fowls, they are real prodigies of drawing, animation, and color; neither Sneyders, nor Veeninx, nor Oudry, nor Desportes, nor Rousseau, nor any other artists who paint animals, have attained, after twenty years of labor, the perfection M. Gérôme exhibits at the start. Black and lustrous, with greenish reflections, the neck bent, its triple collar of feathers bristling up, the eye full of fury, the crest bleeding, the beak open, the claws drawn back to the breast—one of the cocks, no longer touching the earth, darts forward, presenting to its adversary two stars of threatening claws and formidable spurs—a marvel of pose, drawing, and color.

“Not less worthy of admiration is the cock of the coppery, reddish-tinted plumage, which, drawing back close to the ground, lifts its head craftily and extends his beak like a sword, upon which his too fiery opponent may run himself as on a spit! What is remarkable above all in these fowls is that, besides the most absolute truthfulness, they show a singular elegance and nobility. They are the epic Olympian birds, such as Phidias would have sculptured at the feet of the god Ares, the savage offspring of Here.

“Children and birds have made of M. Gérôme’s picture one of the most charming canvases in the exhibition. What a delicious frieze-panel for the banquet hall of a king or a Rothschild!”

We know already that this picture, which merits every word of eulogy that has been bestowed on it, met with the noblest fate painter or critic could have desired—namely, purchase by the state and a place on the line in the principal

gallery of the Palais du Luxembourg. Later, Edmond About wrote, "Greece is the country of simplicity. M. Gérôme was 'Greek' from the beginning, because he was simple." And in the midst of all this laudatory criticism of the young débutant, it is interesting, as Bergerat suggests, "to know, to-day, what Gérôme, *Membre de l'Institut*, and several times the recipient of the Medal of Honor, thinks of this first picture of Gérôme, pupil of Delaroche, and refused in the competition for the *Prix de Rome!*" We have only to turn to the notes where he has so candidly recorded his recollections of these early efforts, and we shall see. He writes:

"At this period—I speak from a general point of view—there was a complete absence of simplicity. Effect (*le chic*) was in great favor, when accompanied by skill, which was not infrequent. And my picture had the slight merit of being painted by an honest young fellow, who, knowing nothing, had found nothing better to do than to lay hold on Nature, and follow her step by step, without strength perhaps, without grandeur, and certainly with timidity, but with sincerity. Praise was unanimous, which was not always the case in the future. My success encouraged without puffing me up. They gave me a third-class medal. My foot was in the stirrup! I then attempted a more complex composition, in which I had less success. I mean my second picture, *Anacreon Dancing with Bacchus and Cupid*, which was exhibited the following year, 1848. A dry, cut-up picture, the style and invention of which, however, were not bad. If I had had then the experience I have since acquired, this work might have been a good thing—it remains mediocre. (In the Museum at Toulouse.) I had at the same time sent a *Virgin and Child*, after the manner of Raphael—insipid and of poor execution. Complete fiasco with these two pictures—it was deserved!"

This paragraph attests, without a shadow of question, the genuine impartiality of Gérôme's self-criticism. Having fallen short of his high ideal, he disdains to mention a fact that, to say the least, would have brought consolation to almost any one else—save this exacting spirit, namely, that his pictures won a second-class medal,—an advance upon the first year,—and that the government purchased the *Anacreon* for one of its best collections is only briefly stated in a parenthesis! It is true that the astonishing success of his début was not repeated, but there is a homely old saying that might apply here—"lightning rarely strikes twice in the same place." Still we search in vain for so unsparing and severe a judgment as this merciless critic inflicts upon himself. Timbal writes: "The admirers of yesterday were a little anxious; they should have quickly reassured themselves; it is not given to every one to commit these faults of exaggeration and arrangement through hatred of the commonplace, and not alone by its strangeness did the *Anacreon* stand out in relief from its neighboring canvases. Doubtless the body and limbs of the flute-player were too rigidly modeled;

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(AT NIGHT)

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doubtless the poet, with his immense lyre, formed a somewhat strange silhouette upon the sky, and the little god Bacchus staggered more through the fault of the portraitist than from the effects of intemperance. But what a charm, reminding one of Luini, in the figure of *Amour*, and in the least details! what ingenious research and what originality of execution! The eye wanders delightedly over this antique landscape, never seen in the engravings of Poussin, but taken from real Nature's great garden—with its somber rocks spotted with lichens, its green sward swept by the chill wind from the sea, and its trees, with their delicate branches and fine foliage colored a pale gold by the vanishing sun, trembling in the breeze." And speaking of the religious picture, Gautier says: "Gérôme, although a pagan of Pompeii, also fully understands Christian art. His *St. John Embracing the Child Jesus on the Knees of the Virgin* might have been signed by Overbeck, only Overbeck would not have displayed this profound science of drawing and this exquisite taste hidden under the Gothic pasticcio. Gérôme goes toward Calvary by way of Athens!"

Despite Gérôme's feeling that he had failed to achieve a success, the enthusiasm aroused by his last efforts was undeniable, and his little band of followers, henceforth known as the *néo-grec school*, increased in numbers and rallied around him with all the ardor of youth and fervor of artistic zeal.

"But the days following victory," remarks Timbal sagely, "are often full of dangers; not only do enemies watch for possible faults on the part of the conqueror, but friends even sometimes become more exacting. Gérôme was going to experience for some time the instabilities of success, although he seemed only to have to march on in the route he had traced out for himself, and in which others already were following him. The eyes of the public were fixed in expectation on the tiny garden in the Rue de Fleurus, where, in the shade of lilacs and rose trees, the little colony had pitched its tents and set up its household gods near him they had chosen as their chief."

"They constituted," says Mrs. Stranahan, "a kind of apostleship around Gérôme of artists of the most delicate conceits, and formed in art a sort of little Athens, in which Théophile Gautier made himself fondly at home. It was a realm, the air of which would not perhaps be sustaining or even perceptible to the respiratory organs of Courbet. Their practice was the opposite of his; it was to put the common, trivial incident into a graceful rendering, often with a charming poetic sentiment, and by harmonizing contours and evolving grace of line, to give to the nude the classic treatment. They had a predilection for the nude. Their treatment differs from the academic classic, in taking the common incident, the familiar and emotional side of Greek or Roman life—in fact, in painting the genre of the antique, or, a more pleasing if less substantial department of their practice, the genre of fancy—as in the works of Hamon and

Aubert. They also treated subjects of modern life, but it was by *poetizing* them into the classic, rather than by *aggrandizing* them into it, as had been the practice of the Davidians. The influence of this school is in some degree perceptible in most of the later French artists."

It was in a simple little wooden cottage that these happy poet-artists gathered around their beloved leader, who, as Hamon wrote, "inspired one with a love of work, but work done laughing and singing!"

But there came, as we have heard from Gérôme's own lips, days of discouragement and trial, and, in truth, of real suffering and pinching want. The revolution of 1848, in which he figured prominently as captain on the staff of the National Guard, — although comparatively pacific, seriously affected the already precarious existence of the struggling band, some of whom were practically without resources. There was no demand nor market for paintings, and Gérôme's generosity soon brought him to the common condition, "empty pockets." Many were the curious shifts they made during the next year to keep the "wolf from the door": such as painting tiny religious cards representing the "*Way of the Cross*," and drawing lots to see who should place themselves on the steps of the different churches, in the hope of gaining the price of a meal by selling these incentives to devotion to the faithful, as they passed in and out of the sanctuary. But in spite of empty stomachs and chilled fingers, which were often warmed only over a blaze made of a stray newspaper captured as a wintry wind blew it along the boulevard, the work went on, and the "laughing and singing" did not diminish, though an attentive ear might have detected an undertone of pathos and patient resignation. Gérôme, as usual, does not dwell on these days of hardship, stoically endured; pride and consideration for his parents prevented him from confessing his needy condition till a dangerous attack of typhoid fever almost put an end to his career. His dear mother hastened to Paris, and, after weeks of devoted nursing, carried him away to Italy, where they remained for three months, visiting Genoa, Milan, and Venice before returning.

Gérôme again takes up his recollections. "After this I exhibited almost every year, but I had lost ground, and several works placed before the public left it cold and indifferent. One of them, under the title of *Gynécée*, aroused considerable attention, but more on account of the subject (sad! sad!) than of the manner in which it was treated."

Although, as Bergerat says, "it somewhat shocked the bourgeois and philistine folk, who seemed to demand that the artist should regard these beautiful forms and graceful postures from their severely moralistic point of view," it cannot be denied that the subject is portrayed with the soberness characteristic of this painter, who reproduces the actual life of ancient Greece not only in his

themes, but in his modesty of pose and delicacy of treatment. Aside from the masterly modeling of the different figures, which are standing or languidly reclining on couches covered with tiger-skins, what delightful grouping of details we find here! Vines clambering upward toward the sun over polished marble pillars; a solemn old stork standing on one leg and gravely regarding some black and white ducks who paddle to and fro in a pool of clear water; vases, lamps, and *amphora* of exquisite shape; delicate frescoes and tiling; graceful draperies, luscious fruits heaped temptingly in a flat bowl with curved handles, and burning incense mingling its intoxicating perfume with the faint odor of the flowers that have dropped from the hand of the sleeping beauty, who lies upon a superb lion-skin which is thrown on the tessellated floor!

Of this canvas, which also bears the title *Intérieur Grec*, Gantier declares, "It is the only picture which can be placed beside the *Stratonice* of Ingres. It is a *chef-d'œuvre* of style, grace, and originality."

No reproduction exists of two additional paintings exhibited this same year (1850)—*Souvenir d'Italie* and *Bacchus et L'Amour Ivres*; but the latter—of which René Ménard writes, "Every one will remember what a sensation was produced by this charming picture"—was singled out by the government and bought for the Museum at Bordeaux.

The years 1851–1852 were busily employed executing a state commission, concerning which the artist writes as follows:

"It was toward this period that I finished a Chapel (St. Séverin), which doubtless has some merit, but which betrays the youth and inexperience of the artist. On one side the *Communion of St. Jérôme*, on the other *Belzunce Making a Vow to the Sacred Heart* during the plague at Marseilles. One or two characters in the first picture are well done, among others the St. Jérôme; the general character is quite exalted, and the treatment does not lack boldness; but everywhere there is dryness and even hardness. This is a defect which I have always sought to correct in myself, and if I have succeeded in diminishing it, I have not yet been able to rid myself of it entirely. In the other picture, several characters are well conceived, among others the young woman showing her dead child to Belzunce. The scene is well composed, the subject clearly expressed—that is all I can say of it!"

Who among competent professional critics will fail to appreciate the sterling worth of criticism like this, or the rare strength of character that renders it possible?

Masson characterizes these mural decorations as "two noble compositions of an elevated character and a true inspiration. If certain portions seem a little dry, nothing is ordinary. In fact, this is a distinguishing feature in the work of Gérôme—that it never falls into, nor touches ever so slightly, the commonplace."

M. de Tanouarn also describes the same work as "an admirable composition, endowed with all the qualities which religious painting can have in our day." In point of mural decorations, Gérôme was afterward called upon to adorn the *Bibliothèque des Arts-et-Métiers*, which was the ancient refectory of *Saint-Martin-des-Champs*, and several years later for some

panels in the Pompeian Palace of Prince Napoleon, of which we shall make further mention.

The Salon of 1852 also held a picturesque landscape entitled *Vue de Pastum*. The brothers Goncourt devoted quite a space in one of their admirable *critiques* to this charming bit of Nature, where "the whole scene exhaled a delicious freshness." They especially admired "the heavy heads, the woolly tufts, the solidity of the joints, and the varied movement of the buffaloes, hastening, rushing down to the water to quench their thirst."

Gérôme's notes now briefly record the exposition at the Salon of 1853 of a frieze destined to be reproduced on a "vase, commemorative of the Universal Exposition at London, ordered by the Minister of State from the government manufactory at Sèvres." The figures on this superb vase, which was presented by the French Government to Queen

Victoria, were life-size, and gave the artist a rare opportunity to exhibit his versatile powers. Says Masson :

"Never perhaps more than here has the painter given proof of his inventive genius, in the grouping of personages, in the research for symbols of each nation, in the pursuit of characteristic types of the human races. The composition is ingenious and simple. With a subject that too easily lends itself to the commonplace, the author has drawn a lofty poem of Universal Industry, for which each nation furnishes a strophe. Antique costumes, learnedly studied, freshened by ingenious details, ennoble the modern accessories. It is a kind of ethnographic résumé, which it is interesting to compare with the tapestries of the eighteenth century which represent the Four Quarters of the Globe."

Gérôme has also executed life-size figures of different nations for a model lighthouse, in an equally masterly manner. He also sent to the same Salon a *Study of a Dog* and *Idylle*, a fantasy in his much-loved classic style—a youth and



maiden leaning against a fountain where a graceful fawn comes confidingly to drink. It is a most poetic conception, expressive of pure, artless love and the happy *insouciance* of "Life in Arcadia."

We now come to the first of those journeys which had so decided an influence over the subsequent work of the artist, and of which he briefly speaks as follows : "In 1854 I started for Moscow with my friend Got. On the way we changed our minds, turned back, and took the route to Constantinople by way of the Danube and the Black Sea, a voyage of tourists, not workers."

He could scarcely have chosen his *compagnon de voyage* better. M. Got, the celebrated actor of the Comédie-Française, was a man not only skilled in his own profession but of remarkable learning and a genial wit. Unfortunately war broke out and prevented our travelers from gaining the interior. Obligated to retrace their steps, they took passage on a huge flatboat, which drifted lazily down the Danube, touching here and there to discharge or increase its cargo. Of this journey Timbal writes :

"One day, as the boat stopped for this purpose, Gérôme and his friend went on shore for a stroll ; chance led them near a group dimly outlined through the morning mists. It was a band of musicians belonging to the Russian army, who were singing a battle-march. Gérôme approached, leisurely regarded them, took his sketches and his notes, and the Cossacks did not concern themselves about him. More prudence is exercised on other frontiers, and any other unfriendly nation would perhaps have made a hostage of the audacious painter, or, more probably, a spy and a victim. This is how it happened that, starting for the Ukraine to sketch the descendants of the vassals of ancient Rome, Gérôme met there the actors in a little page of contemporaneous history, whose modest figures were destined almost to eclipse those of Virgil and of Brutus, but who opened up to him who knew how to see and to portray them a new vein of success ; it is far from being exhausted, and it is by this carefully renewed and cultivated power of recognizing the picturesque element, and the striking physiognomy of foreign races, that the painter still achieves to-day one of his most incontestable triumphs."

This was only one of the many sketches with which our artist filled his portfolios before taking the steamer at Constantinople to return by way of Malta to Paris, where he attacked with renewed ardor the great historical picture which, as we have seen, excited the profound admiration not only of the more serious artists, but of the most distinguished poets, historians, and littérateurs of that period. But it was "caviare to the general," and the disappointment of the artist at seeing his pictures of genre preferred to his greater work is easily understood. He writes : "This same year I had received an order for a large picture—*The Age of Augustus, Birth of Christ*. This canvas, which cost me two years of work and enormous efforts (it measured ten meters in length by seven in height), only

obtained a *succès d'estime*, which was perhaps unjust. However, I must admit at once that the picture had one glaring defect—it lacked invention and originality, recalling by the disposition of the figures, and unhappily by this point only, the *Apotheosis of Homer*, by Ingres. This grave fault once acknowledged, it is just to admit that in this vast composition there are figures well conceived, —*motifs* of groups happily combined (such as Brutus and Cassius, Cleopatra and Antony), — arrangements of costumes and draperies in good style; in short, a quantity of fancies, crowned in some instances with success, with which perhaps the public should have accredited me; it has not done so."

Here again we see Gérôme, with his severely critical eye, detecting and magnifying his weak points, utterly underestimating the impression made by this remarkable picture, which, adds Gautier to his exhaustive *critique*, already quoted, "will be forever remembered as one of the beauties of the Exposition."

"At the same time," continues Gérôme, "appeared a small picture representing *The Band of a Russian Regiment*. I had, it seemed, found *la note sensible*, for it was much more remarked than my large works, on which I had a greater right to count. This year I received the decoration of the Legion of Honor."

And another medal, he might have added, but that his mention of laurels received is rare and always brief, since they never have impressed him as deeply as his failures to attain to his highest ideals. It was no consolation to him to see visitors to the Salon jostling each other in an effort to gain a place in the crowd that always stood before his other pictures, notably the *Recreation in Camp*.

In a private letter to a friend at this time, Gérôme writes: "I send you the picture of the *Russians*, which I took to M. de Nieuwerkerke a few days ago. He has allowed me to hope that he will make every effort to have it hung on the *sacred walls!* As it is not large, try to place it well for me, if it is still allowed to come in. I do not know what title to give it. I think it would be best to simply call it *Russian Recreation in Camp—Souvenir of Moldavia, 1854*. It really has no need of a title, for it is sufficiently plain, and, even if it is placed, it cannot appear in the catalogue."

The artist need not have feared for the fate of this little gem, which was gladly accepted by the administration, many weeks after the opening of the Exposition, achieving an instant and universal success. Gautier writes of it as follows:

"Let us speak now of a picture which does not appear on the catalogue because it was not finished till long after the opening of the Exposition. As it is difficult to find, we are sure of rendering service to amateurs by informing them that it is placed in the first gallery, among the exhibits from Portugal. It

is a study from nature made during a journey in Moldavia in 1854, when the artist had the good fortune to be in close proximity to a Russian camp; actuality, as one will quickly notice, is not wanting in this scene.

"Some Russian soldiers, dressed in *capotes* of gray drugget, resembling the frock of a monk or a hospital great-coat, and wearing blue helmets bordered with red, are ranged in a circle; they have been ordered to amuse themselves and they are conscientiously obeying the command; one of them has advanced to the center of the circle and is executing a kind of awkward Muscovite *cachucha*, accompanying himself on two triangles garnished with strings on which quiver little copper coins which he rattles together; the orchestra is composed of a violin, a drum, and a fife; those who have no instruments sing, or, inserting two fingers into their mouths, produce a shrill whistling; some of them, between the strophes of this rondo, take a whiff from their short pipes. Nothing is more curious than these Kalmuck and Tartar types, with their flat noses, projecting cheek-bones, and shaved heads, their Albino-like mustaches, and little eyes under eyelids sloping toward the temples; the countenances of these poor devils are resigned, nostalgic, and very gentle in spite of their ugliness; the young fifer is almost good-looking, and on the field of battle he would blow into his little reed pipe with the same stolidity as did the fifer so much admired by Frederick the Great.

"At a little distance an under-officer mounts guard, holding in his arm, bent behind his back, a whip, to stimulate the mirth! Farther off a second circle is absorbed in the same diversion. Tents of white canvas, a gray hill where seven or eight windmills are turning their fans, looking like huge wheels, a hazy sky on which a sharp line is traced by a flock of cranes, the flat banks of the Danube, where a melancholy sentinel is gazing into the turbid current—all this forms a most original background for this strange circle. It is impossible to describe the profound sadness of this scene, placed in these somber surroundings, dimly lighted, and as if veiled with *ennui*. The execution has a precision and finish that does not exclude breadth, the secret of which M. Gérôme possesses. One learns more of Russia in looking at this little canvas for a quarter of an hour than by reading twenty descriptive volumes; painting, with its mute language, often says more than the wordiest writers."

Without exception, the critics lavished praise on this unique and exquisitely painted scene, where, as Edmond About says, "each fold of drapery might have been signed by Meissonier."

In addition to these two canvases, each so extraordinary in its own sphere, Gérôme exhibited three bits of genre: *A Flock-tender*, *An Italian Lad Playing on a Samponia*, and the pendant, *An Italian Girl Playing on a Mandoline*, which Gautier pronounced "very finished and very precious, strikingly displaying the delicate perfection of the artist's skill."

"At the end of this Exposition," writes Bergerat, "a little saddened by the injustice of the public toward his important effort in *le grand art*, Gérôme started

for Egypt. Was he not predestined to paint the Orient, this man whose first child's attempt had been to copy a picture by Decamps?" And Timbal adds, "He went to seek the promised land, the country of those poets, choristers of the sun, who were called Marilhat and Decamps. Did he not show some temerity in choosing their route? What was the newcomer going to do? Copy his predecessors or contradict them? Gérôme did not embarrass himself in advance with troublesome questionings. What he was going to see he would relate in his own way. Comparisons weighed but little on him. A single desire possessed him—to copy faithfully the scenes the Orient was about to place before his eyes. In finding again on the shores of the Nile the souvenir of that second vocation of which he had caught a glimpse one day on the banks of the Danube, he fixed a certain horizon and determined upon a precise goal which for some time had seemed to flee before him."

In truth, in Gérôme's recollections there sounds at this moment a joyous note of relief, hope, and eager expectation: a view-halloo of the unequalled success that was to crown his efforts in this line:

"Departure for Egypt. My short stay in Constantinople had whetted my appetite, and the Orient was the most frequent of my dreams. Probably some Bohemian slipped in among my ancestors, for I have always had a nomadic disposition and a well-developed hump of locomotion. I started with friends, being one of five—all of us with little money but abundant spirits! However, living at that time was very cheap in Egypt. The country had not yet been invaded by the Europeans, and one could live there at a very moderate expense. We rented a sailboat and stayed for four months on the Nile, hunting, painting, and fishing, from Damietta to Phike. . . . We returned to Cairo, where we passed four months more in a house in old Cairo, which Suleiman Pasha rented to us. In our quality of Frenchmen he showed us the most cordial hospitality. Happy time of youth, thoughtlessness, and hope! The sky was blue! . . . Many pictures, more or less successful, more or less to the taste of the public, were executed as a result of this sojourn by the banks of the Father of Waters."

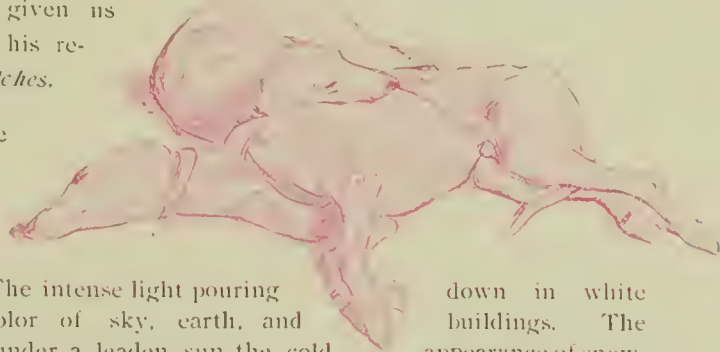
With these few lines, the artist lightly disposes of that unprecedented collection of paintings which he sent to the Salon of 1857, and which at once established his claim to the title of foremost Orientalist of the age—a claim since confirmed beyond all question. The amount of work he accomplished within a few months is almost incredible, and its variety and quality astonished alike connoisseurs and the general public.

Timbal writes: "It is ancient Egypt, whose sand each year devours its precious remains, and also Egypt struggling for a new birth, where the painter seems to show us the steady fatality which keeps an accursed race under the double yoke of slavery and suffering. He gives to these revelations of a country

already well-known, a new physiognomy, and to his pictures the indisputable authority of a document of which history will one day invoke the testimony. And art can demand nothing more from these scenes, so proudly faithful in their simplicity of effect and execution, which repose eyes weary of conventionalities become *banales*, and which are none the less skillful because they do not pretend to add light to the sun, nor to lend brilliancy to the rags of the *fellah*."

Let us follow Gautier as he passes from one to the other of these wonderful canvases, reproducing with facile pencil, for those who cannot see the originals, their unique beauty, their pathos, and power, of which he has already given us some foreshadowing in his review of the *atelier sketches*.

"One is apt to picture to one's self tropical countries as glowing and flaming with heat; this is true sometimes but not always. The intense light pouring down in white floods changes the color of sky, earth, and buildings. The sand, on fire, assumes under a leaden sun the cold appearance of snow-drifts; while the impalpable dust raised on the horizon forms a kind of mist which chills and extinguishes the warm tones of color. Therefore the absolute truthfulness of the *Egyptian Recruits Crossing the Desert* is more astonishing than convincing to the general eye. One thinks, in spite of one's self, of the deserts of the opera, with their skies streaked with indigo and *mine de Saturne*, and their inevitable clump of palm trees. Here, there is nothing of the kind; sand as white as powdered freestone, blown into rippling waves by the wind, betraying the passage of caravans by large footprints, or rising in opaque whirlwinds; a sky veiled by a dusty fog and burning with the rays of a sun blazing at a white heat; before, behind, to the right and to the left, above and below, an absolute barrenness—dull, pallid, dry, overwhelmed and overwhelming; the only drops that fall being drops of sweat, the only breath that stirs, the suffocating *khamsim*. The Egyptian recruits traverse this charming site in charge of several Arnauts. One can well conceive that, in order to force them to start, it was necessary to cudgel them soundly, and fasten them, two by two, like galley-slaves, in their wooden stocks. At the head of this melancholy cortège strides an Arnaut, his gun thrown across his shoulders and under his arms, like the wands the bears, *confrères* of Atta-Troll, hold between their paws; he marches with a calm, insolent, and cruel air, in his beautiful costume whitened with dust. The sufferings of the miserable wretches who follow him with heavy step, hindered by their shackles, do not move him in the slightest degree. He has for human life the quiet, fatalistic disdain of the Orient. Several soldiers guard the column which faces



the spectator. The first row is composed of fellahs, Copts, and negroes, clad in blue shirts, in brown *mach'laks* or white *burnous*, more or less tattered; some are barefooted, others drag along in fragments of *savates*. A gloomy despair can be read in their stupefied countenances, and they march with the somnolent pace of overdriven beasts of burden whom the lash has ceased to sting; the fetters on their wrists prevent them from even wiping their foreheads. The second file, already less distinct, appears in the gaps between the heads, and the rest of the column stretches out like a flock of shadows through an ever-thickening cloud of dust. M. Bida has treated the same subject in a drawing which will not fail to impress European travelers. But he has chosen the moment of departure, where the scenes of farewell have furnished pathetic effects. In the picture by M. Gérôme, the victims, caught as in a vise between the impassibility of nature and the impassibility of despotism, have not even tears left to shed."

With a sigh and a shudder, we move on beside the great critic and pause before the *Memnon and Sesostris*.

"Two mountains sculptured in the form of man— which neither time, nor tremblings of the earth, nor conquerors much more terrible, have been able to move from their base! They are there, their colossal hands crushing their knees, shapeless, monstrous, flat-nosed, returning slowly to rock, standing out against the arid background of the Lybian range which lies barren beneath a scorching sun—rosy in the light, blue in the shadow. *Memnon* has lost his voice, and, since the Roman Emperor essayed his restoration, no longer salutes Aurora. The inscriptions on the pedestal seem to-day untrue, but the phenomenon of his melodious vibration is established by history in the most incontrovertible manner. At the foot of these gigantic statues, a group of men and camels may serve as a scale of comparison; they scarcely attain the height of the base-plate. To relieve this landscape of limestone and granite, M. Gérôme has placed in the foreground several clumps of green herbs, which the summer will soon change into tawny tufts resembling a lion's mane. Some camels are squatting on the grass unsaddled, chewing, or stretching their necks over the turf. In the center of the picture, a large camel, with one fore-leg bent in a shackle, seems to resist the efforts of his driver to make him kneel beside a more peaceful comrade. The stubborn animal raises its head, shows its gums, and is doubtless making the kind of grunting noise which is the mode of complaint peculiar to the camel. The accessories, the saddles, cushions, carpets, sticks, and bits of stuffs are treated with a conscientious precision that reveals the use of each object. In the background, an Arab, mounted on a *mahari*, is scudding away at a great pace; nothing can be more odd than this ambling gait and these long legs agitating themselves in space, like those of an immense field-spider. M. Gérôme, during his travels in Egypt, has made a special study of the queer profiles presented in repose and in action by the strange animal to whom the Arabs have given the name of 'ship of the desert'; he is thoroughly master of it and can reproduce all its attitudes.

"The *Plain of Thebes* is the reverse side of the picture we have just described. The foreground consists of fragments of enormous columns, in scattered blocks, on one of which is carved the image of a god; it is the débris of a ruined palace, probably that of Amenophis; beyond the ruins stretches a plain subject to inundations, crossed by a road along which a caravan of dromedaries is passing, followed by a little donkey carrying its rider on the croup after the Arabic fashion. The two colossi, with great difficulty diminished by the distance, reappear, seen from the back, their royal tresses gathered and knotted behind their heads like a *queue à la prussienne*. Farther on, the eye discovers blackish lands, besprinkled with trees and palms, and to the right hillocks, or rather mounds formed of ruins, fragments of which stick up through the ground. In the background a chain of distant mountains, rosy and purple; over them a sky misty with heat, which seems to lie far above and behind the shimmering, luminous atmosphere, and on which a flock of wandering storks make microscopic points.

"We describe in detail, as if we were on the very spot, these strange landscapes, so new to Parisian ideas that any one but a traveler would be tempted to believe them false precisely because the representation is so absolutely true. But what can we do? The environs of Thebes do not resemble the outskirts of Paris! We must make up our minds to be content with this barrenness—grand, solemn, and mournful. On the frame the sacred *urðeus* spreads its wings, and the hieroglyphic characters, most familiar to travelers, succeed in giving to the whole an absolutely Egyptian appearance."

Beside these more important pictures hung a simple everyday scene, the accuracy of which all travelers in the desert lands of the East will attest. The critic of the London *Athenæum* especially recommended to English artists close study of the "superb execution and firm, deliberate drawing." Gautier also describes in his graphic way this picture of *Camels Drinking from the Fountain of the Crocodile*, which takes its name from the sculptured figure over the basin:

"Before a stone trough fed by the clay pots of a *sassaquich*, a group of camels, one of which carries his driver, extend their ostrich-like necks and plunge their hairy lips into the water, drinking for the thirst to come. They are of all kinds and colors, and M. Gérôme has been able to indulge himself to his heart's content. It would be difficult to render more perfectly the hairy skin, the physiognomy, and the character of this animal. Only the desire to reproduce everything has perhaps led the artist to elaboration of minutie; certain portions are rather sculptured than painted, and the covering of the muscles is in some parts meager. But how greatly we prefer this severity to the slovenly vagueness of many artists. Doum palms, with their fans of pointed leaves, the side of a wall, and a bit of sky fill the background in a characteristic manner. This picture—whose subject offers nothing dramatic, but which represents a scene of patriarchal life with a truth on which the most suspicious can rely—pleases and interests us greatly.

We are not of those who desire that art should have a purpose outside of itself; but, without being utilitarian the least in the world, we think that painting is of *use*, when, remaining within the conditions of beauty, it acquaints us with the types, customs, aspects, and usages of distant countries; and that is why we laud M. Gérôme for having quitted for the moment mythology and history, to take us with him on his travels."

But Gérôme is not of those who quickly and easily forsake "the old love for the new," and he adds to his collection a dainty bit of real life more familiar to the average traveler, from the land that claimed his early artistic affections.

"At the corner of a street in Rome, some *pifferari* are standing before a Madonna, sheltered in a little chapel erected on a fragment of an antique column with a Corinthian capital; from a crossbeam of iron fastened to the wall hangs a lamp about the height of the sacred image. According to the Italian custom the *pifferari* are serenading the Holy Virgin and the Divine Child. One of them, the youngest, is playing on a species of lute; the other presses under his arm the leather bag of the *cornemuse*, inflated with wind, and devotes himself to his untutored fingering of the long pipes. One knows, even at Paris, the picturesque tatters of these strolling musicians, so beloved of artists, and who, for the most part, come from the Abruzzes. Their sharp and nasal chanting is not without charm, above all when heard from a little distance. This time M. Gérôme has chosen microscopic proportions and his picture could be placed on the golden plate of Meissonier. It is a tiny *chef d'œuvre* of finish, delicacy, and precision. Place upon a perfect photographic proof a vivid, clear, charming color, and add the *style*, which is the very soul of the artist and which no instrument can give,—and you will have the *Pifferari* of M. Gérôme, a miniature which possesses grandeur."

Leaving these strange, exotic scenes of the distant East, and this typical Southern group, we find ourselves on the edge of a silent crowd whose faces, expressing varied emotions, are eagerly turned toward another canvas bearing the same signature. Says De Tanouarn: "The artist has resolved in this work a delicate problem—he has pleased the 'crowd' without degrading art; he has approached them like those *grands seigneurs* who make themselves accessible without losing any of the dignity of their rank." He was speaking of the world-renowned *Duel after the Masquerade*, the original of which is in the magnificent collection of the Duc d'Anmale at Chantilly, and a replica in the wonderful galleries of one of our most cultivated and liberal American connoisseurs, Mr. W. T. Walters of Baltimore. It will be interesting to note how this picture affected two nations so different in their "point of view" as the French and English. To this end we quote two quite lengthy reviews; the first by Gautier, the second from the London *Athenæum* of January, 1858.



THE PRISONER ON THE NILE

"One is always sure [says Gautier] of finding a large crowd stationed before the *Duel* by M. Gérôme. It is the popular success of the Salon; and, as the picture is not large, one must always await one's turn to see it. This *vogue*, let us hasten to say, is not due to any method that art would disapprove. Nourished by the severest studies, and endowed naturally with an exceptionally pure taste, the young master would scorn a triumph gained at such a price. The singularity of the subject attracts the public, the merit of the execution retains the connoisseur. It would be almost trite to say that the forms and costumes of modern life lend but little to painting. Artists appear more convinced than any one else of this truth, and they willingly borrow from ancient times the subjects of their compositions. It is only in the last extremity, as in the portrait, for instance, that they resign themselves to the actual fashions; and even then they alter them as much as possible by the introduction of mantles, *burnous*, shawls, scarfs, and other accessories having some special character. Even in genre they stop at the last century, where one seeks the picturesque in the Pyrenees, in Brittany, in Aragon, in Algeria. The number of canvases that could serve as documents in future ages, as to our interiors, our furniture, our costumes, our types, our mode of life, is excessively limited; and, unhappily, almost always of mediocre execution. It seems that the art of to-day is affected by farsightedness, and can only discern objects belonging to remote and bygone ages; it sees nothing around about itself. Aside from several portraits and official pictures, few of the canvases mark the present period. We must, therefore, thank M. Gérôme, the painter of Grecian elegance, the Pompeian archæologist, the expert in exotic or primitive types, for having taken a bare subject from our customs; he risks much in handling a reality of which every one is, or thinks he is a judge, in subjecting new matter, new physiognomies, and new attire to the requirements of art. What would have happened had he depicted a duel fought in black coats?

"The idea of the *Duel after the Masquerade* is ingenious, thrilling, dramatic; it impresses at the same time the mind and the eye, by the antithesis of the action and the actors - terrible action, grotesque actors, a duel of pierrots and harlequins elevated to a tragic height, without avoiding a single comic detail. Some young people, doubtless overheated with wine, have begun a dispute on the steps of the opera, or in some cabinet in the Maison d'Or, on account of a push with an elbow, a too cutting sarcasm, a slight fit of jealousy, or for any other trifling reason. One of those busybodies who are always ready to show courage with the blood of others, has brought swords, and the whole company, without taking time for a change of costume, has gone out in two carriages to the Bois de Boulogne; the gray dawn scarce opens its heavy eyes upon the morning mist, through which skeletons of slender trees are dimly seen. The snow covers the earth with a white winding-sheet, stretched out during the night as if to receive the dead. Cold, solitude, and silence have kept watch around about, that nothing should disturb the combatants; and indeed, they have succeeded only too well in their unlucky affair. Footmarks in the snow show the place of the struggle; one of the antagonists, the pierrot, has been wounded and could say with Mercurio, making a funereal pun, 'Ask for me to-morrow and you shall find me a grave

man!' The blood spreads its red stain over the cassock with the big buttons; the limbs, from which the life is departing, and over which the will no longer asserts its power, lie inert on the snow, and, under the loose garments, seem already stretched out in a shroud. Were it not for the friend, disguised as a valet of the Comédie-Française, who supports him, he would fall prostrate. The pallor of death shows through the paint which has been partly wiped from the face of poor Pierrot; the dull eye already stares into vacancy, and on the drawn lips his expiring sigh leaves a rosy foam.

"The sleeve of the right arm, turned up above the elbow for the combat, exposes the quivering flesh and weak muscles of the young debauchee, who still holds beneath his contracted fingers the sword that has so poorly defended its master. Another person, dressed in the costume of a Chinese mandarin, red and green, oddly beflowered in fantastic design, throws himself upon his knees and examines with terrible anxiety the bloodstained breast of the victim. A little in the rear of this group, a man in a black domino is lifting his hands with a gesture of despair, as if to tear his hair at the deplorable result of a silly quarrel.

"Another group, at quite a distance from the first, is composed of the murderer and his second, who are hurrying away—a harlequin and a Mohican. Harlequin, to prepare for the fight, had thrown on the snow his black mask and his paletot; his sword, stained with blood, lies on the ground, and these significant accessories skillfully connect the two parts of the composition; the harlequin seems to be feverishly telling the savage, whose arm he clutches, that his opponent did not parry, that he absolutely ran himself through with the sword, and other explanations, too late to avoid the inevitable fatality; the other bends as if to reply, 'What is to be done about it?' In the background the carriage of the wounded man assumes in the fog the melancholy look of a hearse, with its inky silhouette, and the drivers, who are whispering together, seem like undertakers.

"Surely this is odd and sinister, of a wild and romantic fancy and a strange philosophical daring! To mix up the Carnival and Death, to change the wooden saber of Harlequin into a real sword; to transform the spots of wine into bloodstains, to surround the death agony with a circle of masks, to demand of Harlequin, 'What hast thou done with thy brother Pierrot?' All this would make the most intrepid hesitate. M. Gérôme has performed this difficult, not to say impossible task with an icy severity, a pitiless *sang-froid*, an irony superior to fate. He has forgotten nothing; neither the ruddy hole melted in the snow by a drop of warm blood, nor the spangles which sparkle on the lozenge-trimmed coat of the murderer, nor the bear's-claw collar of the Indian, nor the formless and *battered mask*, nor the paint on the face of the dying man dissolved by the cold death-sweat.

"All this is rendered with a clean, firm, delicate, assured touch which keeps always within a perfect contour, and a color that is sober, neutral, *wintery*, so to speak, created by the livid, shuddering pallor in the midst of which the clear, vivid tones of the costumes produce a sinister discordance. The face of Pierrot, who is sobered by the approach of Death, and from the dizzy whirl of the

THE PYRRHIC DANCE

1883



masked ball passes to the silence of the tomb, is a creation of powerful originality; no grimace, no melodrama, no straining after effect. There is something in it as dry, exact, and strong as a page of Mérimée. The impression produced is the more profound in that the narrator *appears* indifferent. M. Gérôme, like a careful artist, does not leave to the fancy of the gilder the form and ornamentation of his frames. He has himself designed, for the top of this one, two masks, tragic and comic, separated by a fool's bauble. Does not Folly dance between Joy and Sorrow, causing one to be born of the other?"

One might think this master-page of description hard to equal, yet the critic of the *Athenæum* admirably holds his own. He says:

"The *Duel after the Masquerade*, of M. Gérôme, appeared at the fag end of the last French Exhibition, but too late to receive the universal admiration due to its great merits, and too late to obtain from us more than a line of notice. The scene is the Bois de Boulogne—time daybreak; the sky lurid with a dull, yellow, curdling fog. The duel has just taken place. The one who is pricked to the heart is a pierrot—one of those Scaramouch clowns that the Italians introduced into France in the days of Bellerose and Gros Gentlareme. His face is a three-act tragedy reduced to one look: a gray glaze is over the eye; the passionate, sensual mouth is just dropping with a horrible, agonizing grimace that conveys to you the very gasp and sickness of the first sensation of a vital wound. The face is drawn with the pain; and from under the white fool's-cap the death-sweat trickles through the white fool's paint still on the vicious cheeks, just as rain-drops do through the silvery mist on a winter window-pane. His legs are thrust out stiff and straight in the broad, loose fool's dress, and one hand still holds the thin, sharp sword and another clutches at life. Pierrot, poor, mad, stabbed Pierrot, is held in the half-careless arms of a Duc de Guise, in the full white ruffles, short black coat, and slanted close cap of that Bartholomean age. Sorry or careless, you hardly know which, for his dark face is bent with a sullen anxiety over the sped man. A Doge of Venice, in a great flaunting robe of flowered green satin, with another over it of scarlet, edged with deep stiff gold lace, bends over Pierrot, groping, with horror in his face, for the actual orifice of the wound, from which black small hole ooze, fast and pulsing, dark drops that race down the fool's white dress, over the round cotton tufts that ornament it, and all down the stiffening limbs into a red pool on the trodden snow. Behind him is a more conventional face—a brother or father in a passion of grief, his hands up to beat his temples or tear his hair, to think that here a change is coming that no love, or prayer, or enduring, can stop. His long, black, lace-trimmed domino trails out behind against the Doge's crimson. The gray cloak of the dying Pierrot and his staring, impudent mask lie beside him on the snow; and there, to the right of the picture, are the victors, miserable, though they have won the game. The red Indian who fought has his back to us, and is hurrying away, conscience-stricken, and already repentant, to his coach—that black thing that looms through the fog. His second—perhaps his Asmodeus, his prompter,

his evil genius—a harlequin, a mottle of dull green and red, the spangle and tinsel all gone when last night's lamps went out with a repentant stench at the wickedness they had seen—has him hurriedly by the arm. They are no longer mere triends, they are both criminals. He tries to cheer him with an ill-assumed boldness. 'The thing is,' he says, 'an everyday thing,' and so is murder! nothing! accident! But the murderer is already bowed and aged with sorrow. He has only the selfish satisfaction of having himself escaped. Oh, that it had been his arm, he thinks; or that I had disarmed him! but that grinding thrust! There is the sword—dropped as it was drawn from the cloven heart!

"The harlequin has a great-coat thrust on by one sleeve like a hussar jacket, just as, hot and fired with brandy, they tumbled into the coach and drove straight for the lonely wood outside the Boulevards. How we long that that bent man in the long, skin cloak and fur hood, with the tasseled moccasins, and hair tied up in a knot, with gaudy red and yellow macaw feathers stuck through, would turn, that we might see and profit by his anguish! Well may the frozen trees shake their long, black, spectral fingers over the scene—the horrible sequel of a night of vice.

"And there are two coaches seen through the fog, with the skeleton-looking horses, fit only to draw an orphan's hearse to a cheap funeral, with their carrion heads drooping with the night's toil and roll. One coachman is holding up his hand in horror at the scene; he wonders if any one will pay his fare, or if he will be arrested. He does not like carrying home the dead fool. The other waits and listens, ungesticulating. There, too, the two long paths of stamped footprints in the snow; the one right, the other left. They drive round to avoid the gendarmes, who don't like to see two cabs driving together at odd hours to the duelists' wood.

"And this is the end of it. Those two trodden plats of snow, a dead body, and a guilty heart, all to come from that war of music and of voices, that deluge of shouts and laughter and screams, that whirl of feet-stamps, that jostle and hell-pool of vicious, leering faces and wanton eyes, that fog and eddy of colors and sound, of hot patchouli, of rose, of frangipanni, of muslin and ribbons, of fools, goblins, peasant girls, witches, and monks—and all for what?

"There is an epitome of a hundred passionate novels in this painting, which is worthy of M. Delaroche's best pupil. There is room in it for all shades of painting, from the speckle of Teniers to the willowy sweep of Rubens. There is room for Vernet's impetuosity and M. Gérôme's care. A finer moral lesson than this of M. Gérôme's has not been taught since Hogarth's time."

Claretie, in some reminiscences of a visit to Chantilly many years later, when he again saw the original, writes:

"This picture, which has lost nothing of its picturesque coloring or dramatic qualities, soon popularized the name of Gérôme, till then acclaimed by connoisseurs. It was a success without precedent. The 20,000 francs for which the little *cuadro* was sold, seemed then to have the value of 200,000 of to-day.

This distressing scene in this dreary winter landscape, this masquerade ending in butchery, this ball at the opera looking into the morgue, caused a vivid impression, the poignancy of which was heightened by the finished execution."

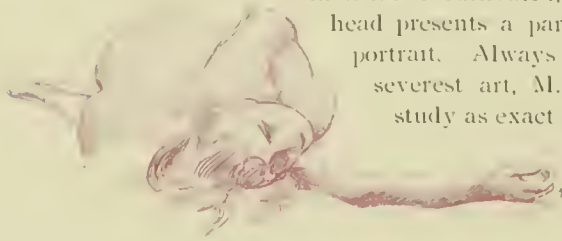
One might easily believe that nothing could be altered or added to heighten the effect of this master composition ; but an artist like Gérôme always sees room for improvement, and eagerly seizes any opportunity that may offer for a finishing touch. In a letter to the dealer charged with the sale of the replica from which the engraving was made, he writes :

"I learn with the greatest pleasure that you have sold the reproduction of the *Duel* that I have done for you, and I am all the more pleased since I hear it has been bought by a distinguished amateur ; one is always glad to know one's offspring is well located. The alterations I have made from the original picture have singularly improved this composition, especially in its general aspect ; some sacrifices made in the background have left to the *premier plan*, that is to say, to the important figures, all their effect, and I regret not to have thought of it at first, when I executed the original. This improvement has been most valuable, and you would have been struck with it had you been able to see one with the other. I have modified also the head of the savage ; it was not well understood at first who was the adversary ; now it is plain to every one and confusion is no longer possible. In short, I think I have improved as much as possible on my first work, and I am happy that it has fallen into the hands of Mr. Walters of Baltimore, since I am told he can appreciate things seriously conceived and seriously executed."

One canvas in this unequalled exhibit still remains undescribed. "a picture," says De Tanouarn, "remarkable for absolutely Oriental coloring, its grave and devotional sentiment, and its physiognomies, slightly savage, yet altogether touching." And Gautier writes :

"However great the merit of the *Duel*, we prefer the *Prayer in the House of an Arnaut Chief*, which attracts less of a crowd. There is in this picture a spirit of tranquillity, contemplation, and conviction that is truly admirable. The scene has for a stage a chamber of thoroughly Oriental nudity : a low divan running around walls roughly whitewashed, a ceiling showing all the beams, and on the side a door draped with a portière. The floor is partly covered by a mat of plaited rushes, which is re-covered by a Turkish or Persian carpet. On the walls hang guns, rifles, and muskets of various forms ; a panoply of battle-axes and yataghans is combined with a tall palm ; from the ceiling descends a chandelier made of glasses, filled with oil, like those one sees in the mosques. A small round table in cedar-wood and mother-of-pearl, in charming taste, supports a three-branched brass candlestick holding large wax candles. In the foreground is a line of *babouches*, slippers, shoes, and *savates*, curious specimens of Mussulman shoemaking—for the votaries of Mahomet bare their feet for all the occasions on which Christians uncover their heads.

"An old man, of vigorous and venerable appearance, his hands lifted in a sacramental posture, recites the *suras* of the Koran with an air of profound faith, turned toward the East—toward that Mecca where are found the tomb of Mahomet, the black stone, and the well of Zem-Zem. Behind him, like pious soldiers obeying the commands of their chief, stand eight persons in a row, their feet touching the carpet; they are rough fellows, with picturesque and savage countenances, softened for the moment by a religious sentiment. A lively faith shines



in these uncultivated, swarthy, and ferocious faces. Each head presents a particular type, with all the verity of a portrait. Always remaining within the limits of the severest art, M. Gérôme has made an ethnographic study as exact as that of M. Valerio in the provinces

of the Danube. M. Serres, the anthropologist, could take notes from these specimens of almost unknown races with all confidence.

By this scrupulous fidelity, of which he has already given proof in the *Recreation of the Russian Soldiers*, so much admired at the Universal Exposition, M. Gérôme satisfies one of the most imperious instincts of the time; the desire which nations have to become acquainted with each other, otherwise than by means of portraits taken from the imagination. He possesses all that is necessary to fulfill this important mission: an eye which sees quickly and correctly, a hand that executes learnedly and surely,—writing down each detail with the imperturbable clearness of the daguerreotype,—and, above all, a perception which we may call exotic,—for want of a more precise term,—which enables him to discover at once the characteristics by which one race differs from another.

"We have had an opportunity of meeting in Constantinople with most of the types represented by M. Gérôme, and we recognize them perfectly. Here is really the Arnaut and the Armatole, with their tall, bony frames, their shaven temples, and their long mustaches; the Bulgarian—already almost a Russian—with his reddish beard and lion-like head of hair, and the Syrian wearing his *chachveh*—all are here, even this lovely blond child, with the silky hair falling from underneath the *tarbouch*, as beautiful as a woman and serious as a man, who makes one think of the Greek *Amour*, and the *Orientales* of Victor Hugo. A little behind this row, a slave joins in the prayer, made, for a moment, by his religion, the equal of his masters. All these personages are dressed in varied and picturesque costumes. The *fustanelle*, spread like a bell, touches the *doliman* with its straight folds; the elbow of the braided jacket jostles the flowing sleeve, the *tez* and the turban alternate; the pommels of *kandjars* and pistols bristle in the belts of embroidered morocco or peep out from the folds of a scarf. All this is rendered with the delicate firmness which is peculiarly characteristic of the artist. The almost uniform attitudes are relieved from monotony by slight differences, which do not strike one at first. Among these believers some hands are raised like those of the chief; others are pendent or resting on the hips; others have the thumbs passed through the sword-belt, a posture common to the Orientals;

but all listen to the sacred words with a devotion and faith that should put to shame many Catholics.

“Before this picture, the most perfect as yet produced by the young master, the critic, who never willingly waives his rights, seeks a *but* or an *only* (like the restrictive personage in the *Faux Bons-hommes*) to qualify the merited praise. In order, then, not to ‘miss our calling’ let us reproach M. Gérôme with too subdued a coloring, arising from a sacrifice to the general harmony, and nothing remains to be said. He has been the first to study the Orient as a painter of history; he has sought for style where others, whom we nevertheless admire, have only looked for color. Let us accept then, separately, the drawing of M. Gérôme and the color of Decamps. He who could unite them to an equal degree would be more than human. If Michael Angelo said, ‘What a pity they do not know how to draw at Venice!’ Titian could rightfully reply to him, ‘What a pity they do not know how to paint at Rome!’”

We should not be surprised to find some lengthy record in the artist’s souvenirs of this matchless exposition, which exhausted the repertoires of laudatory phrases in the vocabulary of *la critique*. But he writes simply, “Another of my pictures, on which I did not place any great expectations, was painted at this time (1857), *The Duel after the Masquerade*, a composition a little after the English taste, the subject of which laid hold of the public. Pretty good execution; several bits well treated (belongs to the collection of the Duc d’Aumale).” And of the others not a word! A proceeding most characteristic of this artist, who never loses a minute in conjecturing the effect of his productions or in savoring the applause which might have turned the head of a less indefatigable, less absorbed worker. Long before the crowds in front of these masterpieces had begun to diminish he was again at work. And again we have to thank M. Gautier for a faithful chronicle of his labor.

“The young painter, whose activity is untiring, has just finished (May, 1858), for the salon of the Pompeian residence of Prince Napoleon in the Avenue Montaigne, three panels, representing Homer accompanied by his two immortal daughters, the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the central panel the god-like beggar, raising his blind eyes to heaven as if to invoke Mnemosyne, is chanting one of his sublime rhapsodies: the young child who acts as his guide stands between the knees of the poet and holds out a wooden bowl, soliciting the charity of the passers-by. On the two other panels, on a background of antique red, are depicted the two epics—that of the warrior and that of the wanderer. The young artist has succeeded in creating something new, even after the superb figures on the ceiling by M. Ingres.”

This beautiful palace has been arranged by the government as a museum, and is well worth the attention of the passing tourist as well as of the art-connoisseur and student.

In a review of an exhibition of modern pictures for the benefit of the "Society for the Relief of Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," we find a notice of a charming picture which was also finished this year :

" *The Collection (La Quele)* represents a choir-boy, or rather a young seminarist, seated against a wainscoting, and holding an alms-purse upon his knees; the face is gentle, sad, sickly—already fatigued by study, prayer, and mortification; the weak chest is concealed by the black cassock, and the hands clasp each other mechanically as if in an exercise of devotion. One would answer for the vocation of this budding young Levite. His eyes, cast down, look at nothing, and neither the sound of a piece of gold in his purse nor the rustle of a silken robe will cause him to raise his glance; he is entirely absorbed in God. The artist has succeeded in putting into this little painting an austere sobriety, a sort of Jansenism of color. No brilliant tones, no bright lights, no straining for effect; nothing but the dim twilight of the sanctuary over a pale, immovable figure, already dead to this world, though still young, and awaiting in silence, for the poor children of Jesus Christ, the rich man's gold and the widow's mite. We are happy to note also an etching of the young master, a souvenir of his travels in Egypt. It is a negress, with eyes half closed as if dazzled by the sun, thick lips, and cheeks as polished as those of a statue in basalt. All this is indicated in a few swift and sure strokes of the needle which tell much more than all the patient labor of the engraver's tools. It is a sketch on copper which is worth an original drawing. The biting of the acid has changed nothing."

Well may the critic marvel at the "untiring zeal" of the young artist, for this same year marked a successful incursion into a new field of activity, which excited even the surprise of his earliest friend and patron. In *L'Artiste* of the 16th of May, 1858, we find the following article :

"A few weeks ago we declared that contemporaneous artists, confining themselves too closely to pictures and statues, did not sufficiently consider the realities of this century. If anything characterizes our epoch, it is certainly the *railway carriage*. One could not find a more significant design to put on the coat-of-arms of the nineteenth century. Well! M. Gérôme, the author of the *Combat de Coqs*, *L'Intérieur Grec*, *Bacchus et P. Amour*, and of *L'Apothéose d'Auguste*,—the painter of so antique, so pure, and so rare a feeling,—is decorating a railway carriage! We are happy that our assertion has received so prompt a denial.

"This car has been offered by the Company of Roman Railways to our very Holy Father the Pope, and nothing has been neglected that would render it worthy of the Sovereign Pontiff. It is divided into three compartments: an oratory, a salon, and a sleeping-chamber. Four angels in gold and silver, the medallions of the twelve apostles, and panels of bronze adorn the exterior. The salon is decorated with paintings by M. Gérôme, arranged as follows :

"Facing the throne, and seated upon a marble bench rounded in a hemicycle, her feet resting on steps strewn with palms of the martyrs, *Religion* seems to

regard the Pope—her representative on earth. She has as emblem, the chalice, surmounted by the radiant Host. Above her hovers the inspiring Holy Spirit. On either side stand the two pillars of the Church: St. Peter with the keys, St. Paul with the sword. The background is a light, blue sky, the top of which forms the vaulted ceiling which joins the sky of the two side compositions. One of these paintings represents the Pope surrounded by cardinals and bishops and from the top of a pier blessing the approaching steamboat, which connects with a trail of fire the French and Roman railways; the Church is invoking heavenly protection upon the genius of man. The other shows us the Holy Father making the sacred gesture over a locomotive ready to take flight, and impatiently blowing off jets of steam from its nostrils of brass, like the monsters of mythology.

"We have expressly described, in their official barrenness, these three subjects—of which the latter two would seem unfruitful and prosaic to the majority of artists. M. Gérôme has, however, succeeded admirably with them. The first would only have to be enlarged to worthily form a hemicycle for a chapel; the other two show that the style lies in the talent of the painter and not in the theme he treats.

"The benediction of the boat has a solemnity without exaggeration, a majestic disposition of lines, an elevated character, which is often wanting in the most elaborate of historical pictures. The cardinals in their purple and ermine, the bishops with their white miters and *dalmatics* of brocade, the Swiss Guards in their mediæval costumes, respectfully surround the Pope in happy groupings which are rich without confusion. The heads, some of which are portraits, have a varied and individual stamp, and the smallness of proportions takes away none of the grandeur of character. The Pope faces the sea, which washes against the foot of the pier, and which is indicated by a coil of chain and masts of ships stretching up in a corner of the panel.

"By a happy contrivance, which insures variety, the blessing of the locomotive is taken in profile. The Holy Pontiff has advanced to the edge of the platform; his immediate attendants hold over his head great fans of white plumes, and behind him the sacred procession displays itself in fine priestly attitudes, of which the chiefs among the Roman clergy seem alone to possess the secret, and which add so much to the impression produced by religious pomp. What noble heads of prelates and monks, and what dignity among these Catholic patricians, even to the smallest details!

"All this is executed in the firm, distinguished manner which belongs only to M. Gérôme, and clothed in soft, harmonious tints, more genuine in our opinion than the loud tones which the multitude denominate 'fine coloring.'

"A Holy Virgin with the child Jesus, and the Good Shepherd bearing the lost sheep on his shoulders, painted half-length in medallions of embossed gilding in néo-byzantine style, complete the decoration of the interior. Outside, on the frieze of the carriage, are the heads of the twelve apostles, painted by M. Gérôme on disks of gold. It would be difficult to decorate more tastefully and more fitly a carriage offered to the Pope.

"The Pope—a railway carriage! Strange junction of words which describes in itself our age: the ancient and modern spirit—unchangeable tradition blessing indefinite progress! We could fill a column with this theme, but we prefer to use it in betraying the secrets of the young painter's atelier.

"While looking at these decorative panels, we peeped out of the corner of our eye at some canvases in more or less advanced stages of progress, and which we are sure will produce, when finished, a great impression at the next Exposition. M. Gérôme is not only correct and skillful with pencil and brush, but he is also a man of the most fine and fertile mind. He does not content himself, as so many others do, with the commonplace across which he stumbles; he loves variety in his subjects and he knows how to treat ordinary scenes in a wholly unexpected manner."

In view of the extraordinary achievements of this year, it is with a sense of amazement that we consider his exhibit at the Salon of 1859. He seems to have been drawn with irresistible force back to the contemplation of life in ancient Greece and Rome, which for a time had been superseded by his study of Oriental types and customs; and an eager multitude, spellbound before this new and thrilling manifestation of his genius and learning, bore witness to the ever-augmenting power of this first and foremost of historical painters. Small wonder that these masterpieces should inspire Gautier to one of his finest efforts in the department of analytic description. In the *Moniteur Universel*, he writes:

"The young master who made so brilliant a début ten years ago with the *Combat de Coqs*,—a charming picture, which could have been taken for an antique colored bas-relief,—has a searching and penetrative disposition; he is always in quest of uncommon themes. Rarity pleases him; novelty seduces him; he loves adventures in art and he provokes them at his own risk and peril. It is not he who will repeat with slight variations a *motif* that has been well received, as many painters do who are quick of execution and slow in invention, and who reproduce imperturbably the same picture all their lives long. Without having written a single line, that we know of at least, M. Gérôme has a literary tendency which betrays itself in the choice of his subjects, in erudition of detail, and archaical exactitude. It is not we, indeed, who will find fault with him for this. This kind of transposition renews the youth of Art, and infuses a little new blood into its veins. M. Gérôme possesses also the ethnographic perception so necessary to the modern painter to-day, when so many races, which yesterday were unknown, spring up to the light and enter into the ever-widening circle of human types to be analyzed. He has proved it by his *Recreation of the Russian Soldiers*, his *Arnauts at Prayer*, and his *Egyptian Recruits*. The *Cock Fight*, the *Greek Interior*, and the *Age of Augustus* have shown us how familiar he is with ancient times and with what accuracy he can make them live again; he can even be contemporaneous and produce tragic effects with a common carnival brawl. To



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elevate Harlequin and Pierrot to the height of serious art, and show the pallor of death beneath the powder of the disguise—this was not an easy task. That he has succeeded has been amply proven. This year M. Gérôme has only traveled in time! he exhibits three antique pictures: *Cæsar*; *Ave Cæsar, Imperator! morituri te salutant*, and *King Candaules*.

"*Cæsar*, the largest of these three canvases, and the only one of historical proportions, engrosses the eye, as far as it can be perceived, by its sinister, solitary, and mysterious appearance, even before the subject has been distinguished. In a deserted hall, whose perspective shows only the pedestals of columns and the feet of statues, through the shadows of evening which are falling, one descends at first an armchair overturned upon the steps of a dais; then, under a mass of white draperies, disordered and bloodstained, a dead body, whose brow is crowned with leaves of beaten gold; this was Cæsar! Their task accomplished, the murderers have departed, the senators have fled, and in the general stupor no one thinks to take up the body. The master of the world lies on the ground, on the spot where he fell, abandoned, alone in the deepening shadows, while without, the city, aghast at the frightful news, is agitated and tumultuous.

"This manner of conceiving the subject denotes a reflective and philosophic spirit. The tumult of murder would have enticed a less thoughtful painter, and doubtless the effect would have been less. Besides, M. Gérôme has studied this composition from several points of view, and has chosen the most sober, the most severe, and the most tragic. We remember to have seen on an easel in his atelier a smaller canvas, where the death of Cæsar was treated in a more anecdotal manner, so to speak. We hope that M. Gérôme will finish this picture of which the Cæsar, now on exhibition, is only a fragment, enlarged, idealized, and transfigured to heroic size. The poem should not take the place of the memory. On the large canvas, the impression; on the smaller, the actual truth."

This striking picture, a life-size study for which occupies a prominent place in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington, furnished a theme for many able pens. Masson, referring to a subsequent statement that "Gérôme had many times clearly shown in various celebrated pictures the philosophic power of his mind," says, "The first of these in date was the *Cæsar* exposed at the Salon of 1859. We remember it well: Cæsar, alone, dead, lying at the feet of the bronze statue in the deserted Hall of the Senate before the overturned throne." Some amiable jesters, some of those who try in painting to be facetious, have called this picture "Washerwoman's Day." We leave the reply to Charles Baudelaire, who was very far from being one of Gérôme's admirers.

"Julius Cæsar! What splendor, as of the setting sun, the name of this man sheds upon the imagination! If ever a man on this earth resembled the Deity it was Cæsar. Mighty and fascinating; brave, learned, and generous! All force, all glory, all charm! He whose greatness surpassed his victories, and who grew in grandeur even in death! He whose breast, pierced by the dagger, gave forth

only a cry of paternal love, and who found the wound of the steel less cruel than the wound of ingratitude. Certainly this time the imagination of M. Gérôme has been swept away; it reached an admirable height when it conceived its *Cæsar, alone*, prostrate before his overturned throne,—the body of this Roman, who was pontiff, warrior, orator, historian, and master of the world, *filling* this immense and deserted hall. This manner of treating the subject has been criticised! It cannot be *too highly praised*. The effect is truly grand. This terrible résumé suffices. We are all sufficiently well acquainted with Roman history to picture to ourselves all that is *sous-entendu*—the disorder which preceded and the tumult which followed. We divine Rome behind these walls, and we hear the cries of this stupid and freed people, alike ungrateful to victim and assassin. ‘Let us make Brutus, Cæsar!’”

Masson remarks, “This page consoles us for many absurdities in the way of criticism.” We find also in one of De Tanouarn’s thoughtful essays the following just reflections:

“Let us beware of imagining that it is impossible to render a general idea, or the physiognomy of an epoch or a nation, by a single action drawn from history. On the contrary, art gains much, and the idea does not lose thereby. I need no other proof than that which Gérôme himself furnishes. His *Cæsar* is assuredly not a complicated subject; it is simplicity reduced to its utmost limits, since there is on the canvas but a single personage, or rather only a body! but the body is that of Cæsar! The emptiness of the scene makes one think of the void which the disappearance of such a man is going to create in the world—a void which will only be filled by frightful wars and bloody proscriptions. This work is without doubt the best that Gérôme has yet composed. Possessed by a happy idea, he has expressed all the interest and emotion it could possibly contain.”

An impressive contrast to the quietude of this scene is found in that which bears the ominously significant title, “*Hail, Cæsar, Emperor! those about to die salute thee!*”

“This is the picture [says Gautier] before which the crowd stops most willingly. To see it, it is almost necessary to fall in line as we did last year before the *Duel*. O honest and intelligent crowd! whom we have so often abused when we have surprised thee in the act of using as a mirror the varnish of some abominable painting! we gladly award thee the praise thou meritest in standing thus before a real work of art!

“M. Gérôme has rebuilt the Roman circus with the unexceptionable science of the architect, the antiquarian, and the historian; never has a restoration succeeded better. It seems as if the artist had lived in the times of the Cæsars and assisted in person at these bloody games; and, after the representation, had sketched the principal episodes on his canvas. Where has he found all these

lost details, these characteristic particulars, faded from the memory of man and neglected by history? for such things cannot be invented.

"Here and there—a little in the poets and writers, a great deal in bas-reliefs, medallions, paintings on vases and all the oxidized relics of antiquity, the excavation of which has revealed the secrets of the past. A prodigious patience was needful to gather together those scattered elements; and a great art to group them, to blend them, and make them live.

"At the right of the picture rises the *loge* of Cæsar, adorned by slender columns with red flutings, gilded on the projecting angles, surmounted by winged figures of victory, and twined with golden foliage—from which are suspended shields bearing heads of the Medusa. On the plinth is engraved the name of Vitellius, but even without the inscription he would be quickly recognized, bending his arm like the handle of a pot-bellied vase, to lean his fat hand upon his knee, a cascade of triple chins falling upon his great chest and displaying the amplitude of his obese majesty. Near him, the Empress, haughty and absent-minded; behind him, the courtiers—the favorites standing in attitudes of respectful familiarity.



Beside the imperial *loge* are the vestals in their snowy draperies, ready to raise or reverse the thumb which decides for life or death. Farther on, upon the benches, divided by staircases leading to the doors of the circular corridors, a multitude in varied and vivid colors swarms up to the region occupied by the *plebs* in their gray tunics. Overhead, held by cords attached to staffs and rings of bronze, and decorated with elephants, tigers, and lions, is the immense *velarium* designed to protect the spectators from the sun. No detail is forgotten. Red panels color the barrier that surrounds the arena; it is a good color—the blood will not show! In the background is a door in the form of a triumphal arch, crowned by a chariot drawn by four horses abreast. By this door the dead animals and murdered men are dragged away, for the endings of this fierce Roman drama have but little variety!

"Beneath the imperial *loge* the gladiators, ready for the contest, make the customary salute; they are preceded by their impresario, a kind of pompous

comedian, of cruel, cunning mien, coquettishly wrapped in his mantle and leaning like a dandy on a slender stick. The gladiators wear strange casques, some with eyes shielded, others with the visor half lowered, and others entirely masked, according to the specialty of the combatants. Their legs are protected by *cucumides*; a wide belt of buffalo-leather ornamented with a row of copper coins is worn like a cuirass, leaving exposed their sturdy chests. Their thighs are half-covered by a short tunic, girt up so as not to embarrass their movements; a light shield defends the left arm; the right arm is protected by laced thongs, armllets, gauntlets, or iron mittens reaching to the fingers. On their shoulders is folded the net of the *retiarius*, and they brandish aloft the trident with its keen points. Some of them have not yet lowered their visors, and one can see their short faces, with the heavy jaws and prominent chin, stamped with sullen resignation and brutish courage; by their theatrical attitude, one divines that they are proud to perform before the eyes of so distinguished a public. It must be, indeed, disagreeable for a gladiator to waste the elegancies of his death-agony on empty benches, or on people who are no judges!

"In the opposite corner lie two dead gladiators. One of them, tangled in the meshes of the net, has not been able to escape the prongs of the fatal trident; the other has a deep wound in his breast. He must have been loudly applauded, for he has fallen in the classic pose so well known to sculptors. In the background an under-servant takes handfuls of sand from a basket, suspended from his belt, to soak up the pools of blood in which the feet of the combatants might slip; a slave, in a striped tunic, throws his hook at a body and exerts his whole strength to draw it toward him. Others, preceded by two players disguised as Mercury and Pluto, drag their victims toward the charnel-house; derisive funeral honors paid to the human form! A ray of sunlight, placid mockery of indifferent Nature, falls precisely upon the bloody funeral procession. All this ceremonial is to be seen at the bull-fights in Spain; but the mules, with their tinkling bells and multi-colored pompons, have only to drag away the bulls or disemboweled horses. Man escapes the peril by his bravery and skill."

De Tanouarn gives also an admirable critique of this *chef-d'œuvre*, and adds:

"Vitellius is well chosen as a personification of that monstrous Roman civilization, wholly exterior and wholly material. The lust of antiquity puffs and sweats under this shapeless mass of fat, this gross exterior, swollen like a leather bottle which threatens to burst. It is thus that historical painting should be approached; it is thus that an artist, without abandoning any of the necessary plastic qualities or omitting the dramatic and picturesque elements of an action, elevates himself to the dignity of a moralist and a philosopher. It is incontestable that Gérôme is an ingenious painter, learned and profound. He is a skillful and patient searcher after ideas; he is not content that his canvas should be clothed with agreeable images—he exacts that it should *think!* Never does he seize his brushes without a full consciousness of what he wishes to do; if he hesitates, it is only as to a choice of the means which will best render what his intelligence has conceived."

Beside this exciting spectacle hung a canvas representing a page of Greek history which had already furnished Gautier with material for an exquisite romance. He says :

“ Had we not an ideal which guarantees us against all self-love, we might be proud of our little antique novelette, ‘ King Candanes,’ which has inspired Pradier to make a statue and Gérôme to paint a picture. Marble and canvas have portrayed our Nyssia in a manner far superior to the text. The chisel and the brush are worth more than the pen, especially in such hands and when there is a question of beauty. Our readers are doubtless all acquainted with this bit of history, related in the first place by Herodotus. It offers to both sculpture and painting a subject full of resources. M. Gérôme has recomposed, with that instinct for antiquity which so rarely deceives him, the interior of the Græco-Asiatic palace inhabited by the King of Sardis, concerning which the archæologist has had only vague data. Candanes is lying on a bed of sculptured ivory, ornamented with bas-reliefs and shields of gold ; upon the walls are drawn the mysterious symbols of Oriental religions ; the feet of his statues still remain unsculptured, in the block of stone from Egypt or Egina ; strips of wood are interwoven to form the door behind which Gyges conceals himself ; the delicate feet of Nyssia rest upon the skin of the Nemean lion, heritage of Hercules ; the artist has left nothing to be desired save to see the profile of this woman whose beauty was so great that her own husband betrayed its sacred perfection. The form, from which the drapery is just slipping, is exquisite in its divine Marmorean pallor.”

The moment chosen by the painter is that when Nyssia is disrobing and making a sign to Gyges to rush forward and kill her traitor husband. This scene, where offended womanly dignity takes its just revenge upon treacherous sensuality, is treated with the chaste nobility of pose and expression to be found in all this artist's paintings from the nude, which excite only admiration for the pure artistic beauty of contour and plastic grace. Yet it is almost a relief to turn from these themes, that gripe the heart and stir the emotions, to the tranquillity of the *Arnauts Playing Chess*. The thoughtful countenances bent over the board are drawn with the perfect skill that has so often been commented on, and which renders these types with all the truthfulness of Nature's modeling. The imperturbability of the Oriental character is well illustrated by the attitudes of the players, who betray no emotion over the game. Gain or lose ? What can it matter ? “ What will be, will be,” and they disquiet themselves no more as to the outcome of the passionless contest than they do over the smoke that rises steadily from the chibouk and vanishes in the air. Life, with its struggles and aspirations, its joys and agonies, what is it all save a faint *fumée*—now here, now gone ! There is but one end, resistless, inevitable ! The boast of the king is strangled in his throat as the poniard is driven home with deadly thrust, the iron-muscled,

iron-hearted gladiators succumb not only to Roman cruelty and power, but to the Conqueror of all flesh, and, gasping, cry to him also "Morituri te salutant"; e'en Cæsar falls—and who can tell where he now lies, or trace the "noble dust of Alexander"? It is doubly interesting to know what the artist himself thought of these creations, that compelled alike the serious and the frivolous to stop and admire. We return to his notes, where we find allusion only to the two most important in this exhibit. He writes:



"In 1850 I exposed the *Gladiators before Cæsar* (*Moriturus*), which I consider, with another canvas of the same nature (*Pollice Verso*), as my two best works. The first was looked at sufficiently, but I do not think it achieved much success. While painting it I had not at my disposition all the documents that I since have gathered together to work up the second. It fails from certain archaeological points of view, and in this respect the fault is a grave one; for, in truth, the gladiators were exceptional beings, who resembled in no wise the soldiers of that period; wearing odd helmets and enormous arms, offensive and defensive, of a very peculiar character and form. In such a case, verity of detail is important, for it adds to the physiognomy and gives to the people a barbarous and savage *cachet*, at once strange and striking. I have said before that this painting was not a very great success, and yet the composition was new, the dramatic side well represented, and the whole effect well enough realized—the restitution of the circus with its *velum* was thought out with much care. I will say

but little of the second. It appeared much later, when I had assembled all possible information that could contribute to its exactness. I think it better than the first in many respects; it has more of the accent of truth, and renders more clearly the brutal side of these Romans, by whom human life was counted as nothing. At the same time [1859] I sent out from my atelier the *Death of Cæsar*, which some amiable critics have called 'Washerwoman's Day!' I myself am no enemy of quiet gayety, and I recognize and appreciate the comicality of this joke; but, all modesty aside, this composition merits more serious attention; the presentation of the subject is dramatic and original. It is a small canvas, which could have been executed on a larger scale without losing its character; which I cannot say of many of my works."

Commenting on this very passage, Bergerat says:

"One should read and re-read this confidential page, written so freely and so easily, for it is a model of impartial, learned, and honest criticism. It contains in a few words Gérôme's entire 'aesthetics.' Once again, I say, every one is not capable of thus passing judgment on himself! Erudition plays a great rôle in the

QUERENS QUEM DEVORET

1889



work of the master, and all that he says of the exactness of his casques and armor for his gladiators applies, equally, to all the paintings he has signed, especially during later years. I find the modern naturalism, so peculiar to all the great minds of our time, in this insatiable passion for archaic *truth* which distinguishes the productions of this painter. But I had always believed that in Gérôme the ethnographic gift took the place of scientific acquirement, and that Nature had done everything for him. It remains proved henceforth that not only has he the instinctive sense for the antique, but that he possesses it as a scholar who keeps posted in all the discoveries of critical history. What distinguishes him from the scientist, and constitutes in him the *artist*, is that he subordinates the document to the idea, and not the idea to the document. From this point of view, the painting called *Pollice Verso* is not only his *chef-d'œuvre*, but a *chef-d'œuvre*. The scrupulous exactitude of the slightest details contributes so greatly to the effect of the imagined scene that it is adorned with the certain definiteness which renders a thing absolutely seen so impossible to forget, so unchangeable, created for all time. It is the ideal of success in Art.

"It was about this time [adds Bergerat] that Gérôme presented himself seriously as a candidate before the Academy, his name having previously figured on the list as a mere formality."

A certain M. Hesse, of whom we never hear, was the candidate of the Institute as opposed to the progressive party, which was led by the Comte de Nieuwerkerke, at that time Superintendent of the Beaux-Arts. Hesse gained the election by one vote, but Gérôme was more than compensated for this postponement of the reward due his conspicuous merit, by his appointment as Professor in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts—a position he still holds through pure love of teaching, as the salary is merely nominal and the time spent with his beloved pupils means to him a financial loss of many thousands of francs.

He allowed two subsequent elections to pass unheeded. A third vacancy occurring, he consented to stand again and was elected—but, as Claretie observes, "without concessions on his part." And he adds: "Concessions are unknown to Gérôme! From head to foot he is upright and resolute."

The year 1860 was one of intense application and preparation for the Salon of 1861, and during this year we find chronicled the appearance of only two pictures, *An Italian Shepherd* and the *Donkey-boy of Cairo*. In the first one we have a picturesque reminiscence of a sunny day on the Campagna. A passing flock of sheep follows close at the heels of its guardian, who enlivens the way with a *ritornello* on his bagpipes, while his faithful dog, from a corner of his eye, keeps watch over the dusty animals, which are painted with a fidelity that even a Verboeckhoven might envy. 'Tis a well-worn theme, but Gérôme's treatment redeems it from the commonplace, and almost invests it with the charm of originality.

In the solemn, priest-like youth, with classic draperies, who posed for the *Donkey-boy* during Gérôme's first visit to Egypt, we have a perfect type of this indispensable accessory of Oriental life. When not lazily awaiting their patrons, brigades of these *gamins de Caire* may be seen charging through the streets, yelling vociferously and belaboring the patient *bourriquets* at every step. We find an amusing description of these donkey-boys in an account of the first *sortie à l'âne* through the streets of Cairo, which a merry band under command of "Colonel" Gérôme made in 1868. As an old soldier on this field of battle, the master laughingly regards the half-terrified amazement of the raw recruits, among whom is Paul Lenoir, his favorite pupil and inseparable companion during a long sojourn in the wilderness. It is he who is to embalm their mutual impressions in a volume which delightfully describes this eventful journey through Egypt to Sinai and Arabia Petræa, and which is dedicated to the master in the following graceful lines :

"DEAR MASTER: Permit me to offer you these few notes of a journey whose greatest charm and value lay in the fact that it was made in your company and under your kind direction. Egypt is your property; for it science and archæology have been able to reconstruct it by its hieroglyphs, you alone have translated its admirable light and brilliant animation, which they could not understand. Recalling the days we passed together in the desert, I venture to ask again the indulgence you then accorded the youngest of your caravan.

"Your respectful pupil,

"PAUL LENOIR."

Behold this joyous student then,—in Cairo, for the first time, clutching his reins and digging his heels into his little donkey, in a desperate attempt to preserve his equilibrium.

"Chmâlak! Yeminak! Reglak! We are rushed into a human whirlpool from which rises an indescribable tumult, increased by the howls and cries of these *gamins*, who, by well-directed blows, urge on our asses till we attain a rate of speed positively astonishing and, in view of the crowded condition of the streets, not a little disconcerting. Cavaliers, carriages, men, women, children, dogs, and long files of dromedaries attached to each other, are massed in seemingly inextricable confusion.

"Chmâlak! Reglak! Twenty times in our frenzied course a moving cathedral of a camel bears down upon our demoralized band, taking up the middle of the street! Twenty times our marvelous donkeys succeed in avoiding a collision, which would have been as disastrous for these little beasts as for us. Truly these animals have the instinct of circulation!"

And not only the animals, but their dusky drivers, who dodge in and out under the feet of the horses and camels, never losing an opportunity to bestow

a sounding thwack on their respective asses as they rush wildly on, displaying, it must be confessed, considerable "method in their madness"; for they bring up their patrons at one of the gates leading out of the city, without broken bones, but past all power of speech, to the intense amusement of their "Colonel," who, arrived the first, tranquilly smokes as he awaits the various detachments of his disorganized command! But we must leave for a time this gay company, of whose adventures we shall later be a daily witness, and return to the Salon of 1861, where six varied and powerful canvases gave imposing evidence of the fertility of conception and unremitting labor of the master. Timbal comments on this period in his career as follows:

"Certain works indicate a culminating point in talent which the artist scarcely ever surpasses; the *Duel of Pierrot* seemed such a one. It rapidly became popular; reproduced by the painter himself, and many times by engraving and photography, it is remembered by every one. But this species of success has its danger, and it is often well to look it in the face, to weigh it, and not permit one's self to be overpowered by it. How many people, without ill-will, recall it at each new effort, as if it had become *impossible* for the artist henceforth to surpass himself! Gérôme knew how to cope with praise! Besides, he remembered other compositions of his, less looked at, less piquant in invention, but which serious critics, and he himself, ranked above the *Duel*. Indeed, without pretending to diminish in the slightest degree, by comparison, the value of this moving picture, we venture to place beside it the simple idyl of *The Straw-cutting*, which seems an illustration contemporary with Herodotus, or a leaf taken from a chapter of the Bible. This juxtaposition proves in Gérôme comprehension of Nature, and the flexibility of an imagination which has been accused of sterility. He roams thus at will in every path, halting not more willingly before a bloody drama than before a field of wheat gilded by the sun; indifferent, if you please, by force of eclecticism, and bewildering the psychology of those who love to confine within certain limits the sensibility of the soul, which, it seems to me, should rather receive all shocks and, if possible, render back all harmonies."

This exquisite pastoral poem of the *Hache-paille*, which so impressed Timbal, appeared at the Salon of 1861. Gautier writes of it:

"We greatly love the *Straw-cutting in Egypt*. Its almost priestly seriousness harmonizes well with the talent of the painter. An Egyptian, grave and tranquil as the melancholy Osiris, guides around, over a circle of sheaves, a car built like a throne, drawn by two buffaloes and rolling on metal wheels; behind him, like an aoëris behind a Pharaoh, is a youth, also in profile. One would pronounce it a drawing from a necropolis in Thebes; and nevertheless it is a faithful sketch of a living reality. A dazzling sun,—throwing its rays over the yellow disk of sheaves, which reminds us of the golden circle of Osymandias—silvers the

heavens and tints the horizon with rose. What grandeur and what solemnity in this simple labor of agriculture! The drawing is as firm as an incision in granite—the coloring as rich as the illumination of a sacred papyrus.”

As further proof of the versatile genius of this great artist, there hung beside this Oriental idyl a picture of *Rembrandt Etching in his Atelier*, which Timbal pronounces one of his best works, “One of those which with justice should silence those critics who are unable to recast their foregone conclusions, and who, without taking into account the artist’s claims, or even his progress, continue to reproach him for being an archaeologist wandering from his sphere.”

The *Rembrandt* was a gem of purest quality, and all the connoisseurs of the time were in a ferment of admiration over this unexpected revelation of tone-power. Gautier charmingly describes the scene :

“The light, falling from a high window and filtering through one of those frames covered with white paper, which engravers use to soften the glare of the copper, creeps over the table, touches the bottles filled with water or acid, diffuses itself through the chamber, and dies away in obscure corners in warm, mysterious half-shadows. Rembrandt, clad in black and bending over the table, reflects the light on a plate in order to ascertain the depth of the incision. Nothing more. But here is genuine matter for a painter’s brush : light concentrated on one point and diminishing by imperceptible degrees, starting with white and ending with bitumen. This is equal in value to any literary or *spirituelle* fancy, and Rembrandt himself has scarcely portrayed any other, in his pictures or his etchings. The plate which he is in process of biting probably depicts a scene of this *genre*. The *Rembrandt* is a marvel of delicacy, transparency, and effect. Never has M. Gérôme shown himself more of a colorist. This Pompeian, this painter *à l’antiquaire*, this illuminator of Greek vases, has achieved at the first essay the absolute perfection of the Dutch masters.”

Still another note in this far-reaching but harmonious chord, that, transposed into different keys, vibrates with new power and richness. Now it passes into the minor, and reveals to us the pale, inspired features of a great representative of another phase of Art.

“The portrait of Rachel [says Gautier] is at the same time a portrait and a personification. Tragedy has blended itself with the tragedienne, the Muse with the actress ; draped in red and orange, she stands erect under a severe Doric portico. Sombre passions, fatalities, and tragic furies contract her pale countenance. Yes, it is Rachel—sinister, savage, and violent.”

De Tanouarn also writes :

“This portrait has not only the merit of great individual resemblance, it is the austere and noble image of Tragedy itself. And truly, Rachel was tragedy incarnate, passing through living realities of the epoch like a pale and majestic phantom.”



III. DEATH OF CAESAR

This impressive canvas hangs in the historic collection of the Théâtre Français, and never fails to arrest the eye by its weird and melancholy grandeur.

And now come three scenes from the antique, the first of which, under the title *Two Augurs cannot Regard each Other without Laughing*, suggests with consummate skill the ease with which poor credulous human nature has been imposed on from time immemorial. Behind the scenes, these two accomplished hypocrites indulge to the full their contemptuous merriment, while the awe-stricken populace without, silently pondering the utterances of the Oracle, obediently submits reason and will to these clever impostors, who, with only a change of garb and ritual, still number their followers by the thousands in our so-called enlightened age!

"The *Two Augurs*," says Scott, in his "Gems of French Art," "entitles Gérôme to the highest place as satirist as well as painter."

The most brilliant epoch in Greek history furnishes the artist with a theme for his next canvas—*Socrates Comes to Seek Alcibiades in the House of Aspasia*.

"Such [says Gautier] is the title of the second Greek picture of M. Gérôme. Alcibiades lounging on a couch beside Aspasia does not appear greatly inclined to follow his master, which can easily be conceived; philosophy is not worth as much as love—above all when Aspasia is the inspiration. A young slave, an artful, roguish beauty in transparent drapery, tries to keep back the spouse of Xantippe, and on the threshold of the door an old woman smiles sardonically. In the foreground a magnificent hound stretches himself out—the same dog whose tail Alcibiades cut to furnish matter for Athenian gossips. No specialist in animals could achieve its like. Placed as he is, he gains perhaps too much importance, but the dog of Alcibiades is himself a personage and not an accessory. The background represents an *atrium* decorated with that antique elegance so well understood by the artist. It is a restoration, in every sense of the word, of an exquisite rarity, and evincing a knowledge that in no wise detracts from the effect. The figures stand out boldly against the architecture, luminous and gay with many colors, in which one can find no fault save perhaps that of too much richness. The Athenians reserved all their luxurious decoration for their public buildings, and their dwellings were very small; but Aspasia, the renowned adviser and later the wife of Pericles, could well indulge in these splendors."

In the *Phryne before the Areopagus*, an equally celebrated and more dramatic historical episode is illustrated with inimitable power. Some critics of this period, jealous of the tide of admiration which surged in one direction, leaving their favorites with scanty appreciation, sought for some means to diminish the general enthusiasm, and could find nothing better than to assume an air of outraged modesty and loudly protest against these paintings as being at variance with the teachings of the Christian religion! Their attitude of offended virtue was so

visibly feigned and even ridiculous, and their position so altogether untenable, that they were soon silenced by the verdict of the best critics, which verdict Time has confirmed. Bergerat justly rebukes them for their prudery. He says :

“Painter and admirer of Antique Greece, it would have seemed to Gérôme, to say the least, audacious to ascribe to the contemporaries of Alcibiades sentiments which Christ did not preach to the world till a century after the death of Aspasia. He was not responsible for the fact that Athenian society admitted the courtesan as one of its fundamental elements and regarded her existence as one of their most serious principles of conservation. If we are interested in Socrates we cannot ignore Aspasia, and if we celebrate the justice of the Areopagus, we cannot forget that it acquitted Phryne on the simple revelation of her beauty—a national beauty, the remembrance and softening influences of which have survived for ages.”

The painter has well chosen the moment when Hyperides puts the crowning touch to his eloquent defense, and gains his cause by revealing to these worshippers of the religion of pure beauty the matchless charms of the Athenian flute-player, whose perfect form was reproduced by Apelles in his Venus Anadyomene and by Praxiteles in the famous golden statue of the Temple of Delphos. The charge of impiety and irreverence toward the gods, punishable by death, could never have been sustained in the face of the incomparable loveliness which, to these superstitious heathens, was almost a proof of the divinity of its possessor. The instinctive gesture of the astonished Phryne, the varied emotions of the equally astonished tribunal, the triumphant glance of the successful orator, the floating drapery—every detail is rendered with a skill that leaves one at a loss for words that shall bring fitting tribute. The dramatic intensity of this scene is given with all the artist's characteristic power, which raises him so far above contemporary artists. Criticism has long since ceased to cavil at the subject, and the *Phryne* of Gérôme takes rank with the finest creations of antiquity and surpasses them in dramatic grouping and emotional delineation.

In an interesting and original volume entitled *Sententie Artis*, by Harry Quilter, M. A., a well-known English critic, we find the following comparison :

“I feel inclined to deny true imagination to Mr. —. Why? Because I should do so to any man who imagined the body and forgot the soul; who gave me the face of antique life, but not the heart. It is not probable that if any of us had audience with Agrippa, or witnessed the death of Caesar, we should think of palace marbles first and the living emperor afterward. To use a theatrical image, the actors in this artist's paintings do not ‘take the stage.’ Compare his work in this respect with that of Gérôme. In most of this painter's works, if we examine them carefully, it will be found that most of the effect depends upon the painting of suddenly arrested action. In nearly every picture there is a

pause of action. We hold our breath, as it were, to see what is coming next. We can only point this out; like many another incident of art it cannot be proved to those who do not feel it."

The *Fine Arts Quarterly Review*, of London, referring to the *Phryne* says: "It is needless to insist on the consummate art-power which in such compositions attacks difficulties that lesser artists would simply evade. A hand for drawing, an eye for both ideal beauty and individual character, together with thorough technical knowledge, are proved in this work." And Claretie writes: "In the smallest picture, in the least of his drawings, Gérôme shows the hand of the master. Certain studies taken from Nature for his *Phryne* would form an incomparable frieze for the cabinet of an amateur, as finished as any antique."

It was after the Salon of 1861 that our artist, wearied by his immense efforts, and haunted, waking and sleeping, by visions from the enchanted "land of the sun," yielded to his passion for travel and organized a party which, under his intrepid leadership, penetrated far into the then little known regions of the Syrian Desert. His notes furnish us with a condensed but graphic account of this journey, revealing anew his keen powers of observation and reflection in regard to both physical and mental phenomena. He writes:

"About this time I undertook another journey to the Orient—to Judea, Egypt, and Syria. We were seventeen days crossing the Desert of Syria. It was the first time that I had ventured into the desert. Our caravan was well organized, though not very large. We had supplied ourselves carefully with everything necessary to our material existence, above all with Nile water, a precaution all the more important since we took with us four horses, and we were obliged to load the water these animals were to consume, on the backs of the camels; twenty-four liters a day, multiplied by seventeen, made 408 liters. Happily at El-Arich, the last Egyptian station, there was a well where travelers could renew their supply. In very long crossings, it is impossible to take horses; besides, camels are admirably convenient, since one is not obliged to occupy one's self so seriously with their food and drink. Once arrived at the encampment,



they are loosed, and they instantly set off in search of both. They always find a certain fleshy plant, with narrow leaves, the interior of which contains a certain humidity, and which serve at the same time as food and drink. They can therefore make several long marches without being watered, but they drink deep when they find opportunity. Their spongy feet are admirably constructed for the yielding soil. They spread them over the sand and are thus enabled to sustain their heavy weight, while the horses and the asses sometimes sink in up to their knees. The camel is truly a ship in this desert sea.

"Nothing could be more agreeable, more poetic, than our encampments in this solitude, with its added charm of novelty and the unknown. Although fatigued by long marches in the full blaze of the sun, I began my work with ardor as soon as the halting-place was reached; but alas! how many things I was forced to leave behind, only a bare memory of which I could take away. I who prefer three touches of color on a canvas to the most vivid of memories! But one must always press forward and let one's regrets ride *en croupe!*

"In spite of the charm of this desert life, I am bound to say that at the end of a certain number of days, when one catches the first glimpse of cultivated plains, when one meets again one's fellow-men, one has a very sweet sensation; and the sight of a green prairie—*really green*—rejoices one amazingly. . . . Approaching in the direction of Gaza, we passed suddenly from utter barrenness to a fertile country; there were pomegranates in blossom, orange, lemon, and palm trees. . . . we found again life and labor in all its phases—but no gates! Samson had not returned!

"Several leagues from Jerusalem we pitched our tent, for it was already late, and we wished to start very early the next day. By daybreak we were *en route*, but were suddenly assailed by the most terrible storm I have ever in my life endured. At a turning in the road (our road was the bed of a torrent!) a gust of wind almost overturned my horse and me, and one of my comrades, who, fatigued by riding, was trying to get on better afoot, was forced from time to time to take off his riding-boots and empty them, for the water, running in at his collar, literally filled them.

"On our arrival, the tempest was still raging and it was impossible to pitch the tents on account of the violence of the wind. For want of more suitable refuge, we hastened in to *Saint-Sépulchre*, in a horrible state, wet to the skin and chilled with the cold. But we forgot everything before the strangeness of the spectacle which met our eyes. It was Good Friday, and all was in a state of preparation for the Easter Festival. Pilgrims from all four corners of the earth were there gathered, nay, jammed together; some singing in procession, others silent in prayer; others still, having constructed rude lodgings with planks, between the columns, were swarming there with their wives and children; for a certain curious tradition guarantees a peculiar blessing from God upon children conceived in these holy surroundings. We elbowed Armenians, Greeks, Copts, Russians, Roman Catholics in a word, all Christian sects who came there, not only to adore and supplicate the Most High, but also, and above all, to declare that they *execrated each*

other! For in truth it is seldom that these feasts pass by without blood being shed upon the flagstones of the Temple, and two or three corpses being scattered on the ground! And then the Turkish regiment that mounts guard, fully armed, crosses bayonets and clears out the place! In order to avoid this scandal, each of the faithful of late years is searched at the door and relieved of his knife and any other offensive weapon, so that now these devotees of the Christian religion are forced to fall back on insults, hustlings, and knockdown blows with the fist! I was nearly strangled in one of these allfays, which I found only moderately attractive; for I was not of the number (which really was not small) who, old and decrepit, make long journeys in order to die at Jerusalem and be interred on the banks of the Kedron. Those who have religious sentiments, and wish to preserve them unsullied, will do well not to visit the Holy Sepulcher at this time.

"The character of the country is desolate—stones everywhere, scanty vegetation, olive trees of rickety shapes twisted by the tempest; but it is not a commonplace country. When one has once seen it, one can never forget it. The city has also its own physiognomy: swarming and very agitated at the Easter season, gloomy and silent at any other time. An excursion of five or six days is sufficient to make the tour of Judea, which is really the *bantieu* (suburbs) of Jerusalem; everywhere mournfulness and barrenness, even on the banks of the Jordan, above all on the shores of the Dead Sea, a pool lying in low ground, in a heavy, burning atmosphere. We passed Lake Tiberias, one of the spots much frequented by Jesus; and made long stretches, now on horseback, stopping at Baalbec, within the inclosure or rather the ruins of the city, of imposing grandeur, but whose style denotes an epoch of decadence. The most curious point there is a very ancient wall, each stone of which has proportions so formidable that one wonders what machinery the Titans of that period possessed, to be able to bring these huge blocks from the quarry.

"Arrival at Damascus after a two days' march. It was the crown and end of our journey, as Cairo had been the beginning. Damascus! Cairo! the most remarkable cities of the Orient; those which have remained longest untainted by the impure breath of Europe. I speak of the 'long ago,' for since then Cairo has been disfigured, and this Khedive, who has laid his sacrilegious hand on these relics, will have a terrible account to render to Allah!

"I worked but little at Damascus, for I was very fatigued by the journey. In midsummer the heat was tropical, and so much the more insupportable, in that the city is surrounded by mountains covered with immense trees, which stop the circulation of the air, and one suffers much during the warm season in spite of the numerous brooks that furrow the ground in every direction. I was present at a very curious Jewish feast given by a rich banker, where a large number of young women were smoking their *narghiléhs* in astonishingly *décolleté* costumes, seated on rich divans in immense halls of very elegant architecture.

"Before closing these notes I want to tell you of a touching episode which I witnessed at Jerusalem. Our cook met one of his friends, also a cook, in the service of some travelers who were encamped close beside us. This friend, who was

still young, had quitted his home in Bagdad two years before, leaving his old mother there alone. At the end of this time, the poor woman could no longer overcome the longing to see her child. She set off without money, without resources, on foot, attaching herself to the different caravans she met, living on charity. And thus she made numerous and painful journeys, seeking her son. But where shall she look, for she is absolutely ignorant of his whereabouts. Is he in Egypt or Syria or Greece; in Turkey or in Arabia? In Europe, Asia, or Africa? She knows not; but, sustained by love, she walks on!—

and still she walks on.
Allah had pity on her and permitted her to meet her well-beloved son at Jerusalem."



On these same notes, hastily jotted down by the artist as "reminders," Bergerat comments as follows: "Their autobiographical interest is thrown into the shade, so to speak, by their physiological value, and for him who knows how to read and judge a man by his style, no portrait could more exactly reveal the

personality of Gérôme than these few pages of pen sketches. Incisive clearness of vision contends here with the taste dominant in the character; and these are the two master qualities of the painter. As he writes, he paints; the philosophy of art is the same. Remark how his eye is caught instantly by the decisive note of objects or scenes, that he subordinates surrounding details, and that his thorough education as a painter aids him to select at a glance the desired effect out of many." The return voyage was saddened by the death of one of their little band, Duhais, who was sorrowfully interred at Trieste. This long journey of eight months was followed in January, 1862, by the marriage of Gérôme to the beautiful daughter of Monsieur Goupil, the well-known head of the most important art-publishing house in the world. After the wedding-journey of two months in Italy, they returned to the charming hotel which Gérôme had constructed on the Rue de Bruxelles, which now forms a part of their present residence on the Boulevard de Clichy. In his artistic and commodious home the master often recalls with a smile the little servant's chamber under the roof in the Rue St. Martin, which he occupied as a poor student when he first came

to Paris. He changed afterward to an old house in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie,—the former site of the Théâtre Français,—where he obtained a more comfortable room directly opposite the old Café Procop, so much frequented by Voltaire. He was finally able to take a tiny, obscure atelier, but still an atelier of his own, in the Rue de Sèvres, where he painted the famous *Combat de Coqs*. The artist who occupied this memorable studio afterward, meeting Gérôme one day, assailed him with a flood of questions as to how he had been "able to exist in that black, gloomy, frightful hole!" The master, genuinely surprised, replied, "I did not have time to notice all that! It was gay enough for me, for I remember we laughed and sang a great deal!" From this dark little studio he went to the Rue de Fleurus, where several of his comrades came to live with him, among them Hamon, Picou, and Schoenwerk the sculptor. From there to the Rue Duguay-Trouin, then surrounded by open fields, and where his drawing-room was the street! for there he received all his visitors when it was too dark to work and he could not afford lights. It was about this time that he was playfully accused of living "like a Sybarite"—a good-natured sarcasm which has been taken *au grand sérieux* by several critics! The father of the painter Toulmouche, one of his best friends, finally constructed an atelier for him in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs, which he occupied until his marriage, and where he painted many of his great pictures. Ménard gives us a graphic description of life in this gay atelier, an invitation to which was eagerly sought for.

"M. Gérôme's studio has always been frequented by a great number of artists and men of letters. When he was living in his *boite-à-thé* (the name given by painters to a sort of Japanese house in which was his studio), he was the center of a large group of young men who surrounded him with gaiety. In the evenings there were improvised fêtes in which wit and humor made up for the absence of ceremony. The studio was further enlivened by an enormous monkey, whose only fault was a determination to paint like all those about him; this, however, was serious, as he was not always satisfied with painting upon his own pictures, but sometimes daubed over the works of other artists! Then there was a burst of indignation, but the saucy monkey contrived always to get forgiven on account of his thousand tricks and farces, and to get the laugh on his own side. There were several studios for painters in the same house, which, moreover, was near the Luxembourg, a quarter where artists congregate in great numbers. As groups of painters are always formed by a sympathy in tendencies, the friends of M. Gérôme were generally little inclined toward realistic innovations. There had been some noise made about some large pictures by M. Gustave Courbet, which, not without merit, somewhat resembled caricatures, and certain theorists exalted very loudly the manner of the painter. Naturally, a different opinion prevailed amongst M. Gérôme's friends, and this led to the representation of a parody 'de circonstance,' acted in the studio, and in which a certain 'Réaliste' exposes his doctrine in these words:

"Faire *vrai*,—ce n'est rien pour être réaliste ;
 C'est faire *laid* qu'il faut ! or, Monsieur, s'il vous plaît,
 Tout ce que je dessine est horriblement laid !
 Ma peinture est affreuse, et pour qu'elle soit vraie,
 J'en arrache le beau, comme on fait de l'ivraie !
 J'aime les teints terreux, et les nez de carton,
 Les lilletes avec de la barbe au menton,
 Les trognes de tarasque et de coque-eigries,
 Les durillons, les cors aux pieds, et les verrues !
 Voilà le *vrai* !"

"This criticism of realistic doctrines might be somewhat sharp, but it was an answer to the sarcasms continually thrown from the opposite camp upon the artists who drew most of their subjects from antiquity."

Ménard's mention of the monkey, which was Gérôme's property and his especial pet, reminds us of a comical story that we have from the artist's own lips. Jacques was an unusually bright specimen and his master was indefatigable in training him, especially in regard to his manners "at table," where he was often the gravest of the little company. He could not be cured, however, of certain marauding tendencies, and soon Gérôme was obliged to pay damages in the neighborhood for uprooted flowers, broken windows, and like mischief. A collar and chain thenceforth kept M. Jacques indoors and in order. One day, having succeeded in breaking his fetters, he made his way slyly through the open skylight into the street. His absence was not remarked, till his empty chair at the noonday *déjeuner* called attention to the fact that he was doubtless *en route* for further costly adventures. Hastily clapping on a hat, Gérôme rushed out in pursuit, inquiring of every one he met, news of his fugitive property. He traced him as far as one of the Grands Boulevards, and there, on turning a corner, he discovered a crowd gathered in front of the immense glass window of a fashionable restaurant. Naturally gravitating in that direction, his astonished eyes beheld M. Jacques, with napkin decorously tucked into his collar, gravely seated at a table where a *tête-à-tête* breakfast was in progress, regardless of the energetic protests of the gentleman, or the dismayed shrinking of his fair companion—and resenting by a furious chattering any attempt on the part of the convulsed *garçons* to remove him from his comfortable seat! Repressing his merriment by a strong effort, Gérôme entered the *café*, and courteously apologizing for the intrusion of his "familiar," captured the uninvited guest, who meekly submitted to be borne away amid the cheers and bravos of the amused spectators!

In spite of the hilarity that enlivened this period of his life, the artist's habits of steady application were too well confirmed to be affected to the detriment of

his work, and in his more luxurious quarters in the Boulevard de Clichy he did not alter his rigid rule of early rising and almost uninterrupted labor till sundown.

Connoisseurs, and, indeed, the general public, had learned to look eagerly for Gérôme's exhibit at the Salon, confident of finding the wherewithal to satisfy eye and heart—the senses and the imagination. The Salon of 1863 was no exception to the rule. Varnishing Day beheld a delighted throng almost equally divided before four canvases, passing from one to the other with ever-increasing admiration for the infinite versatility and flawless execution more and more apparent at each exhibition. Perhaps the longest pause was made before the *Prisoner on the Nile*, one of his best known Oriental souvenirs. The London *Athenæum* characterizes it as "a marvelous work, one of the most poetical we know of and a noble example of execution," and another writer in the same review adds, "The picture in question is so brilliant and solid that its illusion is almost complete, and that result is obtained without the sacrifice of any noble qualities to mere imitation."

Maxime Du Camp says :

"The scene takes place in Upper Egypt, on the Nile, not far from the village of Luxor, with the imposing silhouette of the Palace of Amenophis stretching along the horizon. In several strokes of the brush M. Gérôme has shown perfectly, to those capable of understanding, the state of Egypt, where a dreamy, gentle, submissive race is tortured daily by its ancient conquerors, more uncivilized, more vicious, and less intelligent than the vanquished."

Charles Blanc gives a more detailed description of it :

"The *Prisoner* is a little masterpiece. Bound, and lying crosswise in an Egyptian bark, the captive is borne on the Nile to his final destiny—which doubtless is decapitation by the saber. Urged forward by two oarsmen, one of whom is a strong-armed Nubian, the craft flies like an arrow over the placid waters in the twilight. The master, girdled with poniards and pistols, broods over his vengeance, and looks steadily before him with half-closed eyes, a glance of cruel joy flashing from beneath the long lashes that veil them. It reminds me of Richelieu dragging Cinq-Mars off to the gallows in a boat on the Rhone. Meanwhile, a youth with languishing glance and equivocal mien, an effeminate stripling of low degree, sings, while thrumming his mandolin, as if chanting by order a death-song in mockery of the prisoner's sufferings. The heavens are cloudless ; nature calm and happy ; the Pharaonic temples embellish the distant banks of the stream and trace on the still, clear evening sky their solemn and eternal silhouettes. Yes, this picture is a masterpiece. Nothing should be changed in it—absolutely nothing ; *ne varietur*."

Philip Gilbert Hamerton bears eloquent witness, in the *Fine Arts Quarterly Review* of London, to the manifold power of the master. He says :

"Here is a Frenchman who seems to have all the good of English Pre-Raphaelism with none of its extravagance. He is as minute as Holman Hunt himself, omitting absolutely nothing that can be told in paint; yet his detail, however marvelously studied, is always kept perfectly subordinate to the main purpose. His picture of the *Prisoner* represents a boat on the Nile with an unlucky prisoner in it bound hand and foot. The rowers are a wonderful study,



their muscular shoulders and arms wrought out to the utmost, even down to the swelling sinews of the wrist, whose strong cords conduct the power of the arms and chest down to the hands that grasp the oar. There is so much masterly drawing in every bit of this work, such perfect care, such loyalty to fact, that you cannot find one thoughtless touch in it. The distant shore of the Nile is a lesson for a landscape painter; the polished ripple in the calm water, and the long drawn reflections are full of delicate truth; the sky right in color and painted, it seems, at once. A curious property of this picture, and which goes far to prove its consummate truth, is that the spectator has no idea at first that it is minute work, for the details, being modest and in their right places, do not continually cry aloud 'See what a multitude we are!' as details are too much in the habit of doing in England. After gazing at the picture for five minutes we begin to discover that it is full of minute facts, which we had not seen; and if we go to the picture every day for a week, we shall always find something new in it."

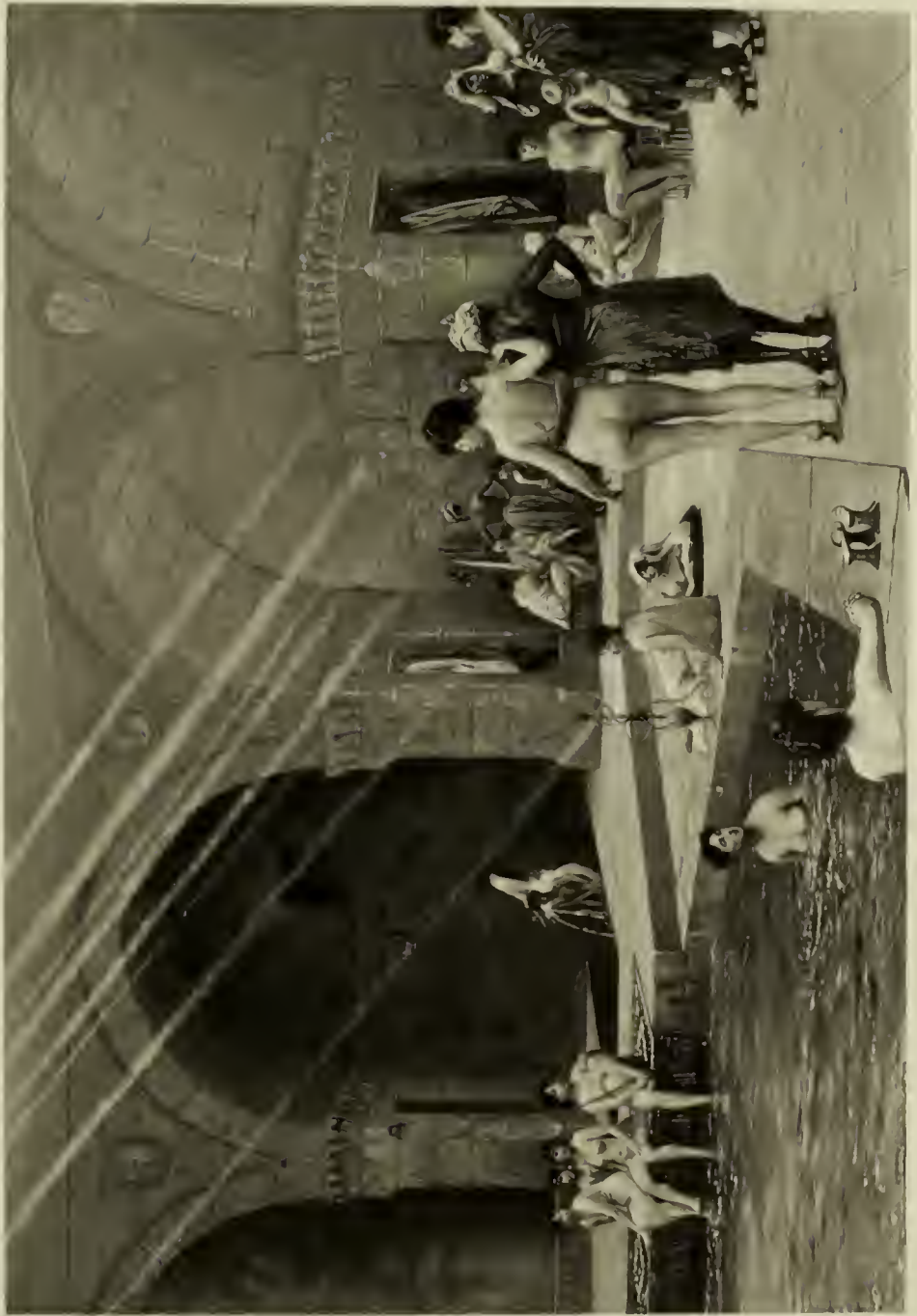
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Timbal takes up the theme as follows:

"It has been said that Gérôme contents himself with seizing on the wing a picturesque scene; that he transfers it to the canvas without commentary, without seeking to add any other attraction than that of a vigorously faithful transcription. However, it would seem that the author of the *Duel of Pierrot* can overleap, when he pleases, the limits within which he often voluntarily confines himself, and even when he remains a simple painter of manners and customs, he succeeds still in being something more. One evening, walking on

GRAND BATH AT BROUSSA

1885



the banks of the Nile in the twilight, he was looking at a boat drifting down the river over the silvery, trembling wavelets. Seated in the prow, an Arnaut was singing to the stars, accompanying himself on the *guzla*. Was not the theme sufficient? The painter, however, with the interior eye of his imagination, beheld there an actor who would double the interest; on the rower's bench he extended a poor slave, his hands and feet closely confined by fetters. Blow, balmy breeze! thou passest over meadows the prisoner never more shall tread; shine, O light of heaven! on these eyes soon to close forever; and thou, executioner, insult thy victim by voice and gesture! Here are contrasts which more than one painter could render with equally skillful brush, but the heart of a poet alone will discover them, and without having to owe a debt of gratitude to the chance which has furnished them!"

The assertion of Maxime Du Camp, that, to be successful, Gérôme "must have seen with his own eyes," that "he imagines very badly but remembers very well," is silently but effectually refuted by dozens of poetical conceptions, among them this picture of the *Prisoner*, which was re-exposed in 1867. Gérôme makes characteristic mention of it in his notes: "The *Prisoner* (now in the Museum at Nantes) had a universal success, being admired by both connoisseurs and idiots!"

In *The Comedians*, the artist has revived for us a scene from the earliest periods of dramatic art—the trying on of masks representing every possible phase of emotion, the use of which preceded the cultivation of facial expression on the part of the players themselves. Two actors are critically regarding the effect of a most lugubrious mask which one of their *confrères* is holding before his placid countenance. The shelves of this curious antique green-room are heaped with these different canvas visages, on which all the passions of the soul seem to be petrified. Truly Gérôme can make not only his public but his actors literally laugh and weep at will! The drawing, coloring, pose, and grouping of details, which never detract from the breadth of style, are carried to a degree of perfection only attainable by a master mind and hand. Of the *Turkish Butcher at Jerusalem*, a marvel of color and finish, which was also re-exhibited in 1867, Gautier writes:

"Here is a youth with charming, melancholy, dreamy mien, leaning idly against the wall of his stall, where the different meats are suspended from hooks. In a circle, at his feet, lie the heads of his victims, sheep and goats, who seem to regard him mournfully from the depths of their glassy eyes. The butcher is a genuine fatalist—he pays no attention to these mute reproaches; he kills without cruelty, just as he would do anything else, and would no doubt as calmly cut the throat of a man as of a sheep. Surrounded by these poor dead animals, he abandons himself to a *kief*, in which he beholds the visions of the Thousand and One Nights. Nothing could transport one more vividly to the Orient than this little picture, which could be covered by one's hand."

Molière Breakfasting with Louis XIV., the closing picture of this quartette, as skillful in treatment as it is varied in incident, gives us one of those scenes that reveal Gérôme's peculiar power of seizing and expressing the finest *nuances* of emotion. The ironical *bonhomie* of the king as he administers this stinging rebuke to the snobbish prejudices of his favorites; their surprise and wrath, poorly concealed by the majority under an obsequious deference, and openly displayed by the outraged pillar of the Church; the mingled dignity, embarrassment, and enjoyment of the guest, who can so thoroughly appreciate the humor of the situation, piquant enough to have been taken from one of his own inimitable comedies,—all is rendered with matchless ability. Hamerton writes

“The picture of Molière at the court of Louis XIV. is an astonishing piece of work; so thoughtful, graceful, and refined in conception, so exquisitely perfect in execution. The incident is that famous one when the king gave a lesson to his proud courtiers by inviting Molière to eat at his own table, since they considered him unfit for theirs. Perhaps Louis was the more honored of the two when they sat thus together! but the courtiers did not think so. In their view, the king had lost all sense of dignity when he let that playwright eat with him. Every face is full of expression, the king's beaming with malicious enjoyment at the sensation he has just created; Molière, already seated, is bending modestly forward, with his two-pronged fork in his hand, to attack the viands in obedience to the royal will. The pale bishop in the corner, with the violet vestments, is especially indignant, his face white with anger and full of scorn; but the king is not in a humor to be frightened by anybody's cross looks just now. As to the execution, it is enough to say that everything is honestly drawn, down to the embroidery on the stockings, with firmness and accuracy, yet no undue emphasis. Every detail is treated patiently and respectfully. There is another picture of precisely the same incident by a clever painter, M. Lemm. His interpretation is lively and skillful, but a careful comparison of the two pictures only makes Gérôme's great quality more conspicuous. That quality is best expressed by the French word *distinction*. It is more than refinement; it is consummate grace joined to perfect knowledge.”

Gérôme's notes barely record the appearance of these four pictures, which created so much enthusiasm, and also mention without comment the exhibition at the Salon of 1864 of a portrait of a friend, M. A. T., and *L'Almée*, an Oriental scene, at that epoch more striking from its novelty, but since become familiar to the world who thronged to the late Universal Exposition of 1889, and watched with amazement the strange contortions of the Khedive's *ballet de l'Opéra*, who came to Paris to capture the plaudits and the gold of the assembled nations. Every one who has seen this singular exotic dance can bear witness to the absolute verity of the painter's canvas. Gautier writes:

"There is always a crowd before the *Alméc* of M. Gérôme, a curious picture which is like a corner of the Orient in a frame. In one of those smoky hovels, where one takes coffee, squatted on rush mats, an *Alméc* is dancing before some Albanians with their strange costumes and fierce mien. Dwellers in the Orient have very peculiar ideas in regard to dancing; the sight of a well-turned limb and ankle, or gauzy skirts raised by a dexterous movement of the foot—all this would seem to them the height of extravagance and immodesty; but provided that the gold-spangled slipper never leaves the ground, they permit the most voluptuous undulations and poses of the body, sensuous movements of the arms, and waving of silken scarfs, languishing glances, and the head rolling from one shoulder to the other as if intoxicated with love. This Terpsichore, with her eyelashes stained by *k'hol*, and her nails reddened by *henna*, has nothing in common, as one perceives, with the Terpsichore of the opera. The *Alméc* of M. Gérôme is executing one of these dances. Her vest of yellow satin incloses her form like an antique *cestus*, her trousers of a pale rose-mauve taffetas, wide and pleated like a skirt, envelop her from waist to ankle. She advances by imperceptible displacements of the feet, undulating the serpentine lines of her body, her head lying on her shoulder like a turning dervish in an ecstasy, and keeping time by a nervous jingle of her *crotales* to the chant which the musicians, seated in the shadow, are droning out to the accompaniment of the *rebeb*, the *tarbouka*, and a dervish's flute. The Albanians, with their belts bristling with a perfect arsenal of pistols, *kandjars*, and *yataghans*, and wearing on their heads *caffichs*, whose cords and tassels half conceal their countenances, look at her fixedly, as impassible as kites watching a dove, while a negro, smiling from ear to ear, abandons himself to his delight and applauds the dancer while marking time for her. In the background we perceive the *kawodji*, occupied with his stove; at the left, through the open door, we have a glimpse of Cairo, the blue of the sky gleaming oddly through the fine carving of the *moncharabys*.

"We know to what a point the ethnographic sense is developed in M. Gérôme. No artist seizes as well as he the typical accent of races, the local character of costumes, the exotic variety of accessories. With respect to all these points he exhibits an intimate and penetrating accuracy, of which one could have no doubt, even were one unacquainted with the countries represented by the artist-traveler. The *Alméc* is of an astonishing truthfulness in point of type, pose, and attire. Her bracelets, her strings of sequins, her gold-embossed girdle, display the coquettish savagery of Arabic adornment. The toilet is complete; nothing is wanting, not even the carmine on the nails, the black line under the eyes, and the little blue tattooing on the chin. Even in this *genre* picture, one divines the painter of history by the science of the drawing, the purity of style, and the masterly taste which presides over the slightest details."

The Salon of 1865 was rich in the elaboration of several other sketches taken on the last journey through Egypt and Syria, notably the *Prayer in the Desert*, which Bergerat justly ranks among "the purest and loveliest gems in his superb Oriental casket." No description can possibly convey more than a shadow of the

beauty of this scene. Up from the east comes a seemingly interminable caravan, reluctantly quitting the coolness of mountain passes to face the glare of the open desert and the level but still powerful rays of the setting sun. Here is no muezzin to warn the faithful that the hour for prayer has come ! yet the warlike leader, ever mindful of his oft-repeated duty, has thrown himself from his horse, who turns quietly to nibble at a tuft of grass, while his master, lacking the requisite carpet, unfastens his mantle and spreads it upon the burning sand. Then removing his sandals, and turning toward the city of Mahomet, he bends his head and with humble reverence calls upon the name of Allah and his Prophet. His lance, carelessly thrust into the ground, points like a minaret to the misty blue heavens and serves as guide to the horsemen who are urging their weary steeds over the plain toward the hill in the foreground, while the patient camels move slowly and heavily forward over the endless reaches of white sand which extend to the foot of the dimly outlined range of mountains in the background. In spite of the color and movement, here is the same intense stillness, the overwhelming loneliness, the same penetrating sense of distance and space, of poetry and mystery, which takes possession of every one who studies Gérôme's pictures of the desert. Add to this a religious feeling thoroughly appreciated and reflected by the painter, and we have one of his most expressive compositions in this *genre*. We almost feel that we are traveling with him through this Syrian wilderness, which he faintly outlined for us in the notes we have quoted.

In the *Muezzin -at Night*, which the *Athenæum* praises for its "tone, softness, solidity, and admirable expression," there is the same strong, genuine religious feeling. Here too are loneliness and space; but it is the loneliness of the night, which intensifies all emotion, veils all defects, and reveals beauties hidden by the midday glare; and space, through which the reverent soul can upreach past unknown worlds and touch the Infinite. The unquestioning faith of the Moslem, as well as the picturesque contour of his postures while at worship, deeply impressed our artist and became a favorite theme. In *Prayer on the House-top*, he gives us another phase almost as beautiful as those we have described. Gautier says:

"In this *Prayer* M. Gérôme has not needed to exert much effort to make a delicious picture. It is evening; the gold of the sunset meeting the twilight azure, produces one of those greenish blues, like the blue of the turquoise, of a delicate and rare tone. The moon faintly outlines its silver crescent, and the minarets, tapering like masts of ivory, send out from their high balconies the call of the muezzin, 'El salam alek, aleikonm el salam!' A vague, soft light falls upon the terraces of the whitewashed houses, where the believers, standing, kneeling, or with their foreheads bowed upon their carpet, recite their prayers



THE SLAVE MARKET.

and chant the glory of Allah, the eternal, solitary, and only one, in the solemn attitudes of Oriental devotion which the artist excels in rendering. The impression made by this little canvas is profoundly religious. After the work, the heat, and the dissipation of the day, the evening descends, bringing to souls and to Nature, calm, freshness, and serenity. Islam, filled with faith, confides itself to God for the coming night."

In the *Arnaut, Smoking*, we have a picturesque specimen of an Albanian taking his ease on a wide divan as he lazily pulls away at his *narghiléh*, having kicked off his *savates*, and drawn up his feet under his snow-white *fustanelle*. The light filters through the lattice-work of the *moncharabiéh* and touches up the long mustachios and swarthy breast, the jeweled handle of the *kandjar* thrust into his sash, and the multicolored embroidery of the cushion on which he rests his elbow. It is a picture full of rich and harmonious tones.

Side by side with these glimpses of far-away and unique races seen in their native surroundings, we find another of these strange Eastern types transplanted into the very center of modern civilization, and presenting one of the strongest possible contrasts, as to costume and manner, that history ever furnished for a painter's brush. The Imperial choice fell upon Gérôme to render this extraordinary scene, and, little as it was to his liking, he has achieved a success where almost any other artist would have been obliged to chronicle a failure. Gautier describes this canvas as follows :

"*The Reception of the Siamese Ambassadors at the Palace of Fontainebleau*, of M. Gérôme, keenly piques the curiosity of the visitors to the Salon, and one is forced to wait one's turn to see it. Indeed, it is a strange spectacle, these ambassadors crawling on all fours over the carpet toward the throne. M. Gérôme was qualified above all others to depict this singular scene; he has a profound knowledge of exotic races, and a marvelous grasp of their peculiarities and dispositions. Picturesque ethnography is of very recent date, and is one of the modern conquests of art.

"When the old masters had foreign subjects to paint, they contented themselves with types of pure fantasy, and local color did not trouble them in the slightest degree. These deceptions are no longer admissible in our time of exact information and easy travel. Nothing can be more fantastic than this procession of swarthy creatures, robed in costumes glittering with gold and embroideries, which advances on hands and knees, in postures impossible to European articulations, toward the Emperor and Empress, whose kind gravity is maintained despite the oddity of the spectacle. On the steps of the throne are deposited imperial parasols, stuffs interwoven with gold, delicate foreign jewelry, and all the fanciful luxury of the extreme Orient. One cannot sufficiently appreciate the exquisite care and exactness with which the artist has rendered the figures, costumes, and jewels of the strange embassy. In front is a youth with shaven head, complexion of gold, and eyes like black diamonds, who is

creeping along so gracefully, and lifts his head with so droll an air, that it is a pleasure to look at him. One would say it was a Cupid, who, through caprice, has disguised himself like a grotesque bit of Chinese porcelain.

“Beside the carpet which is being traversed by the Siamese notabilities in these batrachian attitudes are the great personages of the court, the familiars of the *Chateau*—standing erect, calm, grave, disguising a half-smile under their official seriousness, each face being perfectly recognizable. The maids of honor to the Empress are grouped near the throne. At the other end of the hall, in a corner near the edge of the canvas, the artist, a necessary witness of the scene, has represented himself as standing next to Meissonier. The frescoes of Primaticcio, discreetly subdued to give more value to the leading motives, are visible in the half-shadow of the background, which they people with their vague silhouettes. It would be difficult to treat this quaint subject more skillfully than M. Gérôme has done. If the glittering and gilded costumes of the ambassadors, with their Asiatic richness, make the familiar European attire appear insignificant, the blame must not be laid on the artist’s palette. The abruptness of contrast was inevitable.”

As Gautier remarks, all of these officials that surround Napoleon III. and the Empress Eugénie are easily to be recognized by any one familiar with the entourage of the court at this epoch; but the difficulty under which Gérôme labored in painting these portraits can scarcely be conceived by the uninitiated. It is partly illustrated by the following anecdote, related by Timbal, for the absolute verity of which we have heard the master vouch more than once.

“One day, one of the personages to whom was assigned the honor of figuring in the picture of the *Ambassadors*, arrived very much later than the hour indicated by the painter. ‘Impossible to have you pose to-day,’ said the artist, a trifle vexed at this carelessness and the loss of time; ‘I am expecting the Duke of P—; he will be here at three o’clock, and it is now ten minutes of three.’ ‘Oh, well!’ replied the delinquent, with nonchalance, ‘you have ten minutes! work quickly, for I shall not be able to come again!’ After that, accuse portraits of lying or the painters of want of fidelity or skill.”

The same steady, quiet work went on during this year and the next, producing for the Salon of 1866 three canvases, the most important of which, *Cleopatra and Cæsar*, has achieved a world-wide renown. A paragraph from Plutarch’s *Life of Cæsar* furnishes the key to this marvelous picture: “Cleopatra embarked in a little boat and arrived by night before the Palace of Alexandria. As she could not enter without being recognized, she wrapped herself in a carpet which Apollodorus bound with a thong, and which he caused to be conveyed into the presence of Cæsar by the very door of the palace. This ruse of Cleopatra, it is said, was the first bait by which Cæsar was taken.”

The exquisite form of Cleopatra, rising from the folds of the heavy rug

like Venus from the billows of the sea, is brought into strong relief against the swarthy skin of the slave who has borne in on his sturdy shoulders this living freight of fragrant beauty. An appealing glance from the mournful eyes of Egypt's vanquished Queen meets the astonished gaze of Cæsar, as he lifts his head from the manuscript he is perusing—and all is said! The picture is fraught with suggestion, fascinating the eye that loves to linger over beautiful contours, and, still more, one that can read between these eloquent lines. This canvas was also exhibited in 1871 at the Royal Academy in London, of which Gérôme was made an Honorary Member.

We have already alluded to the *Door of the Mosque El-Assaneyn*, where Salek-Kachef exposed the heads of the rebel beys he had put to death, which appeared also in 1866. Gérôme here indulged his love of fun by giving to several of these heads the features of some well-known Parisians who had not made themselves particularly agreeable to him! A prominent critic reproached him for his frivolity, but the joke was hugely enjoyed by the public and especially by his comrades, who thoroughly appreciated this good-humored and artistic revenge. This canvas was also re-exposed in 1867. There are more than four hundred of these mosques at Cairo, this one of Hassan, or El-Assaneyn, or El Haçanin, as it is indifferently called, being the largest and most elaborate. Lenoir, who visited it for the first time with Gérôme, refers to it as follows:



"The mosque is, *par excellence*, the rendezvous of prayer; according to its importance it corresponds to our cathedrals or to the simple country church. The minaret is its steeple, from whence the muezzin summons all the faithful to prayer by the languorous chanting of several verses from the Koran. The always elegant cupola of these edifices corresponds to the site of the tomb of the caliph, sultan, or rich personage who has constructed the building. Varying a little in their interior arrangement, they are nearly all constructed in the same manner: a large, square court with its peristyle, in the center of which is the pool for ablutions; in the sanctuary, called the *mihrab*,—a sort of richly ornamented recess whose Gothic niche is invariably turned toward Mecca,—stands the *menber* or preacher's chair, which is often a real *chef-d'œuvre* of sculpture and decoration. The Mosque of the Mameluke Sultan Hassan dominates the entire city of Cairo; by its colossal proportions and absolutely pure Arabic style, it is undoubtedly the

most beautiful mosque in the whole Orient ; neither St. Sophia, nor all the massive edifices of Constantinople, can be compared to it. It is situated in front of the citadel on the Place Roumeliéh. A door, the height of the building, leads into it from a lateral street which runs into the Place. Marbles of every shade, connected by arches, and ornaments of bronze set off the elegance of this principal entrance. Thousands of stalactites, forming niches, stretch up half the entire height and gracefully melt away where crossbeams of carved wood sustain a wondrous collection of lamps of glass and ostrich eggs, richly colored.

" We go up several steps and then descend several others, finding ourselves on the same level in a long gallery adorned with stone benches on either side. It is the antechamber of the mosque ; at the extremity of the imposing hall are stationed *catenas* and guards. This mysterious and terrible prelude only renders more striking the marvelous spectacle which confronts one immediately ; an immense court, in the form of a Greek cross, is occupied in the center by a most picturesque Saracen structure. Sustained by columns of porphyry, and surmounted by a brilliantly decorated cupola, this little octagon pavilion serves only to shelter the pool for ablutions. Opposite the entrance a colossal arch forms a single vault, a smaller repetition of which is indicated on the other side of the court ; it is the sanctuary, erected one step higher than the rest of the edifice. At the ends of long chains, thousands of lamps seem to descend from heaven and present from afar the appearance of a shower, or a trellis suspended in space. At the bottom, and always turned toward Mecca, is the *mihrab*, richly ornamented with precious mosaics, paintings, and arabesques.

" The preacher's chair is equally a masterpiece of sculpture. Green, red, and yellow flags brought back from Mecca, form trophies of brilliant colors on each side. Innumerable votive offerings are covered with a medley of objects and inscriptions. On each side, large square platforms, less high than the *menber*, serve as stalls for the ulémas and young dervishes, for whom these places are exclusively reserved. Finally, matings and rich carpets cover the remainder of the marble pavement and preserve the feet of the faithful from contact with its glacial surface. The colors which preponderate in the general ornamentation of mosques are green and red, agreeably alternated in arabesques and many other designs. The religious inscriptions are generally painted in blue or golden characters, on immense boards, with a green background. When *new*, this superb mosque could certainly not have possessed the mysterious poetry it has to-day ; and, without being a lover of uncleanness, I believe that time alone can blend so marvelously these colors which originally must have been very glaring.

" At the right of the *mihrab*, a little low door, concealed by a black curtain embroidered with gold, gives access to the immense chamber which corresponds to the exterior cupola. It is here where the tomb of the Sultan Hassan is placed ; a grating of forged iron and a second barrier of painted wood isolate this square stone from the rest of the hall, which is in a most complete state of nudity and decay. Looking up into the air, one is terrified by the height of the vault. Enormous stalactites garnish the angles to the point where the Gothic form of the dome commences to accentuate itself, giving to this cupola the aspect of an

immense hive, where the owls have installed a clamorous colony. Every day a part of these wooden decorations and massive sculptures detaches itself and falls with a crash. Far from trying to prevent this danger, the Arabs consider it a favor to be struck by one of these celestial tiles, which will send them straight to Paradise. The sheikh, who rather doubted our religious fanaticism and our eagerness to see the Prophet, invited us not to prolong our visit to this locality, exposed as we were to the caprice of these sacred showers.

"The dominating impression in a visit to the mosques is the exclusively religious and almost poetic character of these buildings. They are not our smart Parisian cathedrals nor our imitation Greek temples—real *theaters* of devotion at the hours of service. Seeing all these Arabs, silent and grave, prostrate themselves before the wall of the *mihrab*, I could not help thinking of my dear parish of the Madeleine, where the one o'clock mass resembles so nearly a *première* at a theater, that some people actually give up the races at Long-champs to attend it! At Cairo, there is fanaticism, if you please, but true religious faith, and its manifestations here have none of the elegant and frivolous piety of our Catholic mosques. The beadle and the pew-openers have no prestige in the Orient, and equality before God is there scrupulously observed; the dirtiest donkey driver invokes Allah on the same carpet as the most richly caparisoned sheikh. To laugh, to blow one's nose, or to sneeze would entail the most serious consequences upon the offender, and Heaven knows if we deprive ourselves at home of these diversions! I assisted several times at the reading of the Koran, but I never saw any one asleep. St. Paul himself could not have achieved a greater success!"

The Muezzin, which hung beside the picture of this beautiful mosque, shows the sheikh standing on one of the balconies of the minaret and sending out his call to prayer over the city.

The Exposition Salon of 1867, besides affording a second glimpse of the pictures we have before described, contained four new canvases in which the artist again displayed the surprising range and depth of his powers. The most prominent was the *Death of Cæsar*, the first sketch of which, seen by Gautier in the painter's atelier, is described as follows:

"Nothing can be more singular and striking than the *Death of Cæsar*, as yet only a sketch, but where already the entire intention of the painter can be read. It is antiquity conceived after the manner of Shakespeare. The scene *must* have taken place thus! The body of Cæsar—a real body, rolled in a bloody mantle—lies at the foot of the statue of the great Pompey, the pedestal being stained in his effort to hold himself up by it.

"Appalled by the murder, and fearing to be compromised, the senators have taken flight, with the exception of one obese old man who has gone to sleep in his *curule* chair; grown heavy and dull through excessive indulgence in good cheer, he has heard nothing through his profound slumber and has no idea of what has taken place. Imagine the scene! In the foreground, at the left of

the spectator, in the corner of the canvas, lies the body of the fallen Cæsar; at the right, several rows of empty chairs, some of them overturned in the precipitation of flight. In the background, through the open door, the backs of the fleeing senators, who jostle each other in their haste; a little nearer the front, the group of conspirators waving their swords and withdrawing, now that their task of murder is achieved. Brutus, passing before the statue of *Rome*, which forms



the pendant to that of *Pompey*, half turns and casts a melancholy glance behind him; he feels already that he has committed a useless crime, and the 'Tu quoque, Brute,' pierces his soul. Liberty was dead before he killed Cæsar! Truly this is a bold and romantic manner of treating this most classic of subjects. Never did a scene in history appear more *real*. If photography had existed in Cæsar's day, one could believe that the picture was painted from a proof taken on the spot, at the very moment of the catastrophe."

"*The Death of Cæsar* [says Mrs. Strahan in her admirable "History of French Painting"] is perhaps Gérôme's grandest, as it is certainly his severest work. The adequate and impressive conception of the subject, the learned presentation of it, and the skill of technique in depicting it unite to form its completeness. He gives it in two pictures: in one (1859) the body lies alone; in the other (1867), more dramatic, the senators, one alone retaining his seat, are hurrying away as by an irresistible impulsion. But the nearly empty senate chamber is full of historic suggestion as it is also of artistic success."

A careful study of this great work leaves one so thrilled by its dramatic side, its potent memories, and subtle suggestions that we wonder with what eyes M. Charles Blanc has regarded it, when he remarks that in this picture "the passions to be expressed are stifled under archæological science!" Truly, the historical accessories are carefully and accurately grouped, but the interest unconsciously and utterly centers itself in the emotions of the principal actors in this tragic scene, and in the analysis of the feelings of these quaking conspirators, hastening from the presence of this great soul, who in death still retains his power to awe, and before whose lifeless body the most daring tremble and flee. We well remember Gérôme's satisfaction when informed that the greatest Shakespearian actor of our epoch—Edwin Booth—has reproduced his wonderful picture in the stage setting of the third act of *Julius Cæsar*, in which he gives an ideal impersonation of Brutus. No greater testimony to the perfect distribution

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of dramatic, artistic, and historic values on this canvas could be desired than that furnished by this fact.

Beside this *chef-d'œuvre* hangs another whose pathetic beauty sinks deep into the soul and rouses a feeling of indignant sympathy that blurs the eyes which look, and turn to look again and again.

"Gérôme's *Slave-Market* [says Maxime Du Camp] is a fact literally reproduced. When the *djellabs* return from their long and painful journeys on the Upper Nile, they install their human merchandise in those great *okels* which extend in Cairo along the ruined mosque of the Caliph Hakem; people go there to purchase a slave as they do here to the market house to buy a turbot. Seated on mats in the shadow of the galleries, with their nudity scantily concealed by a few greasy tatters, the negresses await their purchasers, dozing, or braiding their hair in the thousand little plaits that form their coiffure. The higher-priced women, those from the plateau of Gondar and from the country of Choa, are shut up in separate rooms, away from indiscreet eyes. It is one of these women, an Abyssinian, whom M. Gérôme has taken as the principal personage of his composition. She is nude, and the *djellab* who has charge of her has the head of a regular brigand, accustomed to all manner of violence and abduction; the conception of an immortal soul has never troubled the mind of such a bandit! The poor girl stands submissive, humble, resigned, with a fatalistic passivity very skillfully portrayed by the artist. A man surveys her and looks at her teeth as one inspects those of a horse, and appraises the merchandise with the distrustful glance peculiar to the Arab. Two or three persons in beautiful costumes complete the principal group. In the inclosed background one perceives other slaves scattered here and there."

When we are finally able to tear ourselves away from this wonderful and touching scene, a masterpiece of sentiment, drawing, and color, we find another bit of Oriental life awaiting us in the *Vieux Marchand d'Habits*.

"The Clothes Merchant [says M. Du Camp] is one of those old men, numbers of whom exist in Cairo, who retain old customs, refusing absolutely to wear the tunic or the *tarbouch*,—remaining faithful to the ancient turban of white mouseline and to the wide robe with its ample folds,—seeming themselves to be an itinerant curiosity, strolling through the streets and crying their bric-à-brac. When they meet a European, they halt, and with an engaging smile they offer a *hachette*, or an old poniard, saying, 'Antica, Mameluke, bono, bono!' This one of M. Gérôme, carrying on his arm some lovely old rose-colored garments, offers a saber to an Arnaut, who is very near allowing himself to be persuaded; a group has gathered near the merchant and each one is giving his opinion. In the background is a shop near which a reddish-colored dog is crouching in the pose of the god Anubis, and one catches sight of two women enveloped in white mantles who are entering their house.

"Gérôme has seized *en route*, with great felicity, the different types of the Orient. The Arab, the Skipetar, the Turk, the Barabras, the Syrian, can be recognized at the first glance, and in the ethnographic expression of his personages he is always correct (at least unless he attempts some jest, as he did last year with the heads heaped up in front of the *Mosque of El-Haçanin*.)"

One more Eastern scene completes the list, *The Chess-players*, a small canvas which forms part of the famous collection inherited by the late Sir Richard Wallace from his father, Lord Hertford.

The autumn of 1867 beheld Gérôme again *en route* for the Orient, this time for a journey of greater length and range than any he yet had undertaken. We have already referred to it in quoting from the volume written by his "Fidus Aelhiates," the witty and lovable Paul Lenoir, who was to be the chronicler of this grand tour.

"Embarked upon the steamboat at Marseilles, all was excitement with the younger members of the party when the mists slowly lifted from the horizon and the coast of Africa revealed itself like a long golden straw floating in the distance. Their imagination getting ahead of the vessel, they vied with each other in being the first to discover the most imperceptible objects. Do you see this? Do *you* see *that*? They are palms!—No! they are camels!—No, again—for they were only windmills!"

Arriving finally at Alexandria, Adha-Anna, who had been Gérôme's cook on his first trip to Egypt, took charge of all the baggage and left the travelers free to roam through the narrow streets where, says Lenoir:

"Everything seems to roll like pebbles in a torrent; your toes are trodden on through principle, and you are hustled and jostled through religious conviction; the dromedaries, asses, and horses appropriate the best part of the paved road and the foot-walks; the rest of the street is generously abandoned to foot-passengers, to the women who, wrapped in their long blue draperies, either carry enormous burdens or drag along with a garland of children hanging in clusters among their rags and tatters.

"Alexandria is the inevitable antechamber of Cairo, as, in a badly planned apartment, one is forced to pass through the kitchen in order to reach the drawing-room! Endless avenues of tamarisks and lemon trees shade the banks of the Grand Canal of Mahmoudiéh, and the blues, reds, and yellows of luxurious villas offer a charming contrast to the thousand tints of the exotic vegetation, from the pearl-gray of the aloe to the emerald-green of the banana. The slender masts of the long *dahabiÿhs* seem to touch the sky as they glide along towed by an odd *mêlange* of animals; now a camel and an ass are harnessed together, now a shapely horse and a heavy, clumsy buffalo. To-day there is a railway by way of Damanhour; the houses, built of earth or dried brick, lean against each other, and one can scarcely decide where the village ends and the country begins, so

uniformly gray is the earthy color. Farther on, the aspect of the country changes and one is conscious of penetrating to the heart of Egypt. Enormous fields of grain recall the low-lying fields in Holland, save that here and there snowy herons furnish a luminous point in the general monotonous tone of green.

"An infinite variety of birds dart past; everything, from the diminutive lapwings fluttering about like August butterflies to the noisy sparrow-hawks and strong-winged eagles.

Arrived at Cairo, Gérôme organized a goodly caravan, composed, as we see from his own notes, of twenty-seven camels, including ten dromedaries, which carried the artists and their servants. While the preparations were being made for the desert journey, Cairo and the vicinity were thoroughly studied from the artist's point of view, and the pictures elaborated from the sketches here taken prove a perfect panorama of Oriental life, to which the notes of master and pupil furnish a piquant commentary. What seemed greatly to amuse the latter were the little beasts of which Gérôme has given us so good a type in his *Ass Egyptien*. While the master paints, Lenoir embodies their reflections as follows:

"The ass plays too important a rôle in life at Cairo and throughout the Orient not to merit the honor of a zoölogical digression. In the first place, my ass was not an ass! It was properly speaking the *bourriquot* of Cairo, a quadruped of a special nature, which should not be confounded with the beast of burden, the common ass. The *bourriquot* is as lively, adroit, intelligent, and indefatigable as his brothers of Montmorency are vicious, lazy, and obstinate. The ass is not only the first friend you make in the Orient, he is also the best pair of shoes you can buy! for you only use your boots when you throw them under the bed. Always mounted on an ass, a horse, or a dromedary, the customers of St. Crispin economize here astonishingly in shoe-leather. We lived, so to speak, on an ass, during our whole expedition in the province of Fayoum, just as, during the two months in the Desert of Sinai and at Petra, we lived on a dromedary."

We have already laughed over the first wild rush through the narrow streets of Cairo, but the little band did not always ride at such breakneck speed. Every novel effect of color and form, of pose and grouping, was caught by keen eyes and without delay transferred to the ever ready canvas:

"In the more aristocratic quarters, the passing of camels is prohibited by law, and here wealthy inhabitants dash to and fro in handsome, springy barouches, preceded by runners richly costumed.

"On every side we see the admirable sculptures in wood, which, under the form of *moucharabihs*, serve as windows and ventilators to the elegant residences; arches surmounted by terraces, fountains of rose-colored marble, niches

adorned with paintings, slender pillars in every species of granite, carved balconies, doors mysteriously ajar, each furnished with an almost imperceptible *véilleuse* and piquing our curiosity to the highest degree."

Gérôme gives us a glimpse of one of these Eastern houris who was not so averse to being seen, in his *Almée at the Window of her Moucharabiéh*. Each ramble furnished him with half-a-dozen *motifs* for canvases that have never



been hung at any Salon and the greater part of which have never even been seen by his countrymen, since eager amateurs have invaded his ateliers and carried them off to distant lands almost before the paint was dry. One of the favorite points of rendezvous was the Gate of Babel-Nasr, the most beautiful of the seventy-two gates which adorn the walls of Cairo.

"By its elegant architecture and historic associations it well merits admiration and attention, for it was through this gate that General Bonaparte passed on the 29th of July, 1798, the day after the battle of the Pyramids. It was the first study that Gérôme made on his first visit to Cairo. Flanked by two enormous square towers, this door presents an

appearance at once imposing and gracious, through its colossal proportions and the sculptured ornaments that make it a real work of art. Two doors, literally covered with iron, close the entrance to this warlike construction. Beneath the arch a military post is stationed, which Gérôme has immortalized in his *Arnauts of Cairo*. Assuredly they are there from love of ornamentation and to please us painters, for, studying this group of soldiers decked out in brilliant costumes, one is tempted to question their strategic utility as regards the security of the city. While awaiting a new conquest of Egypt by no matter whom, these decorative soldiers, these sentinels of comic opera, have no other orders than to stop the photographers whom they would honor with their confidence.

"Their costume, artistically loosened, their luxurious arms as brilliant as they are inoffensive, their proud, disdainful attitudes, their slightest gestures, everything about them seems to have been carefully studied.



THE GRAND WHITE EUNUCH.

"Nothing, however, can be more natural than these interminable Greek mustaches which divide the face in two, like two enormous buffalo horns, and which form the greatest ornament of these energetic faces bronzed by the sun. The mustache, which has nothing of the Arabic in principle, is a sign of Albanian origin in the Cairene soldier. The Arnants, — this Greek militia imported into Egypt by Mehemet-Ali to contend against the increasing importance of the Mamelukes, — inaugurated at Cairo both the fustanelle and the mustache, the effect of which they heightened by wearing the richest stuffs they could find in this country which they had invaded. It was an innovation in a land where the beard is in high esteem, and where the respect due to a man is graduated according to the length of this ornament. A soldier amateur, the Arnant plays his rôle with ease, and becomes an indispensable bit of furniture at the door of a mosque or the entrance of a palace, with a dozen pistols and sabers artistically enlaced in the compartments of a wide belt of red leather, which gives him the appearance of a walking bazaar. His pipe, tobacco, and food find also a place on this vast *étagère*. He is fully conscious of his interesting appearance and, in order not to disturb a single one of the arms in the museum he carries on his stomach, he keeps ready a tremendous *courbache*, which holds both enemies and admirers at a distance. The *courbache* is a long flexible whip of hippopotamus hide, which combines the pliability of a whip with the precision of a stick. It is the indispensable scepter which obtains everything, regulates everything, and decides everything, when *bakchich* has become powerless to settle a delicate question.

"A strange feature in these surroundings, which differed so essentially from Occidental scenes and customs, was found in the cemeteries which lay outside of the city, veritable forests of little whitewashed tombs, each of them consisting of a large flat stone laid upon an entablature of one or two steps at the most. The principal stone, forming the body of the tomb, is saddle-backed. At one of the extremities is erected a column, or a simple oblong stone, sculptured according to the importance of the deceased or the fortune of the parents. The end of this stone, generally very rudely cut, represents the coiffure of the dead, and the white ball, surmounted by the little fluted case, is nothing but the turban of the proprietor, in marble or imitation stone, according to the rank of the defunct. On several tombs, more carefully decorated than the others, remains of palms and votive offerings could be distinguished. Sometimes we saw women draped in long blue veils, crouched near a tomb, their factitious sighs and methodical swaying imparting a savage tone to their manifestations of grief. Sometimes simply seated, at others literally extended full length on the stone, they seemed to speak with the dead. An idea of this singular conversation may be gathered from the following phrases: 'Is *God* great? Dost thou see him? Art thou happy? Await me—dost thou hear?' and so on interminably, for the defunct are generally discreet enough not to reply!"

Gérôme's two pictures of *Tombs of the Sultan at Broussa* give one a perfect idea of these strange sepulchers, before which a sheikh recites, at intervals, selec-

tions from the Koran, keeping up a sort of perpetual prayer, burning candles and incense according to the rank of the deceased. The City of Caliphs, improperly called the Valley of Tombs, has furnished him with materials for many interesting paintings.

"Its minarets and domes group themselves with the premeditation of a theatrical decoration which desires to surpass the most extravagant expectations. The multitude of these monuments, seemingly leaning against each other by



reason of the marvelous perspective, which permits us to take them all in at a glance; the variety of their dimensions, the indescribable elegance of their Saracen architecture, oblong cupolas of almost Persian forms; these graceful minarets, each story of which reveals marvels of sculpture; the gilded crosses which surmount them, the bits of faience sparkling in the midst of arabesques of marble—all this transported us to a former world, and we almost expected to meet Saladin on an elephant at some turn in the ancient cross-roads!

"Everything in this spot confirms the sentiment of religious admiration which has taken possession of us: the solitude of these almost abandoned mosques, the uncivilized character of the clay houses that surround them, and even the types of the few inhabitants seem to conform to the style of that magnificent Mussul-

man epoch under which were produced the most beautiful *chefs d'œuvre* of Byzantine art interpreted by the Arabs.

"It was not Cairo, it was Bagdad suddenly transported into Egypt to console the painters who were not to have the happiness of going as far as the ancient capital of the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid.

"In the interminable row of monuments, each more graceful and admirable than the other, the first mosque we approached was that of El-Achraf. Its ruined interiors still present a most interesting and almost complete *ensemble*. The little carved pulpit where the Koran was read is still intact, sheltered as it is in one of the angles of the principal hall. To a height of several meters the walls are decorated with inlaid work and mosaics in exquisite taste. Higher up, these luxurious decorations are supplemented by sober paintings, the charming designs of which are fully equal in detail to all the other Arabic ornamentation. A slight recess in Gothic form offers the richest decoration in the whole mosque. This veritable *abside* is not indifferently placed, but corresponds to the direction of Mecca, and it is there the sheikh begins the dull and drowsy intoning of the

prayers or the reading of the Koran. The carved pulpit is placed at the right of this sanctuary, where there is no altar, but simply a great profusion of lamps and inscriptions. Two enormous copper candlesticks, adorned with two wax tapers, still more enormous, mount guard on either side.

"The short, wide form of the candlestick and the colossal size of the candle make one dubious at first sight as to the nature of this object, which is the entire visible expression of the Mussulman worship. Some days after this, one of us made a study of this mosque, which admirably renders its mysterious and poetic character.

"We had left our asses at the door, and also conformed to the law which prohibits the shoes from accompanying their owners into the holy place. You can imagine nothing odder than this battalion of boots sadly awaiting us on the steps, where they seemed to envy us our privileges. The regulation *bakchich* being bestowed on the sheikh, who is the doorkeeper of the mosque, we bestrode our beasts, who of their own accord—such is their instinct for the beautiful—deposited us at the entrance of the Mosque El-Barkouk. While we were in the mosque the sight of our coursers had aroused the poor population, always hidden away under the rubbish; and like flies attracted by a bit of meat, this multitude of women and children endured the rudest blows of our donkey boys, rather than slacken their hold and renounce the paras of copper which we would toss them in charity under the pretext of its being "*bakchich*." For one must not fall into the error of confounding *bakchich* with charity! which latter would doubtless be humiliating to an Arab; the former is a gift, a present among princes who respect and desire to honor each other! *Bakchich* is a colossal institution in the Orient; it is an indirect contribution from the traveler, which may easily exceed the cost of the whole journey if he does not guard against too great liberality in his offerings. In addition, gratitude on the part of the child and woman consists in a renewal of the demand with an irritating persistency proportionate to the generosity which you have displayed in your first donation. The Mosque of El-Barkouk is more imposing than that of El-Achraf, although of a later period. Its principal entrance, surmounted by covered galleries, produces an extraordinary effect; the staircases in marble, and the columns of porphyry, are lavishly and picturesquely disposed. The taste of a skillful architect has certainly presided over this luxurious ornamentation; for this richness is not the result of a ridiculous heaping up of precious materials nor of loud colors, as in the more modern constructions of the Mussulman religion. St. Sophia, with its superabundance of gilding and gigantic proportions, certainly does not produce the impression of grandeur and mysterious poetry which the Mosques of Cairo inspire to the highest degree, from the superb Mosque of Hassan (El-Assaneyn) to the smallest of the constructions which adorn the tombs of the Mamelukes, — so fully do taste and elegance make up for mathematical proportions of a purely massive and coarse construction."

Gérôme indeed made a thorough study of the different views and times of worship in these wonderful mosques, and in the *Reading of the Koran*, where the

central figure of the white-bearded patriarch is especially fine; *Prayer in a Mosque*, with ten figures in various devotional attitudes; *The Mihrab*, with the sheikh seated on the floor reading, and another *Prayer*, with five figures, he reproduces not only the strange coloring, the magnificent sculptures in wood and marble, and the graceful groupings and postures, but also the profound religious sentiment which is ingrained in these simple Mussulmans, so faithful and unpretentious in their worship. In *Public Prayer in the Mosque of Amrou*, with its flock of doves fluttering down between the marble pillars, — which forms part of the collection bequeathed by Miss Catherine Wolte to the Metropolitan Museum of New York, — the artist has given us, we think, the most perfect of all these interiors.

“ Amrou, general under the Caliph Omar, was the author of this monument, which is reputed to be the first Mussulman mosque built at Cairo.

“ Nothing has arisen to contradict this origin, and the style of the edifice confirms all the details connected with it. Gâm-a-Amrou is the Arabic name. Constructed in the year 640 of our era, at the time of the conquest by the Arabs, it can be considered as a point of departure, or the cradle of Islamism in Egypt. Situated to the east of old Cairo, with which it is contemporaneous, it is surrounded to-day by endless rubbish, shapeless ruins of the city of which it doubtless was the most beautiful ornament. The walls of this architectural relic form a perfect square, the interior being only the regular peristyle of an immense court. Two hundred and thirty columns of marble form the foundation of this open air edifice, for the covered portion is insignificant relatively to the rest of the building.

“ In the center of this enormous court is the traditional pool of the mosques, where each Mussulman performs his indispensable ablutions before beginning his prayers. This little pavilion, still dotted with paintings on the lower part, is shaded by a superb palm tree, which seems to be the time-honored guardian of this holy place. But the water of the pool argues little in favor of the piety of the faithful of to-day, unless it is a result of their uncleanness! We made a conscientious study of this remarkable locality, where the slightest details express the pure simplicity and consequent beauty of Arabic art. A graceful minaret shoots up almost immediately over the principal entrance, and signals from afar the presence of this important building, which, without it, would scarcely be perceived on account of its regular form and the way it is closed in by ruins of the ancient city and fragments of every description, increased by the encroachment of the sand. In the covered part, which forms the sanctuary, where there are six rows of columns, but few points recall the worship so long carried on in this mosque. Its *mihrab*, or *abside*, turned toward Mecca, is in a state of ruin, as well as the *member*, the sculptured pulpit so religiously cherished in other mosques.

“ Tradition, or an apocryphal legend, calls your attention to a long white vein or seam in one of the columns near this pulpit. This miraculous scar is

attributed to the *courbache* of the Caliph Omar. The tomb of the author, or rather founder, of this public building and the city argues in favor of his modesty: his funeral monument is a simple rectangular stone, surmounted by a common little roof supported by four sickly little columns, and this excess of simplicity has not lessened the veneration which true Mussulmans profess for Amrou and his mosque, for the most important personages honor it often with their official visits and carry away blessings of a very superior quality.

"In a second visit which we made *en masse* to this interesting mosque, we wished to comply with a pious legend which is one of the accessories of the edifice, as follows: On the right of the door, under the peristyle of the court, are two slender columns formed of a single piece of marble, bound together by their capitals and the ornaments at the base. A space of only a few centimeters separates the two shafts, and a pious Arabic legend gives to this opening the most agreeable properties, among others that of prolonging the life of all those who can pass between the two columns without breaking their ribs! Several of our party, thanks to their youth and the elegant slenderness of their build, slipped through like letters into a postal-box, easily carrying off a license of longevity *à discrétion*. But one of us had to make such efforts that the columns seemed to crack at contact with his powerful physique. 'He'll get through!' 'He *won't* get through!' He *did* get through, but at what cost! At another spot we assured ourselves eternal happiness by running, with our eyes blindfolded, a space of several meters, at the end of which we were to touch a black slab inlaid in the wall. The Arabs were convinced of our utter dishonesty, so often did we succeed in hitting it, nearly all of us striking the center of this celestial target. The serious and almost fanatic conviction of the sheikh of the mosque contrasted singularly with the comic side of these superstitious legends, which recalled to us the sack-races and blindman's-buff of our merry schoolboy days.

"After numerous salamaleks, and still more numerous bakchichs, we were able to tear ourselves away from the congratulations and compliments of the sheikh, who doubtless saw in us future neophytes, or good customers, considering the enthusiasm which we had displayed for his little games of chance and of eternal salvation!

"We returned to Cairo at full gallop by the route which runs along the Nile as far as Boulak. A thousand picturesque incidents would have detained us had we not been preoccupied with an important operation which awaited us at the hotel, namely, the selection of a dragoman for our expedition to Fayoum. A veritable council of war, this ceremony had gathered together in our court a fantastic collection of physiognomies and of strange types. At the mere sight of some of these professional guides to whom we were about to confide our whole existence, our hands instinctively buttoned up our coats and lingered in the neighborhood of our watch-chains! Nothing could be more singular than this legion of worthies, some of whom, armed to the teeth, recalled to us those types of brigands which till now we had only seen in the stories of Perrault and which spoil the comfort of travel like horrible nightmares. Inoffensive for the most part, these honest thieves came to offer us their services with a zealous compe-

tition most comical to behold. Each one endeavored to persuade us by *lours de force* of eloquence and bundles of certificates, forced from the victims who had honored them with their confidence.

Generally they spoke several languages very well; one of them spoke eleven, this profusion rousing a little anxiety lest he should attempt to speak them all at once! We finally succeeded in making a double bargain with a certain Hassalioni, for donkeys and drivers for Fayoum, and with a very intelligent Syrian, named Joseph Moussali, for the dromedaries, camels, and drivers for the Desert of Sinai and Petra. In our expedition to Sinai, we were served by the domestics who formed the staff of this Moussali, remarkable and varied types of this Arab population, so gentle and so docile, whose dispositions have only been altered by the unjust treatment and indescribable brutality of their conquerors. The contracts read, signed, and sealed, and all being decided, from the number of fowls to the size of the pots and kettles, we went to visit our tents, artistically pitched under the most beautiful sycamores of Ezbekyéh. Having consecrated an entire day to the trial of our asses for the journey, we set off at five o'clock in the morning with all our accessories, and reached the Nile a little above the island of Roudah, our dromedaries having arrived the evening before. It was here that we were to cross the river to gain the road to Gyzéli and reach the Pyramids toward three o'clock in the afternoon. At the end of this island, the impetuous current of the river seems to slacken a little, its efforts being divided. It is doubtless for this reason that this point was chosen to effect its important passage. Here is the rendezvous of the boats which ply between the banks in the interests of commerce and circulation. *Cangues, dahabiéhs*, little crafts of every shape and size, form at this spot a motley flotilla. Whether a favorable wind permits the graceful sails to be unfurled amid this forest of masts, or an absolute calm brings into use the colossal oars and professional oarsmen, this point of the Nile and of Cairo offers the most vivid picture of maritime movement. Rarely does a collision disturb the scene. Like real fish, the small and large vessels cross each other carelessly with an equal rapidity, recalling the skill with which our Parisian vehicles are guided through the densest crowds. What interested us particularly, and amused us greatly, was the forced embarkment and stowing away of our asses on the little barks, the patrons of which had first offered to take us over. We had at first a slight repetition of our debarkation from the boat at Alexandria, in the struggle among these worthy people, who wished to oblige us in spite of ourselves, in snatching away our asses and literally tossing them into their respective little wherries. It was the first time we had occasion to observe the importance of our dragoman and the impressive gestures which saved him the fatigue of expressing himself in his native language. With his sleeves turned up, and armed with a formidable courbache, Joseph Moussali thrashed, in turn, everything in front of him, beasts and men, till the most perfect order was established for the transfer of our animals and of ourselves into the bargain! We were forcibly struck by the yellow coloring of the river. It is caused by the sand which the Nile constantly rolls along, and, the current being stronger than usual, we

THE CARPET MERCHANT

1887



sailed over on a real vanilla-cream. We passed the last banks of sand near the island and found ourselves in the middle of the river. A unique spectacle presented itself to us, and the poetic swaying of our bark intensified the impression of dreamy enchantment. It was about nine o'clock in the morning; the sun flashed on each of the waves which made of the Nile a veritable tossing sea, and the coloring of the water recalled the rivers of gold in Chinese romances.

"On the banks of the island of Roudah, and over the walls of its gardens, palm trees of an incredible height shot up like rockets over the Nile. Behind us were grouped the thousand and one vessels, boats, and little craft which we had



found on the left bank; this forest of masts and white sails, the stuffs of various colors which are generally stretched across the decks as protection from the ardent rays of the sun—all this was charmingly mingled and mirrored in the water. We reached the farther bank—as crowded, as animated, as noisy, as the one we had just left. The unpacking of the asses was as difficult and as extravagantly funny as their installation had been. During the fairly long crossing they seemed to have taken a liking to navigation, and it needed sundry blows of the courbache to rouse them from their sentimental reveries; they were literally thrown into the air, and, like so many cats, generally landed on their feet. Arrived at the village of Gyzéh, we found a battalion of camels carrying our baggage; they had started the night before in order not to retard our departure from Cairo. Behold us, beasts and men, *en route* in Indian file, firstly, on account of the narrowness of the roads along the Nile, and secondly, to conform to the classic aspect a caravan is supposed to have. The

dragoman at the head, then each of us in turn, and our pack-camels bringing up the procession; we must have looked like the figures in the landscape paintings on clocks; but we were far from thinking of this, having forgotten our personal silhouettes in our admiration of all that stretched out before us.

"The Nile once passed, we entered really into a new zone; already the temperature was sensibly altered, the proximity of the desert giving to the wind unexpected sharpness and violence; there are no longer gentle currents of air which gracefully sway the palms, but sudden whirlwinds, which tear off branches and leaves, while raising clouds of sand and dust. The country, still very verdant, takes on a much more savage aspect. The village of Gyzéh is surrounded by groves of palm trees, which make of it one of the most picturesque sites in the environs of Cairo. These palms attain fabulous proportions; their wrinkled trunks are enormous, and the elegant palm-tufts surmount them like immense capitals, furnishing a dense shade, impenetrable to the sun; in several localities reserved for travel, their symmetry produces an impression of a grand colonnade holding up a marvelous vault of verdure. Although its name is historical, there is nothing important about the village, unless it be the famous incubators for which the fellahs have preserved the recipe from the time of the Pharaohs. These manufactories of small chickens, which Herodotus so much admired, still exist, and work with the same precision as they did in the kitchens of Sesostris. In some more rugged portions of the valley we came across some *saquièhs*, a sort of turning well, the motive power of which is ordinarily a buffalo, an ass, or camel. These primitive wells are the auxiliaries of the Nile and supplement the benefits of its inundations. Two immense wheels, which form the gear, cause to descend and ascend a veritable rosary of little earthen jugs, which empty the water into a ditch destined to fertilize the surrounding soil or simply to supply the necessities of a little village. The installation of a *saquièh* generally offers the *ensemble* of a most picturesque composition in both design and color: one always finds an uneven ground, water, palm trees, animals and their drivers, groups of women and children, who come here for water when the Nile is too distant; it is the rural life of Egypt in its most practical and truest aspect.

"Apropos of *saquièhs*, it is important to notice that the Egyptians were the real inventors of these wells, improperly known among us as artesian wells. Olympiodorus, who lived in the sixth century at Alexandria, writes that wells were dug in the oases to a depth sometimes of 124 meters.

"'It is certain,' says Dégousée, 'that the existence of subterranean springs was known to the Egyptians; the methods they employed to make use of them are still practiced in Africa by the Arabs of the desert.'

"In the search for, and difficult perforation of these wells, in consequence of the shifting nature of the sand, one finds a nearly complete resemblance to the means of sounding employed in China and the whole of the extreme Orient. Is it not humiliating to think that these wells were not known and accepted in Europe till 1828—imported from the Orient by the advice of the celebrated savant Jobard, of Brussels?

"After having followed for some miles the left bank of the Nile, we turned suddenly to our right, leaving our beloved palm trees to cross lands which were in a state of culture doubtless very satisfying to their proprietors, but much too green to please our painter eyes: this general tone, almost disagreeable in its monotony, only made us appreciate more keenly the sharply accentuated line of demarcation between the desert and the cultivated lands. Our attention was distracted from these geological considerations by the sight of the Pyramids, which seemed to flee before us, so greatly did their gigantic proportions deceive us in regard to the distance which remained to be traversed in order to reach them. The view of the Pyramids obtained from Gyzéh is most imposing. Seen from a distance of five or six kilometers, when a caravan between you and them can serve as a scale of proportion, their extraordinary dimensions impress one most forcibly. By the orders of the dragoman, and almost in a traditional manner for those of us who had visited Egypt before, our tents arose, as if by enchantment, under the shade of an enormous sycamore, which insisted on flourishing in the midst of the sand; supplemented by three palm trees, this magnificent tree formed the entire vegetation of the environs; it is under its foliage that all travelers seek shelter and repose before beginning their archaeological researches. There were as yet no tenants, so we installed ourselves without protest, and drew up a lease of three days with this hospitable tree, with freedom to move when we pleased. Camels, donkeys, tents, escort, donkey-boys, camel-drivers, our luggage, and ourselves all found ample room under its benevolent branches."

While the novices in this joyous band hastened away at daybreak to pay a formal call to the Sphinx, scramble to the top of the Great Pyramid and explore its interior, as well as some of the numerous tombs which lie scattered around, Gérôme remained alone to make the sketch which was afterward reproduced in his exquisite painting called *The First Kiss of the Sun*.

"After several days in this interesting locality, we moved on, by way of Dachour, to the real desert. After having followed, twisted around, and crossed successively an interminable series of canals and pools, we reached the end of the cultivated lands and prepared for our first assault on the desert itself. It was to be a severe day, for our next halting-place was the village of Tamyéh, which lies nearly in the center of the province of Fayoum. The day was truly a disagreeable one, in spite of the precautions we had taken, for we had not counted on a hurricane of sand which surprised us in the middle of the desert at the always interesting moment of breakfast. The clock at the Bourse in Paris probably marked noon, but our stomachs loudly declared it to be at least four o'clock! The flat dishes were spread around and our eyes were already devouring the papers in which our cold lunch was wrapped; we had just seized our forks when, quicker than lightning, a real deluge of sand overwhelmed us: the bank against which we were leaning gave way, taken up by this tempest, and poured over everything, eaters and edibles. Waves of sand dashed into our

eyes and blinded us. Bottles, dishes, the *memi*, all lay buried under the sand, and we began a series of excavations to prevent our property and ourselves from disappearing entirely in this cataclysm. The Arabs, having lent us a helping hand in our distress, had lain down in the sand, thus avoiding the painful contact with the wind, which lashed our faces like blows of a whip. The temperature which preceded this event had suddenly changed. An icy cold had taken the place of the heat we had experienced since morning; like the currents of warm and cold water which meet in rivers and the ocean, this cold air seemed to fall from a celestial glacier. Our unhappy asses suffered horribly; in spite of their instinct of self-preservation, and the devoted efforts of our Arabs, these miserable beasts were seized with real convulsions as they struggled and rolled over, trying to get out of the sand that continually re-covered them. They bled from eyes and nose, and in the midst of this general scuffle we thought of the army of Cambyses, who, surprised like us in the desert, returned without a single *chassepôt!*

“On the avowal of our dragoman himself, this was a terrible day, and one of the severest of our expedition. But we were obliged to move on. This was difficult enough; after having found the greater part of our accessories, we set ourselves to work to exhume our asses and to get them to go on farther. We had swathed our faces in veils and *kouffies*, but the sand penetrated everything, and its violence had nearly taken off the skin. At the end of two hours this *khamsinn* abated, happily for us, but we found ourselves confronted by a new trouble. In an exactly opposite direction from that we were following, the *mirage* caused us to see endless lines of palm trees; our critical situation, this deception, and the contrary direction we were taking, all contributed to render us very anxious as to the *dénouement* of our day. At last the Arabs, whose eyes are used to the desert and its snares, pointed out to us real palm trees, but it was only two kilometers farther on that we began to barely perceive them. These two little green tufts on the horizon of this ocean of sand had the effect of promised land finally sighted. We felt like crying out, ‘Land! land!’ As soon as we reached these trees of deliverance, we and our asses threw ourselves down to take a little siesta, which was absolutely indispensable in view of our fatigued state. The indefatigable camels carrying our luggage, being above these little human weaknesses, continued directly on to Tamyèh, where we were to rejoin them, finding our tents ready to receive us. A good stretch of the desert remained for us to cross, and it was with difficulty that, rousing ourselves from our slumber, we took up our march. The soil had, however, changed in its character, the road which we followed still bearing the imprint of the footsteps of men and camels; we were approaching countries more solidly established and less movable than the sands that had just failed to swallow us up. By the more assured stepping of our animals we felt we were on rocks, still covered with sand, but which were soon to make a striking appearance.

“After having climbed some uneven ridges, we found ourselves suddenly on the border of an immense ravine, a real precipice several hundred meters



FOR SALE.

wide. This natural canal reaches beyond Tamyèh to the lake Birket-Keroun. It serves, like two others, to hold the waters of the Nile, which completely fill it at the time of the overflows. Just now it was dry, and presented a most savage and frightful appearance. By a caprice of nature, its heaps of rocks seemed to be the ruins of a great city precipitated into the abyss. Weeds and shrubs of every description filled up the gaps and made a natural resort for the most ferocious beasts we could imagine. We were not altogether wrong, and this Egyptian savanna merits only too well its reputation, for it is there that numerous wild boars have established a republic most disastrous to the inhabitants of the neighborhood. The havoc they make in the crops is a veritable calamity for the country, which can barely raise a sufficient supply, literally surrounded as it is by the desert. Souvenirs of the chase made this locality especially interesting to our colonel [Gérôme], who was not there for the first time, and who executed, the next day, the finest *coup de fusil* that had ever been seen by the inhabitants of Tamyèh. The village, which is quite large, stretched out before us on the other side of this immense ravine, the passage of which was not of the easiest; but two hours after, we were installed under our tents, pitched to the northeast, facing the principal gate. This considerable oasis presents on the whole a charming landscape, framed by a brilliant golden line which incloses it on every side. It is an island of verdure in the midst of an endless stretch of sand. From our encampment, perched on the heights, the slightest details of the village were visible.

The principal gate was in front of us, a sort of semicircular arcade, composed of alternate dried and burned bricks. Here was the rendezvous of all the arrivals—the great market where all the important personages of the locality gathered together. On the right a pretty minaret stretched gayly upward like a village steeple, overtopping everything, and several clumps of palm trees broke the monotony of the roofs and terraces of the buildings. Animals of all kinds, as well as the people, wander over the tops of the houses, and in its *ensemble* this life on the roofs presents a most unique effect. Women laying out linen, Arabs mending the roofs, and children running and leaping from house to house like so many cats. But what struck us most forcibly as predominating in this comical animation, was the incredible number of dogs; we had never seen so many, nor such varieties; not a terrace that was not adorned with at least three or four of these animals; crouching like sphinxes, they watched one as far as they could see. This picturesque glance at a city of dogs was to be followed by a much less cheerful impression during the night. From the setting to the rising of the sun, these thousands of guardians of the peace called and replied to each other in the most plaintive, piercing, and discordant of tones. One could believe that Jezebel allowed herself to be eaten by them to enjoy the felicity of no longer hearing them! Our state of fatigue after this cruel day in the desert rendered this free concert only the more insupportable, and it lasted from six o'clock in the evening till five o'clock in the morning—without the slightest *entr'acte*. This horrible night was a long-continued nightmare; cries and menaces were in vain. Our dragoman, in an excess of zeal, killed two of these

gentlemen with his revolver—which made matters still worse, for all the dogs in the village ran to eat up their comrades, and there was a tempest of howlings that would have terrified Dante! With the rays of the sun the infernal orchestra ceased, and calm was at last re-established. It was time, for we were half dead from want of sleep, not having been able to close our eyes during the whole night.

“The day after, with the help of several natives, a first attempt at a hunt was organized; the sheikh of Tamyèh was greatly interested in this expedition, and had promised his active assistance, and we expected on his part a deployment of forces in proportion to the enthusiasm he had exhibited the day before. The next morning every one was ready,



awaiting the promised reinforcements; we were under arms in the village square, when we perceived a

big fellow, simply clad in a brown tunic, much too short for him; he ran toward us, frisking and gesticulating like a madman. This monkey was the son of the sheikh himself, and aside from this title to our consideration, no detail of his exterior compensated for the too great simplicity of his accouterment. Cries, leaps, and pirouettes in space were all that we could at first obtain from this acrobatic Nimrod. On our remarking that he was only armed with his ten fingers to fight the enemy of the desert, he rushed immediately to the tent where our food was prepared, and chose an enormous kitchen knife, which he held between his teeth in order to gesticulate more freely! This strange companion-in-arms was escorted by nine or ten other Arabs, armed with sticks, who were to arouse, track, surround, and beat up the game. They began along the deep ravine which divides the entire province. After several fruitless *battues*, an enormous wild boar was pointed out to Gérôme. Three shots, skillfully placed, were fired into this huge animal, who, with a shoulder and a foot broken, twice endeavored to continue his furious rush, and then rolled over into the bed of the torrent, from which he was fished out by the Arabs. A camel had to carry back this boar, fabulously large for this country, where they are generally small; this one weighed over three hundred pounds.

“The son of the sheikh could no longer contain himself; preceding the *cortège*, he and his knife executed indescribable fantasias in the air. ‘*Alouf! Alouf! Kalas! Carwaga Gérôme kebîr!*’ Such were the shouts with which the entire village deafened our ears. David bringing back the head of Goliath had certainly no greater a success! The Copt population, like good Christians, came to assist us in consuming this bulky game, and a general distribution was made in the village to our co-religionists. Everybody was at the feast, for the dogs had their part of this general quarry, and, in spite of the large crowd gathered together, eagles and other voracious birds swooped down in

THE TERRACE OF THE SERAGLIO

1886



their midst and disputed the prey with them. Haunch of wild-boar, *sauce mère*; filet of boar, *sauce poivrée*; cutlets of boar without sauce, figured for several days on our bills of fare. To send some to France to comfort our families would have been a great joy to us, but postal difficulties hindered us, and this generous movement of our hearts was interred in the depths of our stomachs! Toward evening we all assembled again and proceeded to invest one of the large ponds to the southwest of the village. Hunting is no longer hunting in this marvelous country, in this veritable promised land, where the keepers must have been on a strike for centuries. Neither the grains of sand on the seashore, nor the stars in heaven, can give an idea of the flocks of wild ducks which blackened the water. As night fell, these compact masses seemed to be immense floating rafts, which divided into squads under our incessant firing. Fortunately for them the darkness came quickly and put an end to this St. Bartholomew's massacre. Besides, the tough flesh of this duck is disagreeable to eat, and in these innumerable flocks only a few acceptably increased the resources of our kitchen. The next day our intrepid hunters left with regret this enchanted country, and this too short sojourn was often recalled in the evenings under our tent, with recitals of all we had done and all we could have done! As we left camp, the feathered population escorted us without ill-will and swelled the chorus of the villagers, who lavished on us the most flattering ovations in honor of the three-hundred-pound boar of whose undesirable presence the bravery and skill of Gérôme had relieved them. From the back of his ass, one of us killed a dozen pigeons with one charge, and the *menus* of the province of Fayoum left the most cherished memories in the heart of our cook. These orgies of game were lacking in the desert, and we often longingly recalled Tamyèh at a time when English preserved meats and sardines formed the chief part of our supplies.

From Tamyèh, the extreme northeast of the province of Fayoum, we were to move toward the center, stopping at the village of Senouhrès, which, after Médinet, is one of the most important localities. We were still in the desert, but the sand was less powdery and less dangerous than that we had crossed from Dachour. Here the soil was firmer, and as we could all move more easily, we fully expected to sleep that night at Senouhrès (which city furnished the theme for Gérôme's celebrated picture, the *Saber-dance before the Pasha*). As we gradually left the sand, the village appeared in the distance like a huge fortress perched on a plateau, graciously crowned by minarets and cupolas. These domes, which appeared first, belonged to an ancient cemetery, quite large, but abandoned and in ruins to-day, but which, by its importance, testified as to the rôle played by Senouhrès at another epoch. A number of ponds, brooks, and little canals render the approach to the village tedious and disagreeable. Passing suddenly from fine sand to a marshy soil, we consumed several hours in going around and crossing these innumerable little obstacles. This city of Senouhrès, on account of its commercial, and, above all, agricultural importance, possesses a regular administrative machinery. Authority there is installed on an official footing equal to our most intricate sub-prefectures;

therefore, by the advice of our dragoman, we prepared for a series of formalities and *salamaleks!* According to friendly indications, after having made the circuit of the village, our tents were pitched to the south on a prairie on the bank of a charming stream, and in the shade of ravishing palms. We had patriotically unfurled our national flag before the eyes of the dazzled population, and were almost disposed to put on our pearl-gray gloves to go to pay our respects to the sheikh and the other magistrates of the city. Already our animals, decked in their gayest trappings, had crossed the ford which led to the town hall; already we almost tasted the coffee they were fatally sure to offer us, when our dragoman, who marched at the head of the procession, entered into a long conference with a young Arab, magnificently dressed, who, running breathlessly to meet us, indulged in a most expressive pantomime in order to explain his meaning. We stopped; the dragoman apprised us that, warned of our visit, the sheikh and all the municipal council, for reasons of *gravest importance*, found it absolutely impossible to receive us; that they themselves would take the trouble to come and bid us welcome the next morning; and meanwhile they presented their most respectful homage and prayers for our prosperity, etc., etc. Not at all annoyed by this disappointment, we were preparing to regain our tents; but some of us, not wishing to lose time, applied to the dragoman, who, according to directions easily obtained, conducted us to the quarter where the dancers lived—the *almées*, whom we had seen in a mirage, and of whom we dreamed every evening and sometimes in the afternoon!

“After numerous detours among small, dirty houses, we arrived at a little door, through which Arabs of all ages, sexes, and sizes were going in and out. It was not the mysterious sanctum we had imagined, guarded by fantastic beings adorned with sabers and costumes of brilliant colors; entrance was free to all, and we went in without the slightest formality of an announcement. In the midst of a little, square court, seated on rugs and mats, a dozen women were munching oranges and drinking *araki* with some fairly well-dressed personages, who were not at all disturbed by our entrance. These gentlemen, whom we saluted *à l'arabe*, returned our greetings very politely, made room for us beside them, and invited us to sit down *en famille*. We had certainly come to see these ladies, but we had not foreseen the too-easy reception accorded to us. Our very limited acquaintance with the Arabic language placed a forced restraint on the expression of our sentiments. The words that we knew the best, just at that time, were those referring to the saddling of our asses and the loading of our camels. And we therefore ran the risk of committing an unpardonable rudeness in reciting our little *repertoire* of the stable! ‘*Koïss kélir!*’ and ‘*Kélir koïss!*’ formed the refrain which accompanied the dainties we lavished upon them. ‘*Ya! habibi!*’ was their favorite response to our compliments, and this *petit Trianon* on all-fours did not lack a certain royal *cachet!* Our rivals seemed to be charmed by our efforts to be amiable. Several of these women, rather better-looking than the others, wore ornaments, collars, and bracelets of great price; attached by threads to their hair plaited in little braids, numerous pieces of gold of all dimensions certified to the sumptuous bakchiehs which had

been lavished on them. One of these *dansesuses* struck us, not by the regular beauty of her features, but by the savage character of her face and her fiery glance. As an artist, she seemed to be the object of the particular attentions of our quondam friends. Our dragoman asked her name—she was called Hasné; and '*Hasné koïss kétir*' was a ready-made new phrase which had an enormous success. It became the *mot* of the evening; and I turned this success into an absolute triumph by a *coup-de-théâtre* which our native rivals could not have foreseen. I drew from my pocket one of those thirty-sou scarfs which ordinarily form part of the Sunday attire of our peasants. I began by showing it to Hasné; like a real monkey, she seized it, put it around her neck, and then on her head, and was about to run away for fear that I should take her treasure away from her. I made her understand that I gave it to her as *bakchich*; her joy knew no limit; she approached me with convulsions of satisfaction which resembled epilepsy! In my triumph, what I feared most was to be bitten! Torrents of words, sharp and discordant, assailed my ears, and the dragoman vainly essayed to translate for me the odd Oriental expressions of savage gratitude. Our Arab neighbors, without being saddened by our success, withdrew, leaving us the field of battle; we profited by this to arrange for a formal entertainment at our headquarters. Quite astounded by our conquest, and pursued by the joyful cries of these princesses, we regained the camp and organized an official reception for the next day. We were to have dance of the almées, illuminations, games, and a ball, with or without the permission of the mayor! However, we intended to invite him and his staff to this charming fête.

“ We awaited their visit in the morning,—the formal invitation was ready,—they had only to make their appearance. But imagine the general astonishment when they did finally arrive; they were the same personages whose *tête-à-tête* we had disturbed the evening previous! We could not help recalling the majestic phrases used by their ambassador to express their regret at not being able to come and meet us! The municipal council had certainly not had a dull séance, and chance had allowed us to behold these austere officials in full exercise of their functions! However, the whole affair was to them so simple that they immediately recognized us all and expressed great pleasure at seeing us again, almost having an air of complimenting us on the manner in which we had supplanted them! Coffee and araki successively circulated in cups and glasses, the most extravagant Oriental compliments were exchanged, always by means of the dragoman, and all went for the best under the most beautiful tent of the most hospitable of encampments. This serious and official reception offered so singular a contrast to the merrymaking of the day before, that it needed all our self-control not to laugh in the faces of these grave municipal councilors, whom we had surprised very much at home in the *Café Anglais*. But all was gravity this morning. Our guests remained to breakfast with us to the detriment of our tablecloth; it was not a slight operation with them, for they managed with their fingers the food for which we usually need a knife and fork. Our Dijon mustard had a tremendous success, as we had the pleasure of observing later on. We did not say 'adieu,' but only 'au revoir,' till the fête of the evening. Our

dragoman had buckled on his saber and wrapped a new *kouffie* around his *tarbouch*—a proof with him of some extraordinary and solemn occurrence. It was seven o'clock in the evening; we had dined well in order not to faint in the middle of the ceremony. Paper lamps had been artistically hung in our largest tent; as in the circus of Caracalla, all had been anticipated, ordered, and classified; our beds and trunks formed *loges* of the first and second galleries; in the corner on the left the *imperial loge*, the place of honor among Mussulmans; on the right, facing the municipal council, a carpet folded, for our colonel [Gérôme] and ourselves, formed the orchestra chairs; and, scattered around in the aforementioned galleries, the suite of the council, the relatives and friends of the dancers. Finally, our servants and camel drivers, crammed in like so many sardines, formed one of the most picturesque sides of this strange picture. The lamps were burning with impatience when the dancer Hasné (she of the thirty-sou cravat) made a most overwhelming entrée, dressed in a long blue robe spangled with gold, and caught at the belt with fringes of silk; some yellow stuff, artistically wound around her head, formed a most striking coiffure, together with the innumerable braids which fell upon her shoulders, several of which were brought around over her forehead by tiny gold rings. The metallic sound of the napoleons that jingled in her hair, and the piercing cries which formed a prelude to her first steps, the barbaric instruments of the musicians, who had already begun their accompaniment, all these strange noises lent something of the diabolical to this scene, so utterly novel to some of us.

The orchestra was composed of three instruments as singular in tone as the dance they were about to accompany; there was the *darabouka*, a drum in terracotta; the *kemengèh*, a kind of violoncello with two strings, and the *zoumara*, a sort of double shepherd's pipe. Our best rugs had been carefully spread on the spot where the dance was to take place. The artiste did not wait to be urged; at the first sounds of the *darabouka*, Hasné planted herself boldly in the middle of the tent. Doubtless animated by the size of her audience and encouraged by the princely bakchiehs we had promised her, and perhaps roused by the presence of her municipal council, she served up to us the most exquisite refinements of her choregraphic art. Her brilliant eyes darted lightnings, and at a given signal the dance began. At first, slow and cadenced in her movements, the dansuse scarcely moved from the spot to which she seemed bound by her feet; then, the rhythm of the music accelerating a little, imperceptible and hasty steps succeeded the incredible inflections of her body and the almost convulsive movements that form the basis of the dance of the almées. As the musicians increased the time of the step, her gestures, contortions, and the least movement of the arms and head assumed a more feverish and savage character. Almost in a state of rhythmic epilepsy, she sank on her knees, executing new figures, more strange and picturesque than the preceding ones, combining the suppleness of a serpent with the grace of a gazelle. Such was the spectacle which charmed us for positively an entire hour; applause, bonbons, oranges, araki, and bakchieh were not stinted! It was a genuine success, and she must have surpassed herself to judge by the delirium of admiration which overpowered the audience in

general and two of our camel drivers in particular. Both of them blind in the same eye, this misfortune had doubtless drawn them together, and it was not pure chance that placed them in the same loge of this traveling theater. The araki and the music had already prepared them for the most noisy manifestations of beatitude. But when Hasné fell on the rug like a wounded lioness, their enthusiasm knew no bounds; one of them took the other's head in his hands and kept time with it, with genuine howlings of satisfaction; he seemed to wish to twist the head off in order to throw it as a bouquet to the almée—the other cheerfully allowing himself to be thumped and twisted. At the end of the séance, the two turbans, which at the beginning were cocked in the most pronounced manner over the ears of the proprietors, finished by tumbling off entirely, exposing to view their mysterious *Mahomet*; nothing could be more comical than the spectacle of these one-eyed beauties, with bare heads, almost strangling each other to mutually express their happiness! But the most beautiful things have an end. The lamps were beginning to smoke; one of them took fire, and this was the signal for a general retreat, after innumerable *salamaleks*. There had not been too much damage, our domestics were enchanted, and we had gained the esteem of the council, so the satisfaction was general. The dansense, conducted to her home on our most beautiful *bourriquot*, was also pleased with us and did not delay giving us proofs of her lively gratitude! The next morning at five o'clock we were roused by the squeaking of feminine voices from the sleep which we so sadly needed after our soirée, as laborious as it was exciting. It was Hasné, with all her friends, who had come to see us, '*Ya kouloum habibi kétir.*' We were all 'her best friends,' and at sunrise she hastened to greet us! They coaxed her to have patience while serving her with coffee, and we spent a gay morning all together. The conversation did not vary from the perpetual '*koïss kétir,*' but gestures and bonbons made up the deficiency. To amuse her, I had the impudence to show her a frightful puppet which I had brought from Paris, and which had already delighted us in several circumstances. This stupid marionette, suspended by a caoutchouc, made a most ridiculous appearance. I generally hung it on the neck of my ass, for I had vowed that it should see all the countries we were to visit; a bit of nonsense that was only excused by the discovery of a similar doll in the baggage of one of our party, at Sinai! We called him Jules, and Jules certainly did not realize his happiness. He had ascended the pyramids with me and was now to be an actor in an exciting drama.



Hasné played with it like a real monkey, balancing it on her head and sticking it on her ears, with cries of joy that were enough to frighten our animals. I went to make a sketch in the afternoon, and when night came Hasné and Jules had disappeared! This elopement was very annoying! Whether he passed the night on the heart or the *étagère* of the lady, he has never confided to me. Only the half of the next day was lost in searching for this *article de vertu*, and the authority of the entire municipal council was necessary to secure a judicial separation and surrender of the stolen treasure. After indulging in this series of dramatic emotions, we wished to profit seriously by our stay in this interesting village, and we became adroit in escaping from the too frequent visits of Hasné, who had taken an excessive liking to our society. By means of continual bakelichs she was made to understand that we had to work and that we would call on her in her den, which we did with the intention of photographing her, but the smell of the collodion turned her stomach and produced a sudden fit of seasickness, which spoiled our negative!

"In its topographical configuration, the village of Senouhrès offers, on a more important scale, the same aspect as the village of Dachour. Located on a plateau considerably elevated above the level of the surrounding country, Senouhrès presents on every side the silhouette of a gigantic fortress. Like Dachour, the inundations of the Nile are the sole cause of this particular situation. At the time of the rising of the river this plain, where we were encamped, shaded by these magnificent palms, forms, it appears, an immense lake as far as the end of the wood where our tents were pitched. The successive elevation and depression of these lakes produce in the lay of the land a slow but steady lowering. Immense plateaus of earth in successive stories gradually form the buttresses of the village, and the roots of the palm trees serve to consolidate these natural ramparts, which the water eats away and displaces a little every year. Whether this is the only guarantee of solidity, or whether this veritable mountain has for its base a foundation of indestructible rock, the village offers none the less, in its whole extent, the appearance of a fortified city entirely built of earth, from the highest minaret of its little mosques to the foot of its walls. Chance had placed us opposite the most traveled passage which leads from the plain to the village by way of the ford, coming out directly on the market-place. (It was here that Gérôme sketched his picturesque *Fellah Women Carrying Water*.) The women of Senouhrès seemed to have chosen this spot to come and get water, either because the brook appeared to them cleaner just at this point, or through curiosity to see our encampment. From the rising to the setting of the sun, hundreds of women and young girls descended to the water, following each other in a procession with the majesty of vestals going to the sacrifice. Without being frightened off by our observation, they devoted themselves merrily to the diverse operations which ordinarily precede, accompany, and follow the filling of a jug of water. On arrival, a neighbor helps to lift down the jug from the little cushion which serves to steady it on the head; the water is afterward carefully inspected; the woman then raises her dress a little above the knee, knotting it at her belt with one of the ends of the veil which covers her head; she then per-

forms the first cleaning of the jug, which does not lack in picturesque detail, owing to the adroit and supple movements displayed in this first operation. Holding the jug in one hand, she rubs it vigorously with the other, filling and emptying it several times to assure herself of its cleanliness ; then, at the risk of losing her footing, she advances boldly, sometimes to her waist, to dip up the clearest water from the deepest part of the brook. It is in this last operation that, with the most graceful and unpremeditated movements, these women struggle against the violence of the current, the weight of the jug making the exit from this absolute bath more difficult. It is then the aid of a friend is generally accepted, either to cross over a difficult spot or to place in position this heavy *amphora*. The owner bends, gathering together, as best she may, her wet and disordered drapery, while her neighbor, with a single sweep, lifts the burden and balances it artistically on the head of her friend, where several bits of cloth, twisted together, form a little cushion. Waiting then one for the other to go back to the village, they recommence the picturesque procession in which they had just come with their empty jugs. Their pace, less swift, was slackened on account of the slope and difficulties of the path, and a thousand incidents occurred to enliven this march of statues, more or less veiled ; a dog that frightened them, a child that tumbled, were pretexts for the most complicated stoppages and graceful groupings. It would have been pushing indiscretion too far to ask for ten minutes' motionlessness on the part of this charming crowd, but we were able by rapid sketching to note their most frequent attitudes."

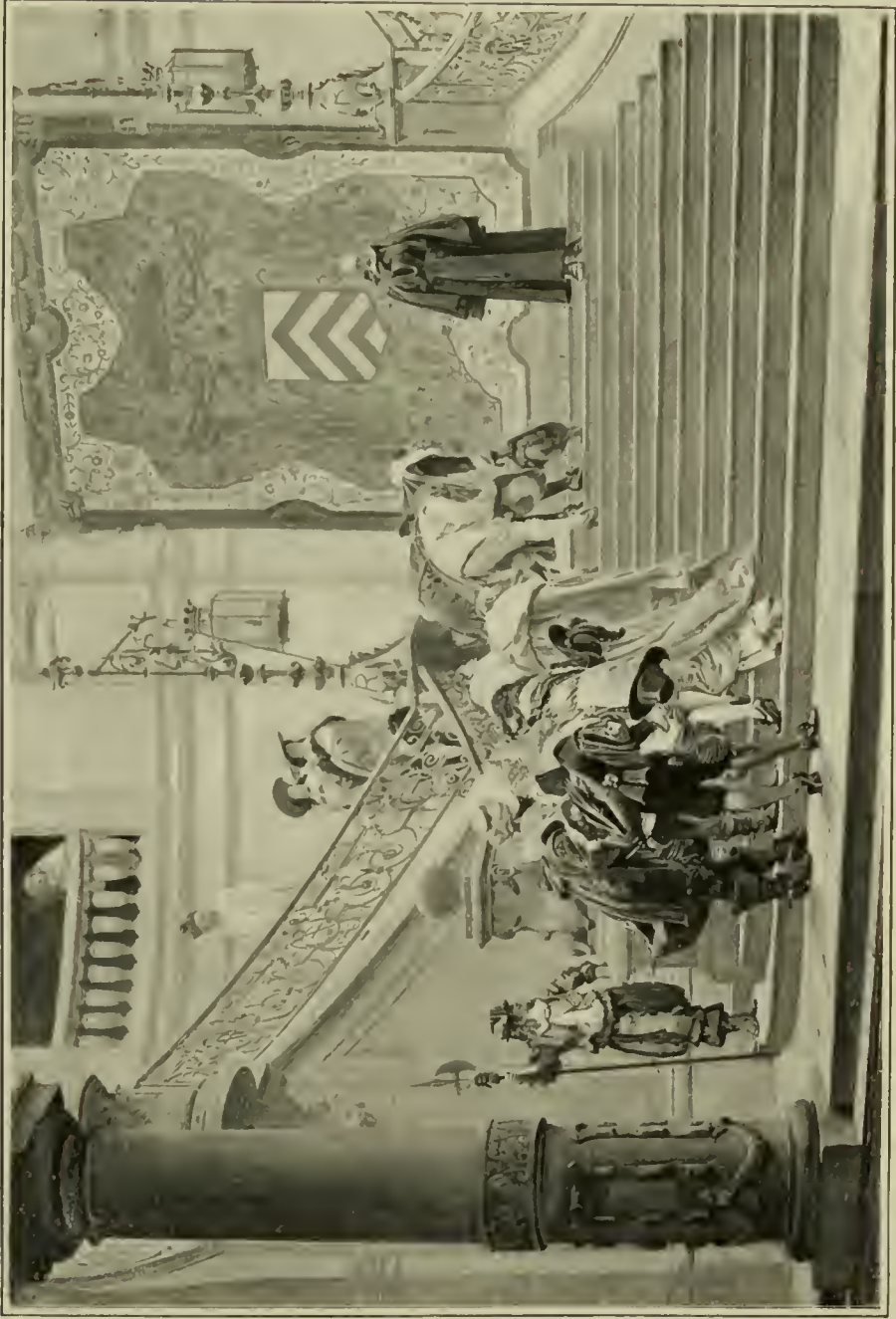
In Gérôme's picture these "graceful groupings" are reproduced in his most masterly manner.

" . . . We were to leave Senouhrès the next day, and we paid a farewell visit to the sheikh and the notabilities of the country. The danseuses, and Hasné in particular, came to express their grief at our departure ; we had bought of them a goodly quantity of dresses and veils, and our short stay must have been quite profitable for them. The fact of preferring things that had been worn to new ones, utterly bewildered them as to the use we could make of them. We revived for them the tale of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp, leaving them new scarfs for old ones. After repeated adieux, and still more numerous bakchichs, we started for Médinet, the most important city in the province of Fayoum.

" We were obliged to pass twice by Médinet in order to reach and return from Fidémine. We could have taken another road, but a sad occurrence compelled this detour ; one of our party was suffering painfully from exposure to the sun. His state of health made it very inadvisable for him to continue the expedition, and we were obliged to have him transported to Cairo, where competent attention could be given to him to help him out of this disagreeable state. The journey from Senouhrès was long and laborious, although we were in cultivated regions sheltered from the khamsinn in its infinite varieties. The remarkable number of canals which intersect this portion of the province make the road a perfect labyrinth ; in default of a map, a native guide is indispensable,

in order not to go astray nor to go over the same ground twenty times, finally arriving at the starting point. It is in this locality, near the grand canal, called the Canal de Joseph, that vegetation attains most extraordinary proportions and surpasses the most exaggerated conceptions. In many places we passed under absolute vaults of verdure formed by enormous branches of trees and shrubs, which we were accustomed to see in much more ordinary dimensions. The lemon and orange trees had the appearance and vigor of our finest oaks; forests of caeti and aloes bordered the roads as far as the eye could reach and seemed to form an impenetrable rampart. After having followed these marvelous paths, we came out on one of the largest branches of the Canal de Joseph. This canal, of which we will speak in our second passage by Médinet, is one of the most important works in all Egypt: very curious legends are connected with its construction and biblical origin. The animation around the city of Médinet was entirely different from that of the cities and villages we had just passed. Soldiers in uniform, cavaliers richly equipped, indicated the rank and importance, commercial and official, which spoiled the picturesque side and local color of the place. Indeed, it was quite difficult to obtain permission to encamp in the environs, from the inhabitants, who already have lost that rural simplicity of costume and gentleness of manner that characterize the *fellah*.

Our dear invalid, accompanied by an intelligent domestic, was intrusted to good hands, and, while he went back to Cairo, we started for the village of Fidémine, generally neglected by travelers, and which has therefore only the better preserved its *cachet de sauvagerie*, so curious and rare to-day. We gradually ascended the Canal de Joseph. Reaching veritable savannas of plantations entirely new to us, we followed a series of paths through woods where Robinson Crusoe could easily have imagined himself on his island. Enormous tropical vines stretched from one side of the road to the other, binding together the palm trees which sometimes barred the road with their distorted and knotty trunks. Our baggage-camels had great trouble in getting through the thicket, and our steeplechase threatened to last till nightfall. We were unconsciously ascending continually while in the woods, but the extraordinary vegetation prevented us from noticing that we were very much above the level of the surrounding country. Suddenly we emerged on the brink of an immense precipice, at the bottom of which ran a brook, which we perceived between the trunks of the palms and aloes which lined the sides of the ravine. We were therefore obliged to make a horribly steep descent on foot, holding our camels by the bridle and helping them as best we could, this long and difficult descent making us appreciate the height to which we insensibly had climbed; for, thinking that we must be going down at least to the infernal regions, we simply reached the natural level of a charming brook at the picturesque entrance of the village of Fidémine. Our tents were pitched beside this limpid water in a virgin forest. Aside from the few village huts which we had seen at the bottom of the ravine, nothing till then had indicated the presence of human beings in this part of the world. At our approach, animals of every description fled away with savage cries, as if they were the sole inhabitants. Not a single person having appeared,



L'EMINENCE GRISE.

we organized a watch for the night, to protect at least our poultry from the beasts who deafened us with their howlings. Were they wolves or only jackals? The sonority of the ravine increased the effect of these noises, and, our imagination aiding us, we were delighted at the idea of an encounter with really savage beasts. Our revolvers under our bolsters, some of us slept with one eye open, but after all we got off with a *nuît blanche*. The next morning, all these ferocious animals having assuredly taken flight at the sight of our warlike preparations, we took a delicious bath in the very torrent where, during the night, one imagined all the lions in the desert were quenching their thirst, in chorus, to excite their hunger. We were still in our bath when the visit was announced of the Sheikh of Fidémine himself, with his suite and the older members of his family. These were no longer the merry old fellows of Senouhrès, but true Arab fellahs, as simple and dignified in their slightest gestures as the others had appeared frivolous. The reception was touching and cordial. Through a sentiment of hospitality truly biblical, the young sheikh had brought his gifts of welcome, certainly ignorant as to our ability to return his generosity. The charming face of this young Arab, the amiable dignity of the old men who accompanied him, this *ensemble* of simple and primitive manners, was admirably framed in by this virgin forest, where nature had been untouched. His gift consisted of an immense dish of rice, with pieces of chicken, sprinkled with saffron, swimming around in it; an enormous *pilau*, which is the ordinary official *pièce de résistance* of every Oriental repast; we invited them in our turn to sit down under our tents and to partake of our *menu* the following day. While we were at table, an odd circumstance occurred to make this little fête memorable for us; for, restricting ourselves to our admiration of the country, our conversation did not offer any great variety; the number of his sheep and camels, his age, his name, etc., formed the substance of the questions addressed by us to the young sheikh, and to which he replied with a charmingly natural precision and simplicity.

"How long is it," asked Gérôme, "since you had a visit from strange travelers?" for to judge by the country, Europeans had not often passed that way; and one thing is certain, that when gas is put in at Fidémine, it will first be found *everywhere* else!

"At this question the sheikh meditated silently, as if he wished to give the exact response Mohammed himself could desire. 'Five years ago,' replied he: 'my father was then Sheikh of Fidémine. I was quite young, but I remember the occasion perfectly.' Giving the precise details then of the time of year and appearance of the travelers, we found that he was unconsciously describing Gérôme himself on his *second* trip to Egypt. Then, after a pause of several minutes, 'My father,' added he, 'related to me that still five years before that, strangers came to hunt near our village and one of these Europeans placed himself in front of our house, seated before a little box, and seemed to be absorbed in some work quite strange to us.' This strange labor was oil-painting, and the traveler absorbed before his little box, which he held on his knees under his great parasol, was Gérôme again, on his *first* trip! A periodic comet which one

ought to see at Fidémine the 9th of February, 1873, since it passes there every five years!

"We had only to follow the caprices of this enchanting torrent to make acquaintance with the country. Ascending the left bank, we reached the village. Descending on our right, we penetrated an endless labyrinth of rocks, plants, aloes, and palms, where only serpents could circulate at ease. Game was naturally abundant in this savage spot and we noticed footprints of animals quite unknown to us. Our hunters could not resist the temptation, and, booted to the shoulders, they plunged into this almost impenetrable forest. Strange cries and howlings lured them on for a long time, but the difficulty of moving around among the cacti and wild creepers that covered the precipices, rendered their efforts fruitless and gradually lessened their ardor. Birds of every possible plumage and an enormous Pharaoh's rat were the only results of this first *battue* in a virgin forest. To judge by this rat, the *cats* of Sesostris must have attained incredible proportions. This animal, however, has really but little analogy with the field-mouse, and nothing justifies the name of rat unless it be the long head and pointed snout. These amphibious animals, which swarm in hot, damp countries, are very destructive to vegetation on account of the way in which they gnaw the roots of the trees which border the brooks, canals, and streams of every description; the Arabs hunt them incessantly, but, in spite of their efforts, this animal is a real plague in several countries. The next day being market-day, we had an opportunity of seeing and sketching the most picturesque and animated groups where the most striking types of the population naturally gather together. The family of the fellah was represented in all its completeness and primitive character; the men tall and strong, with fine expressive features; the women small, and very vivacious in their movements; the children generally of a sickly aspect, and, to the age of ten years, clad only in the garments furnished by nature at their birth. In Egypt there exists a singular contrast between the admirable proportions of the men and the almost pitiful and aged appearance of the women. It is a sad and fatal result of the enervating climate and customs, by which these absurdly precocious natures are exhausted long before the age of full development among us. Numerous books have treated at length these physiological and almost zoölogical questions, since here the woman is relegated to the state of a beast of burden, as soon as she has ceased to adorn the *étagère* of a *harem*. Completely shaved for indispensable reasons of cleanliness, the men preserve, on the tops of their heads, a tuft of hair which bears the sacred name of Mahomet. Is it the name of the prophet attached to this lock or the lock itself that is holy? Be that as it may, the Arab rarely uncovers his skull, and he conceals, with an almost British modesty, this ridiculous ornament.

"In our *soirée* at Senouhrès, chance procured us the favor of seeing the Mahomets of two of our camel-drivers, the only two we shall perhaps ever see, and we should be grieved to have lost this charming souvenir.

"Ophthalmia is the veritable plague which disfigures a goodly half of the population, and the number of blind and one-eyed people has multiplied to such

an extent that there is a proverb which says, 'Among three Arabs you will never find but four eyes!'

"Rice, wheat, maize, and sugar-cane form the substance of the commodities which figure in this open-air market, besides oranges and fruits of every description, which fill the baskets and are almost given away instead of being sold. Asses, camels, and buffaloes take the place of carts with these Oriental market-gardeners, and the women are again the porters, while the proprietors smoke their *chibouks* and drink their coffee, nonchalantly reclining on rugs and mats. Here, as everywhere in the Orient, woman fills the rôle of a domestic animal condemned to the most painful labor, and that most ill-suited to her delicate nature; a *monstrous barbarism*, consecrated by the Mussulman religion, which is far from having disappeared from the Orient. The next day the young sheikh came to make us his adieux, and we left regretfully this picturesque and savage spot to regain Médinet.

"Médinet (which Gérôme has reproduced in his picture of *The Fayoum*) is the principal city of Fayoum, and its name is generally accompanied by that of the province itself. Médinet-el-Fayoum is very important from many points of view: commerce, trade, and farming are organized and administered in due order and even with a certain official *cachet*. The viceroy has a residence here and the movement takes on a little of the tumultuous character of Cairo. The city is traversed in all its length by the immense Canal de Joseph, which reaches as far as the Lake Birket-Keroun, and at this point widens to a veritable river. This size, extraordinary for a canal, has occasioned some discussion as to its real nature, some attributing it to the hand of man and others considering it only a natural deviation of the Nile. Whether Joseph busied himself more or less with the plan, or whether nature alone was the engineer-in-chief, the canal is none the less magnificent; it is the principal artery of circulation and above all of irrigation of the whole province, from the Lake of Birket-Keroun to the Nile. Immense barges and flat-bottomed boats, moored as far as the eye can see along the brick quays, come to seek the grains and straw of the last harvests.



Numerous caravans compete with this transportation by water and serve to connect Médinet with Cairo. The importance of this locality has decided the government to build a railroad across the sands and shifting dunes, a line even now in process of formation and on which we were soon to have an eventful experience. Médinet is not a second Cairo, with its variety of buildings and costumes; it is a great provincial city, therefore there are few loungers but much animation between the buyers and sellers of the cereals and products of the country; it is the commerce of the fields on a grand scale. An interminable bazaar, almost parallel with the canal, stretches from one end to the other of the city; one finds there in miniature the variety and crowding of the shops of Cairo. The merchants and inhabitants have, however, a remarkable simplicity of character. In spite of the uniformed soldiers who mingle with the crowd and spoil the picturesque side, there are always the fellahs with their long blue robes gathered up at the belt with a cord, and wearing a white turban or a simple brown or white skullcap in coarse felt. By reason of changes forcibly brought about through this greater agglomeration, the women of Médinet are prettier and less savage than those we have hitherto seen in the province. Many dispense with the traditional veil, which by rights only allows the eyes to be seen, and, with a beginning of studied coquetry, they know how to dress their hair with taste, mingling with their long blue veils silk stuffs of the most varied tones and ornaments of gold and silver of the finest workmanship.

“I was personally struck,” says Lenoir, “by a superb pair of earrings which dangled like a harness on the neck of a girl who was pretty enough but had a very bad temper, for I had a great deal of trouble in obtaining these jewels, though paying roundly for them in gold. I began by following her, although she walked very rapidly, carrying on her head the eternal earthen jug without which a woman fellah would no longer be a woman; she was going to a little fountain which was at the extremity of the grand bazaar. The rapidity of her pace and the increasing obstructions in the street made me despair of catching up with her. Perceiving that she was followed, and not supposing that it was simply for her earrings, she hurried on still more rapidly and finally fled through the bazaar like a gazelle, and wishing not to lose trace of her in the swarming crowd, I trotted and galloped alternately, without which I should have been infinitely distanced. I was just ready to give up the chase when a happy chance came to my aid. In her precipitate race, one of her yellow babouches slipped from her foot; although this precious *savate* had nothing in common with the slipper of Cinderella, she stopped to recover it; but I had already picked it up as delicately as if it had been a fan and was about to hand it to her with a *tour de force* of grace and distinction. But it had quite an unexpected effect. What I intended as an act of *haute galanterie* was on the contrary very badly misinterpreted; with only one foot shod, she began to run faster than ever, uttering ejaculations which had nothing of the melodious in their sharp syllables. Not wishing to pass for a thief, and hoping to correct this first unfortunate impression she had received, I began to run, holding the yellow slipper in my hand; she was not disheartened, neither was I! And we would

have gone on thus as far as the third cataract, had she not tired first. Finally, arriving at the fountain, she sat down and consented to accept her heelless boot and even offered me a drink from her jug. Although my profile did not resemble his, I thought of Eleazar and Rebecca. But instead of bringing her jewels and demanding her hand, I only had an affair with her *foot*, and had just begged *her* to let *me* have her ornaments! She was easily coaxed, for I showed her one of the irresistible thirty-sou scarfs, with which I never forgot to provide myself, and, thanks to this talisman of the Occident, I entered directly into business negotiations. "*Bekam fi?*" I said, indicating her long earrings. She replied by a flood of words; not understanding the result of her calculation, I showed her a bit of Arabic money about the value of two francs. She took it, and taking off one of her rings laid it in my hand and made a pretense of going away. This was not enough, and I was determined to have the other; there was a new bargain to conclude and I returned at last to the bazaar with my trophy. The affair had evidently been profitable to her, for, "*Ya habibi kêtir,*" etc. I had become an "intimate friend," and as a souvenir she gave me her yellow babouches into the bargain. I put them on my heart and slipped away from my Cinderella in the crowd of the bazaar.

"I found my friends gravely seated in the shop of a tobacco-merchant, seemingly holding a council of war, and debating a question of the gravest importance. It was indeed worth the trouble; the merchant was showing them a small sphinx in granite, of the finest style and workmanship, without the slightest fracture. This treasure, this antique sculpture, charmed us all, and we discussed seriously the price and the conditions under which we could become owners of this beautiful rosy stone. The polish of the granite and the astonishing state of preservation of this *chef-d'œuvre* had so struck us that at first we were inclined to question its *acte-de-naissance*. But Gérôme, grand amateur and archaeological expert, vouched for the real value of the object. The price asked, however, seemed to him exorbitant, and the weight of this miniature Pharaoh monolith made him anxious as to the facility of transport back to Bougival. How much has he since regretted the lost occasion, having had leisure to appreciate its value! Few bits of sculpture in the Egyptian Musée of the Louvre have the charm of this little sphinx, which is perhaps still hidden away in the shop at Médinet, unless it figures on the clock of some unknown collector. Perhaps some Englishman has ordered a pendant in order to have a pair of fire-dogs of the twenty-third dynasty!"

We leave this entertaining journal for an instant to describe Gérôme's picture of *Le Fayoum*. It is a charmingly picturesque bit of landscape, with its spreading sycamore affording welcome shade for man and beast, and its delicate doumpalms mirrored in the limpid water across which a fellah trips lightly on a single plank, balancing a water jar. Beside the arched walls, with their graceful minarets, swarthy white-turbaned Arabs move to and fro, chatting and chaffering, or sit upon the embankments of a rude bridge, watching the arrival of a

chief, who canters gayly up on his snow-white horse, followed by his retinue. A heavily laden ass plods along under the blazing sun, while others are awaiting their burdens near the walls of the city. The scene is full of animation and color, and an infinite variety of grouping and outline. As Gautier says: "When draughtsmen and painters of history apply their science to *landscape*, they obtain surprising effects. The landscapists by profession, too much occupied with details, do not know how to bring out to advantage the contours that exist as much in a landscape as they do in the human face." To return to the records of this interesting journey:

"Like all the cities of Fayoum, Médinét contains a great number of Copts, Christians like ourselves; curious débris of this most ancient population before the establishment of Islamism in Egypt; these Copts, in the exterior practice of their religion, have preserved but little of the customs of the ancient Greek church. The ceremony of the mass has been greatly altered, and the most prominent characteristic of their *culte* is the fashion in which they eat pork and drink wine right before the nose of Mohammed! An Italian monk is installed at Médinét, the last stone of a Latin monastery of considerable importance, which had for its aim the bringing back to Catholicism of these almost barbarous Christians.

"In our quality of strangers, this good Father regarded us as compatriots and came to make our encampment a most affectionate visit. He gave us very curious information about the Christian population of Médinét in general and his flock in particular; invited us to come and see his little rectory, and was melted to tears when we spoke to him of Italy in his native language! He offered us fruits from his garden and wine from his vineyard. In acknowledgment of his amiability we presented him with a jar of Liebig's beef-extract, which recalled to him his distant country and the bouillon he had not heard mentioned for forty-four years; for roast beef, boiled beef, or beefsteaks are as unknown in Egypt as a filet of crocodile in Paris. The buffalo is uneatable and the Egyptian ox, with his twisted feet and horns turned upside down, does not figure on the list of food supplies. Thanks to the importance of Médinét, we had a good deal of trouble in finding a place for our tents. A laundry and abattoir, against which we had unconsciously backed up, forced us to move off farther. It was not an easy affair to find a place, for the proprietors did not seem eager to entertain us. While we were strolling along one of the branches of the canal, our dragoman, like a veritable Solomon, solved the difficulty.

"A large field, bordered with cacti, presented a most inviting appearance; only, the middle of this attractive prairie was occupied by stacks of maize, dried and carefully arranged.

"But a dragoman who has a real saber doesn't care for little details like that! At a sign, the donkey-boys, camel-drivers, domestics, and he himself fell to work; the hedge was scaled and the bunches of maize flew through the air as if by enchantment. In the twinkling of an eye the place was cleared

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and our tents peacefully pitched on this field of battle so oddly conquered. We were a little anxious as to the *dénouement* of this socialistic proceeding, and the interpretation the proprietor would not fail to put on it. But our dragoon, who was possessed of a special *toupet* (cheek!), and a still more Oriental imagination, anticipated the danger; he went to see the owner of the field and explained that the *prince* (Gérôme!) whom he escorted was doing him a great honor in thus being willing to install himself on his property! Charmed by this flattering preference, the proprietor was almost ready to come himself and aid our donkey-boys to pitch his last ricks of straw over the hedge, where our camels had already begun to have a feast! We made several excursions around the country. The extraordinary fertility of this part of the province surpassed anything we could imagine; several harvests are gathered every year. The clover, for instance, is cut three times, and attains a height unknown in our best land. This rich earth, fertilized by the mud of the Nile, has no need of the rest so necessary for our cultivated lands. Scarcely has the wheat been harvested when the plowshare turns up the soil to prepare it for a new sowing. A camel or an ass generally draws the plow; the buffalo is often reserved to work the wells and saquiéhs. The soil, softened by constant irrigation, is so easily worked that the plow resembles a stool turned over, with one foot serving as a plowshare. It is not the large, heavy, shining iron which at home seems to try to turn up the bowels of the earth to the light of day. Here it is sometimes a simple bit of wood, which moves along as if by enchantment in the midst of furrows made in advance, which open of themselves before it. Everything in this marvelous country has the appearance of a dream. Where we use steam machinery, the fellah scratches the soil with a match! The ox, which one meets oftener in Syria, is quite rare in this part of Egypt. The only ones seen here are generally small, with deformed feet, and very long horns bent back like those of an antelope. An enormous hump over the withers resembles a natural deformity, and only serves better to hold the harness fixed on its head. Its color is drab or yellow, sometimes almost pale enough to be called white. Can this ungainly animal claim its family papers as a descendant of the famous Apis? Be that as it may, he is very ungraceful. The hieroglyphic paintings and figures that reproduce the sacred bull bear only a feeble resemblance to this strange animal. In this country, which was almost always occupied by pastoral people, we did not see many flocks, and those which we did see did not maintain their reputation; the little black sheep, with their long heads, resembled goats more than sheep. As far as that goes, the Arab, who is not hard to please, finds the wool of camels sufficient for his needs and for the coarse texture of his clothing. The finest stuffs which we saw on the fellahs, and particularly on the women, come from Cairo, and are sometimes imported from Europe. Blue is the almost uniform color of all the clothing in these countries. The usual short frock of the donkey-boys, the long robe of the fellahs, the square tunic of the camel-drivers, are invariably blue, from the deepest to the lightest shade, according to the use of the garment or the uncleanness of the owner. In the country, this soft tone enhances the

values of the grays and reds of the soil. The light robes of the women (*habbara*), and their long veils, of which we took many samples at Senouhrès, are of a much deeper blue than the other costumes. These stuffs, of a finer mixture of silk and wool, possess the flexibility, transparency, and brilliancy of what a Parisian *modiste* calls *grenadine*. They lend themselves admirably to the forms they cover, and however peremptory the law of Mohammed in regard to modesty, he certainly did not foresee the nature of the gauzy stuffs which the women so skillfully use to ameliorate this severe decree. Only concealing imperfections, these conventional veils leave almost nothing to the imagination. Often one would even wish there were more, so great a charm is there in the unknown, which surpasses the reality in beauty! The children have for their sole covering the skin furnished them by nature, and which seems to contain them with difficulty. The climate and the vegetable nourishment which forms the substance of their food produce among them a state of precocious obesity most painful to see. This exaggerated inflation deforms them entirely, sometimes to the age of eleven years, when their proportions begin to gain a more symmetrical form. . . . In spite of the charm of our sojourn at Médinet, in spite of the series of ready-made pictures which met us at each step, and seemed to lie in wait for us at the corner of each street and of each bazaar, our expedition to Sinai and Arabia Petrea had been arranged, so that we were forced to begin to think of leaving the province of Fayoum. A ravishing country, on account of its essentially gentle and primitive character, with its inhabitants of the Bible and savage vegetation; a veritable terrestrial paradise, where the pastoral people, from father to son, continue to put their whole strength into the cultivation of their fields. We were going to leave this living page of Genesis to enter again the *brouhaha* of the restless and unhealthy world which has already invaded Cairo, and, by means of steam, electricity, and asphalt, has succeeded in replacing the natural charms of the 'Thousand and One Nights' by the accessories of the Boulevard Malesherbes and the Rue Tronchet! . . .

To commence with steam, we send back our asses, camels, and baggage and go to take our tickets at the station of Médinet-el-Fayoum. The station? Well, there was none as yet, but there is to-day, with beautiful gates painted green, and beautiful employees, brand new. As far as that goes, stations are quite useless. One takes the train where one pleases, along the wayside; it stops with all the ease of a *fiacre* taken by the hour, and if there are some stations marked on the indicator, they are placed there solely from a decorative point of view! The stations occur very often and no matter where—according to the laws of a most unforeseen fatality. To light a pipe, to pick a blue-bell, to shoot a duck, are among the thousand pretexts for the train to make a halt; if this organ-point lasts too long, you can sit down to breakfast on the track and make coffee there, provided you do not set the cars on fire! About nine o'clock in the morning we boarded the train without any other administrative formality than shutting the door after us. We stayed there two hours! Thanks to our sketchbooks, which hardly ever left us, the time was not lost, and we made numerous sketches of our neighbors under pretext of taking

notes for the administration. The good Italian Father came to bid us farewell, and left us with tears in his voice as he thanked us for the pot of Liebig with which we had enameled his existence. At the end of another hour, the train, composed of a series of indescribable old boxes, made a start and we moved off, carrying away from this lovely country, which we quitted with regret, hearts and portfolios crammed with charming souvenirs.

The line of the railroad runs almost directly between the sand and the cultivated lands; thus, from a certain point of view, we could not complain of the slowness of our queer locomotive. At our left the whitish line of the desert; at the right smiling vegetation and charming views. It was a veritable magic lantern, and we were jolting along in a pleasant dream when the alarm whistle signaled a station—that is to say, a *breakdown!* First *entr'acte* in the middle of a field—no more coal! This was the prime reason. At the first village the children run to pick up whatever they can find, some trunks of palm trees, brushwood, and *débris* of every description, and we start again, our locomotive digesting with difficulty the varied and odoriferous fuel which has been crammed into its stomach. Another whistle, new halt; no breakdown this time, but a real station, although there is no sign of a building nor an official cap. The village which occasions this second halt lies along the Nile; it is called El-Wastah, a pretty little town, regularly laid out and almost clean. It is a point of junction on the river with the line from Médinét, where the barges discharge their loads or take on the merchandise brought by the trains. Consequently one sees there a great number of camels which ply between the Nile and the railroad. This station was no joke; we had two hours before us which we agreeably spent in breakfasting on the grass under the palm trees, in company of all the dogs of the village, who respectfully ranged themselves around us, begging for a chicken or duck bone. Escorted by these unbidden guests, we strolled through El-Wastah. The barges, gracefully grouped, lend a charming animation to this little port. On the invitation of the owner we visited a lovely pleasure boat, which was only waiting for roving amateurs to descend or ascend the river; but, faithful to our cardboard train, we left these enchanted shores to climb again into our box. We were off; but too soon, a whistle; breakdown! stop again! no more fuel! and right out in the open country, as far from Gyzèh as we are from El-Wastah! We finished by accommodating ourselves to this *Way of the Cross*; we got out with our guns. The engineer declared he had just enough combustibles to go alone with his machine to look for reinforcements. This proposition was unanimously adopted without any one being consulted; and he left us there in the lurch. Several stout gentlemen in clean tarbouchs, who must have been personages of importance, obtained the favor of accompanying the engineer, but they fared badly, for the machine itself had to stop farther on right in among the sand hills. It was doubtless one of these stout privileged functionaries who went to Gyzèh on foot and persuaded the council of administration to send first for the locomotive, and afterward to think of the travelers who were dying of hunger in the open air. We had a six hours' wait, during which we struggled with famine, unable even to dance attendance at the buffet.

Several of us went off hunting and returned with one duck, eight sparrows, and a rat! We were content. Our ingenious dragoman had gathered up some precious fragments of fuel which had fallen from the locomotive along the track, and succeeded in furnishing us with a second-hand supper with the remains of the chicken and the coffee of the morning.

"The night had come; with closed doors we were snoring, careless of the future, without thinking that another train coming from behind might crash into us; but Mohammed watched over us. Toward ten o'clock in the evening, a locomotive, with piercing shrieks from its whistle, hooked on to our coupés and finally dragged us out of this hopeless solitude. We were fairly dazzled on our awakening; for a station, lighted by gas, transported us suddenly into the heart of the most trivial European civilization, and, half-asleep, we were almost ready to ask for the omnibus for the Palais Royale! But we were far enough from it; for it was ancient Gyzèh at which we had just sleepily alighted, and for an omnibus there was a boat to take us across the Nile below the Isle of Roudah. A steeple chase soon organized itself between the passengers, to get the last places on board the tiny boat which was getting up steam several hundred paces from the station. Donkeys were ready for us on the other side, and, preceded by the donkey-boys and their *fanous*, we committed ourselves and our beasts to the care of Heaven as far as the hotel. After so varied a series of emotions, a restorative supper did not come amiss; we slept while eating, and, had our bedrooms not been *au premier*, we would have been found snoring on the table the next day. Our dear invalid was better and we were going to be able to recommence our wanderings. . . .

"By daybreak we had found our way to the superb Avenue of Choubrah, a perfect vault of verdure, more than three kilometers long. The sycamores and acacias which form a hedge on both sides of the road, and whose knotty branches interlace overhead, are of extraordinary dimensions. A delightful gallop of an hour and a half brought us to the door of a charming villa, the chief attraction of which was a real atelier, with easels, canvases, everything necessary to paint after nature. An atelier on the bank of the Nile! a dream realized, and all the palaces of the pashas were not worth this enormous window with its large green curtains! We received a most cordial welcome and could speedily have forgotten that we were in Egypt, had not the Nile and the Pyramids lain before our eyes. The disk of the moon had arrived at its stage of most accentuated leanness, and, in consequence, our cavalcade that evening met with various tumbles into pools and holes, which forcibly retarded our return to Cairo. We arrived looking like thieves, and sundry kicks were necessary before we succeeded in having our own doors opened and escaped being devoured by the dogs of our watchman.

"The dogs of Cairo (of which Gérôme has given us various specimens, notably in the picture entitled *A Warm Day in Cairo*) deserve honorable mention, not for the elegance of their forms but on account of the important rôle they play in the city and in every particular street. Black and drab, they resemble wolves and jackals more than dogs. They are the real guardians



REX TIBICIN.

of the city at an hour when every honest man is supposed to be asleep and only rascals abroad. They evidently place on the latter list all Europeans who continue their habits of dining out, going to a ball and coming home late. In order to return alive from these various operations, it is prudent to go on ass-back, accompanied by a stout bludgeon or a revolver. To keep to the middle of the road is also wise, for if you but graze the shops confided to the care of these *molosses*, you expose yourself to the most unequal struggle and undeserved bites. The expression 'Jezebel devoured by dogs,' which I have always considered as a sort of poetical exaggeration, is nothing of the kind; it is easily explicable when one sees these ferocious animals who devour each other when enough old women do not tumble from the windows! There exists a sort of canine federation which assigns to each his street and his quarter; if a dog finds himself out of his domain, all those in the strange street fall on him and tear him to shreds. It is a corporation with a regular syndicate and laws. For the maintenance of this police, the butcher in each street has charge of souls and stomachs; he owes all his débris to the dogs of his quarter, and the hour of distribution gives rise to most unexpected groupings, needy families always occupying the front row.

"We wished to carefully examine all that we had but obtained a glimpse of during our first stay in Cairo. The bazaar being close to our hotel, we began there. At the end of the Mouski, a wide covered way divides the quarter where all these bazaars seem to be grouped. At the left are the jewelers, on the right the stuffs, carpets, shoes, and costumes of every description; farther on, the saddlers' bazaar, where one finds harness, saddles, and all the accessories of travel. (Gérôme's picture, *Buying a Bridle*, otherwise known as *At the Saddlery*, reproduces this bazaar and gives us the portrait of a superb white horse to boot.) But the so-called bazaar of arms is absurd, for the Hôtel Drouot has bought up the greater part of these Eastern *biblotis de luxe*. We saw at Cairo only horrible modern blades coming from Brussels or England, which betrayed by their brilliancy their trumpety European origin. To say that there were none genuine or beautiful would be to exaggerate, but they were rare. The jewelers' bazaar offered the most unique effects. It is not on a level with the rest of the street; one is forced to descend several steps and squeeze in with the crowd that always blocks up the narrow door. It is an immense caravansary rather than a bazaar. Penned up like animals in a show, each goldsmith has his quarters, his mysterious coffer, his weighing apparatus, his pipe, and his spectacles. In this marvelous den we laid in an abundant stock of souvenirs in the shape of bracelets, collars, etc. The premium accorded in the Orient to all European money, and French in particular, gives rise here to a very simple mode of payment. The jewelry is placed in one scale, your gold in the other, for such is their mode of establishing an equilibrium between their merchandise and your twenty-franc pieces; for in the jewelry of nearly uniform fabrication the workmanship does not count. From the jewelers', we crossed to the stuffs and vestments; pelisses, waistcoats, long robes for men, everything was heaped together and hung up in the greatest disorder.

"The *abayes* and long robes with fitted sleeves are the two garments most generally worn in Egypt and Syria. The *abayes* are the winter mantles which the Arab puts on as a *dernier ressort* against the cold. This garment, consisting of a large square piece of cloth, is cut with biblical simplicity; it is the tunic of the Hebrews, a sack with square openings for the head, arms, and legs. Luxury, which takes possession of everything, has succeeded in making of this classic vestment a real *objet d'art*, by the nature of the texture and the incomparable embroideries with which it is sometimes entirely covered; the *abaya* of the camel-driver has no other ornament than two great brown stripes which run from one end to the other. In the countries farther away from Cairo, the *abaya* has other shades. In the environs of Petra, these large stripes are blue, and the garment is sometimes lined with furs, but in the desert the primitive color of the stuff is generally simplified by the wear and tear and most uniform dirtiness. The *abayes* in green silk, ornamented with embroideries in silver, produce a ravishing effect. There are samples for every taste, from black embroidered with gold, to the most delicate shades. One finds here also a complete assortment of *konffies* in every style. The waistcoats, vests, tunics, and robes hardly ever change their forms, but the stuffs with their silky reflections vary infinitely and produce always new effects. Half-wool, half-cotton, these stuffs give the effect of being made of silk; being profusely gummed and glazed, they lose much by being put in water. The sleeves of these garments, widening like a funnel, seem at first sight as if they would restrain the freedom of the arm; but this surplus stuff, falling over the hands, preserves them from the painful effects of the sun. These ample costumes, which seem to be made only to astonish strangers and embarrass those who wear them, are, on the contrary, admirably adapted to the requirements of the most natural laws of hygiene in a country where one struggles continually against a torrid heat. The silk stuffs in which the Arabs literally swathe their heads, far from stifling them, produce a refreshing coolness; the more an Arab is covered with loose woolen garments, the less he suffers from the sun.

"To go on to the Gobelins. Several of us had a weakness for these admirable rugs, which are made in Persia and sold in great quantities in Cairo. The Cour de Tapis (reproduced in Gérôme's famous *Carpet-Merchant*), aside from the marvels sold there, is in itself very interesting, presenting one of the most picturesque interiors to be found in Cairo. The installations of the merchants, their cupboards and *coffres de réserve*, are veritable *chefs-d'œuvre* of sculpture. Verandas in carved wood shield the shops from too much light, and this twilight, skillfully managed, only brought out more admirably the striking colors of these beautiful carpets. We had the *primeurs* of the recently arrived new cargo and the chance was too good to be lost. It was a real orgy; they must have taken us for commission-merchants, and nothing arrested our purchases but the expensive question of transportation of all these riches. . . .

"Feeling the need of repose, we sought quarters that would be well worth studying meanwhile, and where the divans and coffee would bear some proportion to the importance of our *carvas*. We therefore decided to visit the

Persian ambassador, to refresh ourselves at his expense and do him honor! These visits, which are made so familiarly at home, take on here in the Orient a majestic and official character almost comical. You go to visit somebody you do not know; in your character of stranger, he gorges you with liquors and bonbons and deluges you with coffee, and it is he that is profuse in thanks for the honor you have shown him. On our way we promised ourselves the pleasure of reclining on luxurious divans, but we had not calculated the progress of European civilization. The ambassador invited us to sit down on horrible mahogany chairs, persuaded, doubtless, that he was filling up the measure of our desires by this delicate attention. These fitting adornments of a ready-furnished apartment contrasted singularly with the Oriental richness of this sumptuous abode; fountains of porphyry, colonnades of marble, paintings touched up with gold and inlaid with tortoise-shell, made of this enchanted palace a queer assembly of the richest products of the Orient and the commonest trivialities of our European furnishings. In spite of our disappointment in finding ourselves seated as if we were at home, we were none the less charmed by the princely welcome we received. After the customary compliments, the ambassador presented to us his sons, very distinguished-looking young people, whose wardrobes were supplied by Dusautoy, and who had nothing of the Persian about them save their pointed caps of black cloth. The interpreter explained to us how complete their education was, and rather maliciously added, just at the end of our visit, that they spoke French admirably! Happily, we had not indulged in too many indiscreet reflections suggested by some details of this strange interior. We visited in order the chambers, the gardens, and the stables, veritable marvels of Asiatic luxury with which the Persians love to surround themselves, but which is almost always spoiled by some *bibelot* in bad taste or some absurd prosaic accessory. The bath room, all in Persian faience, and the painted wooden wainscoting and ceilings, excited our particular and enthusiastic admiration. In going out, after having taken leave of our hosts, we ran against a black colossus who was half-concealed by the obscurity of the passage; by the jingling of his chains we recognized that it was a eunuch decorated with jewels like a Spanish *mulet*. (Gérôme's picture of the *Grand White Eunuch*, with its delicious glimpse of the harem in the background, not vouchsafed to the visitors that day, is a reminiscence of this encounter.) Guardian of the special harem of the ambassador, this splendid figure was a fair type of these extraordinary beings, whom we had already remarked at Cairo. Clothed in gaudy stuffs, this living *baldachino* was literally covered with jewels, collars, bracelets, and rings, that announced his presence from afar. He saluted us, not understanding the compassion with which his social position inspired us. A saber longer than himself dragged at the end of a silk scarf and made us think of Blue-Beard; therefore we did not lounge in that corridor for any length of time! Women only have the privilege of entering these harems, which have been described by some imaginative writers in terms more or less improbable and false.

"In the Orient, the harem is more of a luxury than a social institution, and is supported more through vanity than love of debauch. The harem is the

barometer of the fortune of every important personage, and his income is estimated more according to the number of women which he counts in his *gynécée*, than of the horses in his stables. A fair valuation can be made by counting the number of eunuchs at the door. As to the life of the harem, we have had for a long time very incomplete glimpses given by visitors authorized to penetrate the sanctum. The sister of the celebrated Egyptologist Lane has made a very interesting *résumé* of all that we could see, tell, or write on this subject. The seclusion of the women of the harem has been much exaggerated, for, although men can never gain admittance there, the women have every facility for going to the bath or to visit among themselves. How often did we meet them on their richly caparisoned asses, moving freely through the streets, simply preceded by a *sais* or a slave. The women one does *not* see in the Orient are evidently the most beautiful; those one sees are more strange-looking than pretty; and those whom one regrets to have seen, show themselves the most freely! The names of the women are not very varied, thanks to this simplification, one can easily attain the favor of seeing the physiognomies of the feminine inhabitants of an entire quarter. 'Fatma! Fatma!' you cry at hazard in the street, and fifteen to twenty Fatmas automatically open the ventilators of the moucharabiéhs like the birds in a cuckoo-clock! In this collection, several certainly merit the trouble of this rude subterfuge. It was a Fatma whom we persuaded to come and pose for us. It was a new thing for her, and in our honor she put on all her richest ornaments. A tall, beautiful girl, her fine, expressive head was a thorough type of the best Egyptian woman; her sole fault was that she drank araki like a camel-driver and smoked like a Swiss! But one cannot have everything. The most absurd greediness and childishness form the particular characteristics of these naive and almost savage natures, which are brought up like rare birds, or trained animals, to sing, dance, drink, smoke, and sleep. Fatma did not fear to trample underfoot that special law of the Prophet that forbids photography and all reproduction of the human figure. She carried away sufficient and varied bakchiéhs to immortalize our memory in her heart, and she fell heir to the whole stock of thirty-sou searfs that had not been given away in Fayoum, and which would have no temptations for the austere monks of Sinai.

"One of the chief ceremonies of the Mussulman religion happened to coincide with our stay in Cairo and formed one of the most impressive souvenirs of our journey, the *Departure of the Carpet (kisweh)* for Mecca. This carpet is the annual offering of the Viceroy to the mosque of the holy city of the Prophet; a royal present which gives to the departure of the caravan a most imposing official and religious character. The day before, the whole city is a prey to the most unaccustomed excitement; curious sightseers go to reserve their places, and pilgrims gather at the spot from which the caravan is to take its departure the next day. It is near the Porte de la Victoire that the *cortège* assembles. Richly harnessed, the dromedaries for the travelers, and even the simple baggage-camels, are the objects of the admiration and attention of the entire population; the fanatics crowd around the animals and seem to wish to

sanctify themselves by contact with them. The religious character of this fête exacts the greatest reserve on the part of the Europeans who wish to observe it; we were mounted on asses, and to make some concession to the Prophet we had put on for the first time the ordinary *tarboueh*, that absurd red skull-cap imported into Europe by pashas in disgrace and by photographs *ad libitum*. The place in front of the citadel was the superb position we had chosen to review this procession. On our way we encountered a compact crowd struggling on in the same direction, and it was not without much hustling that our asses could breast this deluge of humanity. The women, clad in their most beautiful blue robes, with their nails freshly painted and all their jewels displayed, seemed to be the most eager in the midst of all this tumult. Under such circumstances the *zaghrouta*, a sort of hen-like clucking which they make with their tongues, is the most ordinary mode of expressing their religious enthusiasm. At each street-corner, animated groups escorted the parts of the procession which were going toward the general rendezvous; *cawas*, armed with *courbaches*, opened a way through the crowd for the little brotherhood they preceded, freely distributing thumps to the children, dogs, and asses who did not take themselves out of the way quickly enough. Behind them marched the musicians with their instruments, the *darabouka*, the cymbals, and the flutes which form their orchestra. Following them the *ulémas*, the dervishes, and the other functionaries of the mosque of the quarter escorting the pilgrims who were going to form a part of the grand caravan. Stopped every twenty paces by these smaller processions, and by the always increasing proportions of the crowd, we were at last able to reach the Place Roumêileh, where the most extraordinary spectacle we had ever witnessed awaited us.

The citadel was before us, its picturesque door richly draped with flags; at our right, the perspective of Mokattam and the first mosques of the caliphs; behind, the Mosque of Hassan, which covered the entire place with its gigantic shadow. In this magnificent framework this picture was to present itself to our curious eyes. As in all complicated fêtes, there was a delay, but in spite of the blockades we arrived just in time. A hedge of soldiers stretched the whole length of the place, to free the path of the procession and protect it from the fanatic demonstrations of the crowd. Finally, the cannon from the citadel sounded the departure and the entire city, perched on its terraces, replied by the most frightful cries of joy; some raised their arms to heaven, others prostrated themselves in the dust; the women struck up their chant, or rather their piercing cries of satisfaction, the camels and the asses mingled their guttural observations with the concert, and the noise was overpowering. The procession of court equipages began. Preceded by detachments of military, infantry and artillery, these vehicles, decked out with plumes and gilding, furnished only a long and tedious prelude to the real procession, while the cannon, sounding at intervals, accentuated the official and almost dramatic side of this strange ceremony. Suddenly the cries redoubled, heads turned with feverish haste in the direction of the bazaar which connects the grand palace of Karaméidan with that of the citadel. The terraces, the minarets, and the ruined walls seemed to

sink under the weight of the multitudes piled up on them, and it was strange that these worm-eaten constructions did not crumble under this agitated crowd. The women were number one in this universal row, their shrill and prolonged cries dominating the tumult. Our ears rang, our asses pranced, and our dragoman signaled us to conceal our pipes, for the carpet was approaching. Two men, entirely nude and executing extraordinary leaps, preceded the *cortège*;



these two lunatics are what are called saints, religious and venerable personages who embrace this career for want of a trade more to their taste. The piety of the faithful, who furnish them with everything, had economized to-day in regard to their wardrobe, which consisted of a cord around the waist. Brilliant cavaliers and numerous eawas, seconded by the soldiers of the regular army, with difficulty kept back the crowd, which precipitated itself

under the feet of the white dromedary, the bearer of the precious gift of the pilgrims. Entirely hidden under its ornaments of brocade and gold, this magnificent animal advanced with difficulty under the weight of the enormous catafalque which swayed slowly on its back. In form of a tent, this monument was surmounted by a rich cross

and surrounded by four other turrets; the entire canopy was sparkling with embroideries in gold and precious stones. The stuff itself, of green silk, was almost entirely hidden by this mass of riches. The head of the dromedary was loaded down with ostrich-plumes and pompons of silk and marvelous embroideries. The rest of its trappings were in harmony with the general tones of the catafalque, which, entirely of green and gold, produced from a distance a most dazzling effect.

Then came the musicians mounted on dromedaries of every shade of beauty; these men, half nude, executed an internal music at a little distance from the carpet; their animals were painted with henna and covered with ornaments in gaudy colors. These unhappy creatures gave themselves up, with an indescribable zeal, to the deafening rôle confided to them. Licensed, doubtless, for the trade, some of them presented curious examples of deformity; their cheeks, immoderately distended by the inflation necessitated by the blowing of their *musettes*, seemed to form a part of the instrument, such fabulous proportions did they attain. Immense drums, placed on each side of the hump of the camel, recalled our ancient kettle-drummers; a great quantity of shrill fifes competed with the trumpets and cymbals and

rent the air till the blood rushed to our ears. But it seems that the excellence of these *maestri* is measured by the row they make.

"The camel carrying the carpet made a long pause on the square. Without decreasing in the slightest degree the inflation of their cheeks, the musicians, more deafening than ever, ranged themselves on each side. This halt permitted us to note conscientiously the details of this strange and magnificent fête. The rest of the procession then advanced to the center of the square, several paces from us. A monstrous *santon*, entirely nude, opened the march. (In his *Santon before the Door of a Mosque*, Gérôme has skillfully represented one of these extraordinary creatures.) The dromedary on which he balanced himself was painted with henna and entirely covered by brilliant cloths and trappings. The crowd, drunk with fanaticism, broke through the line of soldiers which guarded the passage of the caravan; men, women, and children rushed to kiss the feet, the knees, the hands of this horrible monster, who rolled in fat on his gilded saddle. The height to which he was hoisted prevented the greater part of the faithful from reaching more than his sacred feet. As far as that goes, the *santon*, but little relishing the veneration of the crowd, agitated himself like a dog tormented by flies. Exasperated, doubtless, by the touches lavished on him by the crowd, he distributed from time to time the most formidable kicks to those whose fervor tickled too much. Balancing himself, he seemed to keep time to the music, as if the dromedary was still on the march. Was it a desire to get away or impatience to return to Mecca? It was difficult to read in this swollen and oily visage, almost buried under the tangled locks which fell over it, and which had not been combed for an age. The audacity with which the women in particular scaled the hedge of *cawas* and *sapties* in order to reach this hideous baboon, was remarkable. The most marvelous and beneficent properties are ascribed to mere contact with this lump of melting grease. They touched him with everything they owned that was precious to them, their clothing, their jewels, their children, to restore their health or preserve them from all misfortune in the future. Those who were too small or too feeble to reach the great toes of this hippopotamus, hung on to the dromedary and satiated him with their transports of ferocious piety. The unhappy beast understood nothing of this new kind of currying bestowed on him by these savages, who seemed to wish to devour him alive.

"It is at once curious and sad to see what a point human folly will reach when consecrated and rendered forever incurable by an idiotic and barbarous religion. After having observed all the repulsive details of this religious orgy, the rest of the caravan filed before us, richly equipped, the pilgrims having vied with each other in luxurious display and new inventions; some of them, sheltered in a sort of cave covered with awnings, displayed their Oriental art in decorating these little traveling habitations. The richest stuffs and emblematic flags in brilliant colors tastefully adorned these motley cots. Others, simply covered by the tent canvas, were remarkable, however, on account of the accessories necessitated by the long journey, which dangled from every side; *gargoulettes*, *narghilès*, lances, and *armes de luxe*, shields, bags of provi-

sions, all were suspended like trophies on the flanks of the animal, which seemed to be impressed with a sense of its importance on account of all it carried on its back. After a march of two hours came the poor pilgrims, who, trusting in the protection of the Prophet, were going to make this long and painful journey on foot. They were not very young, and in the ranks was more than one very old man who seemed more likely to die on the way, or at least at his journey's end, than to return. Among these unhappy creatures we noticed a great number wearing the green turban, a distinctive sign of the faithful who had already made the pilgrimage to the *kaaba* of the Prophet. Several more *santons* figured in this long procession, all horribly ugly: this singular profession of traveling *santon* is transmitted from father to son. One of them was the object of special ovations, and one of our donkey-drivers, very well posted in regard to the fête, being questioned, explained to us that this unfortunate had already made the journey to Mecca seven times and in the same costume! By the odor we might have divined the seven times concentrated sanctity of this lump of lard! But we dogs of Christians were not connoisseurs! Our donkey-boy begged permission to go and venerate this monstrosity; more supple than a serpent, he slipped through the crowd and between the legs of the soldiers, and, hanging on like a mussel to the calf of this holy personage, he gave himself an indigestion of humid piety. But everything passes, even a caravan; the fête was at an end, and we returned thoroughly astonished by these strange scenes, and still wondering at the marvels of decoration and *mise-en-scène*, but profoundly commiserating the actors; the chief characters had played *too well* their rôles in this apotheosis of brutishness! . . .

"But we must be thinking of Sinai, of Moses, of the manna of the Hebrews, and go to expiate all our mundane pleasures in the privations, the sand, the fasting, the fleas, and the famine that await us in the desert. 'Be serious!' says our little band to itself, feeling all the gravity of this second expedition; real dromedaries and a real desert, without the slightest vestige of a 'Restaurant Peters,' this was the prospect which lay before us and which some of us considered with no little apprehension. The railroad had brought us across the sands to the dull and dirty little city of Suez. Our tents and superb dromedaries were to arrive only the next day; for the time being we had no other resource but the *Hôtel Anglais*, already flooded with travelers bound for Indo-China and Japan. Our unhappy fate made our arrival coincide with a near departure and the hotel was full. '*Complet*,' ironically cried from an upper story a *garçon* redder than the sea baptized by this name. We were determined, however, not to sleep out of doors nor in the city; we entered into negotiations and our dragoman obtained the favor of having beds made up on the divans in the salon. But when we came in to claim our half-beds, a dozen Englishmen were snoring there in chorus. Their ungracious refusal to disturb themselves for our benefit engendered all manner of designs in the heads of our band, which exerted itself all night long in the most outlandish inventions. The boots, ranged in battle array on the table of the salon, pro-

jected fantastic shadows into the corners, and some of us could not resist the temptation of sketching them; as if by enchantment, umbrellas were spread, color-boxes opened, and, in the scantiest of apparel, the merits of painting by gaslight were debated! Having some visits to make the next day, we had stipulated for some brushing and blacking. But as we possessed in the caravan a charming *mélange* of yellow boots, leggings, and black boots, which did not call for the same kind of treatment, we had arranged that all the boots which needed to be *blackened* should be placed at daybreak outside the door of the salon. A diabolical idea occurred to one of us and was put in execution. Like the lance of Saul, a *single yellow boot* was abstracted from each of the selfish sleepers and traitorously mixed in with ours; bakelich was forthcoming, and the blacking was not spared! When they returned, shining and polished, each was placed silently at its post and we stole away, picturing to ourselves the scene that would follow the awakening! . . .

"The desert which separates Cairo from Suez has a very peculiar aspect, owing to the incredible mobility of the sand. This white, impalpable dust undergoes the strangest transformations, following the slightest caprices of the wind. Elevating itself sometimes into mountains of great height, sometimes into a series of domes, the same sand presents the next day the appearance of an immense level plain. The crossing is very painful for travelers and even for the dromedaries, who, plunging in to their knees, can only move at a very slow pace. To-day the railroad simplifies this first stage of the journey out of Egypt, but if commerce and busy travelers gain time, the real amateurs of the Orient lose one of the most interesting points of the desert. The sands, of a brilliant whiteness, partake in an extraordinary degree of the various colorings of the sky at different hours of the day. In the morning they are rosy, with violet shadows; in the afternoon the direct sunlight gives them back their whiteness, softened by gray and golden tones of the most brilliant effect. In the evening, during the short period of the twilight, they reflect like metallic plaques the incandescent tones of the setting sun; they are not then mountains of snow, but of fire; perpetually agitated, the sand is always subject to a change of place visible to the naked eye and occurring with frightful rapidity. On the crest of these mountains the slightest breath of wind produces an effect like the melting of snow: the sand sinks away, always with imperceptible clouds on its surface, whose substance is treacherous and impalpable. How many caravans have been and will be its victims! But to return to Suez.

"To stroll through the bazaar and the city, and complete our laying-in of supplies for the journey, occupied the day till the arrival of our caravan and our tents. Our encampment, with its military guard, was established to the northwest of the city, where we were protected from its miasma, and, above all, from its inhabitants. Suez at this time was of a repulsive uncleanness, and no historical monument makes up for this carelessness. The simple house occupied by General Bonaparte offers the sole pilgrimage to make. The tide was high and the holy patriarch having forgotten to leave us his rod, it was in a charming little pleasure boat belonging to the Compagnie du Canal that we crossed the

Red Sea, with dry feet, at the very spot where Pharaoh's artillery had been entirely submerged! Our caravan had made the grand tour in the morning. We passed through the sheds of a section of the work on the Isthmus, where the workmen, a majority of them Frenchmen, gave us the most cordial welcome; they offered us a ravishing little Syrian dog, and being assured that it would follow us in the desert, we put it in a leash and confided it to one of the servants. Here it was that we made at last the acquaintance of our superb mounts. The Viceroy had graciously offered them to Gérôme for our journey; we could soon appreciate the value of these incomparably trained dromedaries, to whom we owed the rapidity of our journeying and our consequent ability to spend a longer time at each encampment. In presence of these magnificent animals and their guardians, it was not without a slight feeling of fear that the novices measured the height of their new situation. The largest of the animals measured 3 meters 25 centimeters to the saddle-bow, and was assigned to Lenoir, he being the youngest of the party. The camels had all been made to kneel down; the moment we were seated on the saddle, the animal instantly rose up with an excess of politeness we would gladly have dispensed with, for his zeal in this operation produced the most frightful swaying imaginable on account of the inequality of length which exists between the hind and fore legs of this beast. But the uneasiness experienced, when riding a camel, has been greatly exaggerated, and the resistance which one makes to the natural movement of the saddle is the sole cause of the disagreeable effects sometimes occurring on these ships of the desert. It is not a rolling, properly so-called, but a very regular and very supportable pitching. Habit soon made us regard this new mode of locomotion as the most natural in the world, and we ended by displays of the *haute école* which excited the admiration of our escort.

"Our first halting-place was not far away, and we soon reached Aïn-Mouça, the springs of Moses. We entered the desert by dunes of extremely fine white sand, which greatly diminished the fatigue consequent on our first *séance* on a movable hump; we left behind us Suez, which soon disappeared behind the steep flanks of the Djebel-Attaka; this mountain in red tones dominates the route and melts away in the distance on the southern side of the sea that reflects its warm tints. The absolute absence of decent drinking-water at Suez gives a great importance to five springs which we found at this camping-ground. The nature of the soil and the presence of this water have favored vegetation there; graceful palms and clusters of trees sheltered the springs; two natives had made little gardens there and constituted the entire population of this refreshing little quarter. It was there we passed our first night in the desert, the very thought of which was full of charm."

Apropos of this first encampment, we find in the dedication of "Le Fellah," a charming volume by Edmond About, the following just tribute to that fidelity to nature which is one of the most striking qualities in Gérôme's work:

"*My Dear Friend:* Do you remember our last meeting in Egypt? It was under your tent at the extreme end of the desert of Suez, in sight of the caravan

THE END OF THE SEANCE

1887



which was carrying the carpet to Mecca. You were starting for Sinai; I was preparing to return to Alexandria with a portfolio crammed with notes, as was yours with sketches. I knew Egypt well enough to describe it from top to bottom, as I have done the Greece of King Otho and the Rome of Pius IX. But the hospitality of Ismail Pasha had swathed me in bands which paralyzed my movements not a little. I had no longer a right to publish *ex professo* a contemporaneous Egypt. Your example, my dear Gérôme, has at once fascinated and reassured me. No law forbids an author to work *en peintre*; that is to say, to assemble in a work of imagination a multitude of details taken from nature and scrupulously true, though selected. Your masterpieces, great and small, do not affect to tell everything; but they do not present a type, a tree, the fold of a garment, which you have not seen. I have followed the same method, in the measure of my ability, which, unhappily, is far from equaling yours, and it is only in virtue of this fact that 'Le Fellah' is worthy to be dedicated to you."

To return to the journal:

"Tethered by a cord, like horses in the country, our dromedaries and baggage-camels formed one of the most interesting parts of our encampment. The distribution of their daily food was very instructive for us, who were to live for two months on their backs. And here let us correct an error that is sometimes made, in regarding the camel and the dromedary as animals of a different race; they are identically the same, with the sole distinction that one is a beast of burden, and the other is exclusively trained for riding. The dromedary is trained like the English horse, and the camel is only used for transportation of heavy weights. There is no more difference of race between them than between the blooded horse and a cab-hack. Our camp, all during the journey, was composed of three large tents and two small ones. One of the former served as a general dormitory for our little band, the second was our dining-room, and the third barely contained our kitchen apparatus. The two little tents formed the apartments reserved for the serious men, who were not in the habit of passing their nights singing and dancing in a ring around the table; over the one assigned to Gérôme floated an *Admiral's* flag, for were we not navigating the desert? The tenants of these smaller tents generally took good care to avoid a too great proximity to the undisciplined and noisy fold, but when the *séances de désert* became too monotonous, momentary fusions and recon-



ciliations occurred; the serious men solicited the favor of penetrating into the den and were made to pay dearly for the privilege. To a spectator placed on the top of a mountain, our caravan on the march must have presented a very respectable *ensemble*, for our effective force consisted of twenty-seven camels and dromedaries. Our ten choice mounts belonged to the stables of the Viceroy; four were especially detailed to carry the water, three carried the tents and the camping apparatus, seven others were loaded with chopped straw and beans for the food of their brethren, for it is a mistake to extend the moderation of a camel to his food; he can remain for a week without drinking, but he must have a daily meal, however slender, his conformation permitting him to carry only a supply of water.

“One of these interesting animals must have been astonished, and with good reason, at the solicitude of which he was the subject, and the ass carrying reliefs had less pretext for being excited; this camel carried more than Cesar and his fortune, for he had on his back our only photographic apparatus, *plus* the two chests of bottles and glasses which make its greatest charm; we lavished the greatest care on him in all the descents and difficult passages; his load, much smaller than that of the others, must have misled his judgment as to the nature of our kind attentions. How many statesmen fall into the same error in attributing to themselves the merit of the lamp-glasses they are carrying! ‘Don’t smash the globe,’ is the basis of the enthusiasm of most of their electors! In these desert countries the affections become displaced and concentrate themselves with intensity on objects to which one would not before have dreamed of attaching any great importance. A second camel held a place in our hearts almost as dear as the one carrying the camera; it was he on whose hump our *pot-au-feu* made itself each day in a marvelous Swedish pot, by the side of which Aladdin’s lamp was insignificant! A chest of wood, thoroughly incased in wool and hermetically sealed, contains a simple pot, which it holds like a jewel in its case. In this pot you place all the ingredients of the *pot-au-feu*, together with its *quantum* of boiling water (easily obtainable an hour before departure); the box being closed with care, ebullition is maintained indefinitely until the water is entirely evaporated, if the matter is prolonged beyond the time necessary for a reasonable cooking. In a carriage or on the back of a horse, an ass, or a camel, the *pot-au-feu* thus prepares itself, and when, having started in the morning, you arrive worn out with hunger and fatigue, an exquisite and burning hot soup is ready for you. This simple physical phenomenon was attributed by the Arabs to sorcery on our part, and the marvelous pot caused them as much terror as admiration. Every time our camel-drivers passed before the camel which carried the soup, they made a grand detour, and crossed themselves after their fashion. Our cook alone, great amateur of his art, had mastered his religious scruples, and he confessed to us that he should renounce the paradise of Mohammed if he did not find there a Swedish *marmite*!

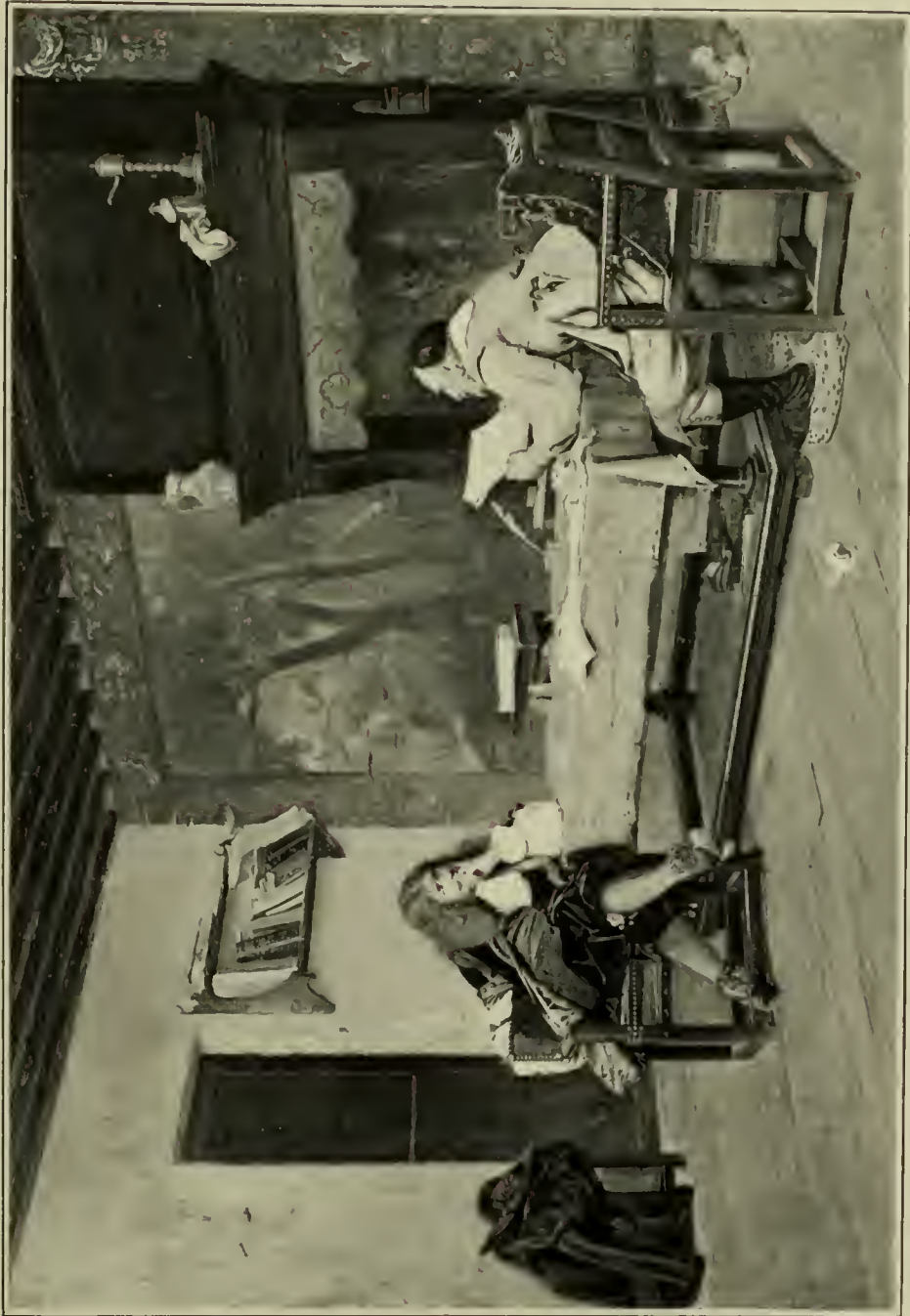
“Our dragoman, of Syrian origin, was very intelligent, endowed like all Arabs with an infinite power of brag; the labors of Hercules were only a joke in comparison to the feats he had performed, the relation of which was accom-

panied by vigorous gestures and demonstrations. Our two other servants were Egyptians, much more reserved and respectful than the dragoman; they were also very gentle and very intelligent, and were preparing themselves, they avowed to us, to be in their turn conductors-in-chief of a caravan. One of them, born in Upper Egypt, was named Ibrahim; his fine, beardless face, graceful gestures, and long blue robe gave him the appearance of a timid young girl; we called him Miss Ibrahim. He and his associate Michel were of an exemplary tidiness, a rare quality among the Arabs, and which offered a strong contrast to the carelessness of the dragoman and the remainder of his acolytes. Another type among our servitors did not lack in interest; it was the kitchen boy, a little African negro, whose name we did not know and who was so black that we naturally called him Snowball! Always laughing, his white teeth produced the effect of a gaslight illumination at the mouth of a cave. His eternally gay nature contrasted with the dramatic side of his functions; he was the sacrificial High Priest; it was he who slaughtered the fowls and the sheep, but it was he also who cared for and fed them. Therefore the fowls had conceived a great affection for him and followed him everywhere. On the march, if Snowball passed near the camels carrying the cages of poultry, there arose a tumult of joyful cluckings to which he replied by opening still wider his mouth, which he had never been able to shut since he was born. The horn of slaughter was the same as that of the feeding, and the hens hustled each other in their haste to meet him. The kitchen-knife in one hand and the sack of wheat in the other, nothing was more striking than this high executioner, distributing life and death at his own capricious pleasure to those who loved him most. There was a picture to make; Sophocles would have written a tragedy. '*Taïb, taïb kêtîr,*' were the only words we ever heard escape from this great laughing mouth, adorned with two thick lips that had never been able to meet. Our cook, Achmet, was tall and thin, mute as the Sphinx, and like him had lost his nose! The charming side of his character was displayed in his excellent cooking, which never harms anything, even *en voyage*.

"The first part of the desert presented a desolate aridity; not the slightest vegetation brightened the drab and gray tones of the sand over which we made our way toward the mountains. In its general configuration, the Sinaitic peninsula forms the most singular collection of mountain-chains almost parallel to each other, and which merge together at the extremity of the peninsula. Between these gigantic walls, which nature has so singularly ranged, are the natural beds of torrents resulting from rains and melting snows. These narrow valleys, which are absolute corridors, the Arabs call *wadis*. The word *valley* does not correctly give the meaning of the Arab word, so narrow is the passage one is obliged to follow sometimes for several kilometers. The light only struck the horizontal planes of the jagged flanks of the mountains, and these ravines were like caves which are only lighted by a prolonged air-hole. The sonority of these wadis is extraordinary, redoubled as it is by the absolute silence of nature, and the strangest echoes permitted us to make with little effort as much noise as a whole regiment on the march. During two days over sand and pebbles, we

perceived continually these magnificent chains, to the heart of which we were going to penetrate; they seemed to fly before us as in a mirage, and it was with real joy that, by a fracture which seemed to split the mountain in two, we inaugurated this astonishing series of passages. The Wadi-Reiyaneh was the first which opened to receive us; it was noon; the shelter-tent, which never left us, was pitched and we proceeded to breakfast, experiencing the satisfaction of being lost to the world. The road appeared to us to be sufficiently easy to find to loose our pretty little dog, who followed us very well. But alas! she was not to be with us long. The wadi, till now very much closed in, suddenly changed its character; the manner in which the two sides of the mountain shot up, cut at right angles like two walls, and the regular buttresses which held them up, completed the illusion that possessed us, that these were the constructions of men and not freaks of nature. At the end of this immense gallery we again struck the sand, which was dotted here and there by tufts of foliage almost of a pearl-gray tone, like bits of wool stirred by the wind. Our dromedaries did not neglect to taste, as they went along, this unexpected luncheon, and we were soon vying with each other as to who should find a bunch for his beast and assure him the exclusive consumption of it. A little farther on, these tufts took on larger proportions, and from their branches and roots were borrowed whips, which we lacked, to stimulate the good will of our coursers.

"On leaving this narrow gorge we reached the shore of the Red Sea, and followed it for some time. At this point the mountains begin to take on the red, green, and black tones which puzzle the best trained eye that may wish to determine the cause of this coloring. Under the action of fire only could the earth and rocks undergo such strange upheavals and decomposition; orange and lemon-yellow veins slash from top to bottom the reddish sides of these natural walls, and from afar imitate the caprices of the most extraordinary marbles. Our admiration for this strange spectacle was diverted by the sight of the sea and the prospect for a long-hoped-for bath. And indeed we had scarcely quitted the Wadi-Sadr, when our dromedaries with one accord started off at their most rapid pace and rushed into the water up to their breasts. The Red Sea, so terrible in history, was at this spot, as indeed in its whole length, as limpid as rock-crystal. Mohammed ought to have been satisfied with our ablutions, for we remained in the water till nightfall, and we would have rejoiced to be able to pitch our tents there. Adorable little shells, of every imaginable color and form, strewn over the sand, were the only drawback to our enjoyment. The sensitive feet of our dromedaries suffered equally from this excess of riches. Amphitrite had left at this spot a lavish supply of those enormous red shells which traditionally figure on the mantelpieces of our *concierges*, and we perpetrated the poor joke of bringing to our absent friends a cargo of the largest, heaviest, and ugliest we could find! We had just scrambled into bed after our lengthy bath when in a moment the weather changed. The most piercing cold succeeded the burning winds that had blown fiercely all day; a terrible tempest, with thunder and lightning, burst upon us. Suddenly a formidable blast of wind blew away the entire tent which composed the large dormitory, together with all its accessories!



A COLLABORATION.

It was not a slight affair to catch it. The staff in the middle was broken, the stakes were simultaneously pulled out from the earth, and the enormous parachute, rising from the earth, sailed away in the direction of the wadi, and we presented the edifying spectacle of tenants running after their house! The hurricane lasted all night and considerably interfered with our departure the next day; several accessories of our camp had been lost in the tumult of the previous evening, and the drenched soil had become very slippery and dangerous for our animals. A day of halt was voted and decreed then and there; we profited by this delay to take another bath and make various studies of these strange mountains, whose lurid tones seemed to be more vivid after the rain. (Gérôme's sketch-book wonderfully reproduces all these marvels.)

"Our tents, spread out on the shore, were drying in the sun, when our Arabs signaled on the horizon the approach of two human beings; some of our men went to meet them and brought them to the camp. Two skeletons, almost naked, were before us, and with staring eyes made signs that they were dying of hunger. These unhappy beings were two fishermen whose boat had been wrecked by a storm some time before. For two days they had lived on raw fish, but for the last four they had had nothing to eat; their appearance was frightful. We came like a providence to them. Our Colonel and the Doctor vied with each other in lavishing care on them, and gave them nourishment, which gradually restored them; then, as we were on the point of departure and these two unfortunates were to return to Suez, we gave to each three loaves of bread, a bottle of wine and two of brandy, which had to last them for quite a long journey, but which was all we could spare from our provisions. No words could describe the thankfulness of these men, whom we thus saved from a certain death, and none of us will ever forget the tears of gratitude they shed on leaving us. Our way lay in an opposite direction; the sea was superb and the fine sand, spangled with brilliant shells, was the natural road we followed. The mountains on our left rose up in gigantic stories piled one upon the other. The natural decomposition of the stone produced fairy-like carvings, and the action of the rains had formed staircases of most astonishing regularity. We seemed to be ascending the steps of Indian temples, multiplying themselves before us as if by enchantment. It was in successively mounting and descending this labyrinth of steps that we had the misfortune to lose our dog Nina. A dromedary had hit her with his foot; this unexpected kick had frightened her so that she ran away, and the efforts of all our camel-drivers were in vain to recall her. In those arid solitudes, so far from Suez, the poor beast must have died of hunger or become the prey of some troop of jackals. There was general mourning in the caravan, and this accident quite spoiled for us the magnificent spectacle which unceasingly unrolled before our eyes. As we advanced, the mountains became more lofty and of more vivid coloring than those we had seen the day previous. We were obliged to leave the coast and penetrate one of those frightful gorges whose existence could only be discovered by the trained eye of an Arab, so nearly do the sides of the mountains touch.

“The Wadi-el-Amárah offered us the first opportunity of tasting those springs of bitter water which gush out so abundantly in these mountainous countries. The bitter fountain of Marah of the Hebrews is supposed to refer to these springs. Lepsius was not of this opinion, but the water was none the less undrinkable! Deceived by its crystal clearness, our animals plunged their heads into it and withdrew them with horrible grimaces. Similar to that of the Dead Sea, it tasted like an infusion of sulphur matches. We only wet our hands and faces, and our skin was covered with blisters and impregnated with salts, the removal of which gave us no little trouble. It was the 25th of February; Mardi-Gras was being celebrated with masked balls at Paris, which we were unable to duplicate. But the most picturesque coiffures were donned by the whole colony and a little *bac* was set up in our tent, which was adorned with our best vintages. Jules was invited to the fête, and our Sinaitic watch excelled in gayety the most successful efforts of our distant country. Firstly, no one had anything to pay; secondly, in the middle of the night the little band indulged in a torchlight procession which filled our domestics with anxiety as to our mental condition. Patriotic songs alternated with ‘*scies d’atelier*’ in the best possible taste, and must have astonished the echoes of these biblical wadis, which probably had heard nothing of the kind for a long time! The *fanous* were at last extinguished and the desert resumed its wonted silence. The Wadi-Schilla was the point on our journey where the mountains surpassed in strange coloring all that one could imagine in violent and outlandish tints; entirely vermilion, red or ocher yellow, they seemed to be painted; on their jagged sides various geological strata, green, blue, and violet, formed arabesques impossible to describe. Wishing to have a clear conscience, some of us made the ascension of the reddest peak to see if it was really fast color, or if these extravagant tints were not the result of some optical illusion. But it was not *poudre de riz!* this rouge was perfectly natural and, from top to bottom, each fragment of these sharp rocks looked like a burning coal. We brought back some specimens which aroused the admiration of the geologists, and we remained several days in this fantastic spot making different studies of these freaks of nature, where not a single blade of grass varied the extraordinary coloration.

“Wadi-Mokatteb, *la Vallée Ecrite*, was the marvelous valley which we were now to cross. At a height of two hundred meters, the sides of the mountain, polished like tables of marble expressly prepared, are covered with Sinaitic inscriptions; for more than three kilometers these remarkable signs literally carpet the slopes that stretch up perpendicularly on each side, like two enormous pages of hieroglyphics, the origin of which has been the subject of many disputes. The red-brick tone of the mountains that bear these inscriptions gives a still more striking character to this strange page of history written on the face of Nature. This valley ends in a vast circular plain surrounded by mountains on every side. The encampment was enlivened by a visit from the brother of our sheikh. He was not alone, for when he entered our tent-salon, he had on his arm an enormous sheep which he came to offer us, provided of course that

we would pay him roundly for it! This courtesy on his part cost us twenty-five francs, a fabulous price for this country. But we could not refuse, lest we should vex this gentleman and a crowd of others who could have made matters very disagreeable for us; after all he was very amiable, and invited us to dine with him, to visit his little family, his little tents, and his little flocks. With graceful gestures and feminine intonations, he explained how charming it all was; we allowed ourselves to be tempted, and some of us actually put on gloves to go to this dinner 'in the city!' The singular repast which awaited us was worth the trouble: *pilau, couscoussou*, mincemeat with bread balls, curdled milk, nothing that could produce seasickness was lacking! A sheep had been prepared *à l'arabe*. The entire animal, placed on the embers like a simple chestnut, was taken off thoroughly burned on the outside and perfectly raw inside. To complicate the roast, the interior had in the first place been stuffed with fruits and odoriferous herbs, which gave it a very pronounced taste of the apothecary shop. We had the delicacy to find everything excellent, risking an illness of several days; Heaven came to our aid, for we were surrounded by the dogs of the tribe, who assisted us to do honor to the repast. After this indigestion *par politesse*, we left this plateau and plunged again into narrow gorges; the soil and the sides of the mountain were of a white and powdery sandstone, which crossed the red tones that still prevailed. A fine sand covered the road and made the walking difficult for our dromedaries. Here the irregularities of the ground did not take the form of crevasses and landslides, as they had hitherto. Swollen like lava in fusion, the slabs of polished granite over which we were moving occasioned our poor animals more than one fall, inexperienced as they were in this painful kind of ascension. We had all dismounted and, holding them by the bridles, we often clung to them under pretext of assisting them.

"After this narrow defile we found ourselves suddenly at the entrance of a magnificent valley, which reached to the steep sides of the highest mountain we had yet seen. The sharp stones which formed the macadam of the road spoiled the charm for us, and the bleeding of our poor dromedaries testified that they were of our opinion in regard to the negligence of the road-menders. We had, however, before us one of the most beautiful points of view in the desert. Mount Serbal dominated all the surrounding mountains; the valley, gradually sloping, came out on the sea above Thor; the steep declivities, with their many fissures and rounded rocks, plainly indicated the extraordinary violence of the water at the time when the rains make a furious torrent of this valley. We entered the mountains by a crevasse, resigning ourselves beforehand to another series of wadis, when the nature of the soil suddenly changed. Bushes and shrubs, with silvery leaves and graceful outlines, soon gave place to trees, and sprouts of palms seemed to push aside the rocks to make room for their lovely foliage. This oasis is the only fertile wadi of the peninsula of Sinai. Wadi-Faran, which introduced itself so charmingly, became still more agreeable, as in penetrating farther we found ourselves in a forest of magnificent palms, through which ran a ravishing brook. The village, composed of earth huts, was concealed by the trees, whose branches touched the ground, starting from

the highest part of the trunk. These new specimens of palms were most striking. The houses, low and level with the ground, were sometimes dug out below the level of the road; for in this gorge the most intense cold succeeds the suffocating heat from which we were suffering at that moment. The less exaggerated color of the mountains rendered more natural, so to speak, the background of this magnificent picture. As yet we had met nothing as picturesque; instinctively we hastened to see who could make the first sketch of this lovely country, where, by unanimous vote, we stayed for several busy days. (Gérôme's portfolio of sketches bears witness to his rapid and varied work at this picturesque spot.)

"After having visited some Egyptian ruins which are still visible in the neighborhood, we started on the last march that was to bring us to Sinai. Wadi-Solaf, the 'Gorge of the Wind,' was the last through which we were to pass, but it was one of the most difficult. The path indicated by the crevasse forced us to dismount, and our dromedaries suffered from a series of adventures before finishing this gutter promenade. But on reaching the mouth of the wadi, we were repaid for all our bruises by the spectacle that lay before us. In front, Sinai itself towered up into space, its imposing silhouette vigorously outlined on the mountains around it. Djebel-Catherine, which precedes and even overtops it, astounded us by its colossal proportions; some savants, on the lookout for novelties and historic contradictions, assert that this is the true Sinai of Scripture. On the right, at an extraordinary height, we perceived some white constructions, ruins of a palace which Abbas Pasha, to gratify a caprice, caused to be built in these inaccessible regions. After having scaled some very steep slopes we crossed a field of tall grasses of a pale yellow, which seemed by their nature, at once flexible and solid, to be a kind of rush. It was a real feast for our animals, but we were in haste to finish our journey and plied our whips energetically to subdue these stomachic caprices. Rounding Djebel-Catherine we found ourselves suddenly in the valley which extends to the foot of Horeb and Sinai. Like a little fortress, the convent appeared hanging on the steep sides of the mountain, and the flowering trees in its garden produced the gayest and most novel effect in this country so arid and so full of terrible souvenirs. Our camp was pitched in sight of the convent, and without delay we made a bit of toilette and went to pay our formal visit to its hospitable tenants.

"The convent of Sinai is the most singular assemblage of constructions that one can find. Extending from the Byzantine period to the time of the most modern Arabic art, every sort of architecture is here mingled at pleasure. Colossal walls, flanked by towers and buttresses, give to the convent the appearance of a great fortress, quadrangular in its *ensemble*; while, conforming to the slope of the mountain which forms its foundation, it appears to have wished to make the ascent and to have remained suspended in space like an eagle's nest. It is a little city, a castle and stronghold which has sustained more than one attack and siege on the part of the Arab tribes who covet its treasures. It had thoroughly the appearance of those castles

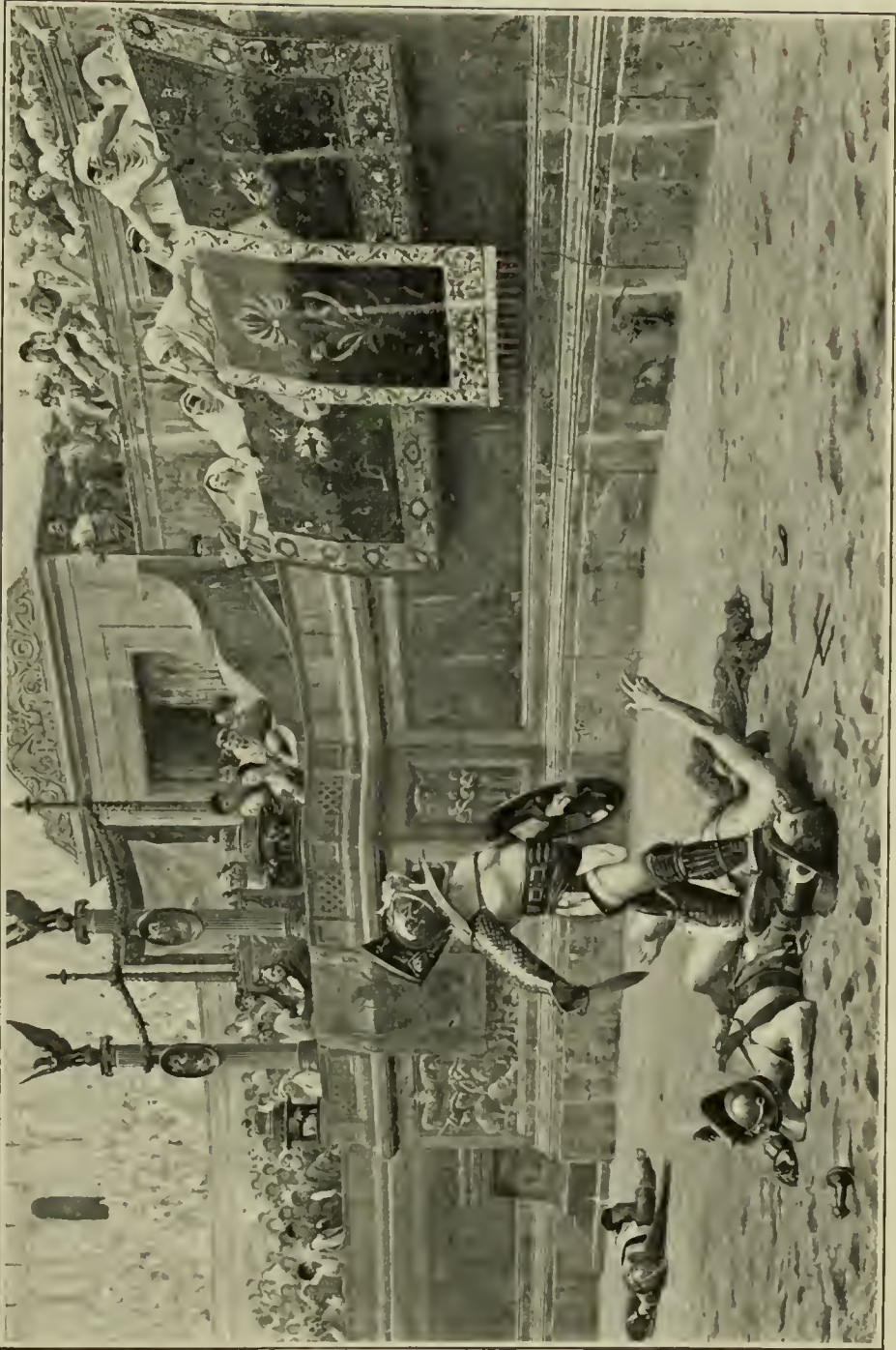
of the Middle Ages, where entire existences were passed in silence, and where the inhabitants only sallied out to make war. To judge by the height of the towers and their buttresses, they must have been but rarely scaled, and we began to wonder what could have been the drawbridge and the entrance to this impregnable fortress. It was by means of a kind of basket hoisted by a pulley that the monks communicated with the outside world; the chain which served to mount the loads and passengers was moved by a windlass, to which the monks harnessed themselves in order to pull up their supply of wood, that is to say, what the Arabs brought in exchange for some donation. On a fixed day a distribution took place, of bread and wine, to all the poor of the neighboring tribes; we were present at this curious ceremony where the bread fell literally from heaven. We had counted on performing this little aerial voyage ourselves, and penetrating into the convent by this singular opening, but we arrived too late. The mania for improvements had reached as far as Sinai, and the good monks had indulged themselves to the extent of having a real door with knockers of the most modern and hateful style. This new entrance, which we perhaps inaugurated, wasn't worth as much to us as the basket. The sacks of flour and rice had the sole right to pass through this artistic entrance, which, as painters, we would gladly have shared, but the rule of the convent forbade the gratification of this caprice.

“To begin at the beginning, we went to pay our respects to the Superior; he was in the library; a monk, with a fine but rather sickly face, received us and preceded us into the reception-room. To get there, we were obliged to climb up several inclined planes, mount several flights of steps, and pass successively through obscure and winding galleries, to find ourselves on a level with a second series of constructions, which seemed like a second city built over the first. A vast court, adorned with three cypress trees, formed the center of this second nest of buildings; there we wound around again and finally climbed up a wooden staircase, an enormous ladder, as worm-eaten as it was slippery, at the top of which we found ourselves on the principal balcony overlooking the interior court. There, by a little door, our amiable guide showed us into a low-ceilinged apartment with two windows—one looking out on the court, the other on the garden. While waiting for the Superior, we were able to make a conscientious inspection of this strange chamber, where religious emblems, Christs, portraits of popes, holy pictures, Greek inscriptions, and the most naïve *ex-votos* were singularly mixed up with trifles, pipes with zouave heads, and tobacco pouches, as little biblical as our own. Wax matches from Marseilles excited our admiration, especially the photographs of the *actrices du boulevard* which adorned the colored boxes holding the aforementioned matches. To find Hortense Schneider and Thérèse in the convent of Sinai was startling! We were scarcely able to contain ourselves when the Superior passed the matches around, but we did not dare to ask if they were family portraits, in view of the scanty nature of the Greek costumes. On his return from the library the presentation took place; our reception was made with most charming gestures, for the dragoman bore all the burden of our eloquence and we had only to approve

by a slight smile, which, however, permitted us to better observe our hosts. The Superior must have passed his sixtieth year; his strongly marked features were marvelously framed in by hair of a remarkable whiteness; a long fine beard reached to his belt and fell like snow on the thick folds of a black robe which covered him from head to foot. Like the priests of the Greek church, he wore on his head a kind of black felt miter; a long veil, fastened on the top, and thrown back, protected the neck and shoulders from the rays of the sun.

The Superior presented to us the other monks of the convent, the most important of whom had rejoined him in the reception salon. A repetition of the dialogue by gestures and a repetition of smiles! Gérôme afterward took the portraits of these hospitable brethren. Aged, for the most part, their faces expressed the greatest gentleness; their severe costume gave them the appearance of those ancient Byzantine patriarchs whose facsimiles adorned the walls; all their implements of prayer consisted of an enormous string of beads and a book of psalms written in Greek and Arabic. The mission of these good monks is not simply to receive strangers and pilgrims, but to devote themselves to the profound study of the rare works and incomparable manuscripts which fill the library of the convent. This marvelous library is usually only accessible to monks; but our quality of artist-painters, and, above all, the magnificent proportions of our official dromedaries, smoothed away all difficulties; the Superior himself conducted us thither and dusted off the most curious parchments and papyri. A Life of the Saints, exquisitely decorated with paintings and portraits, particularly excited our admiration by the purity of design and brilliant coloring. These manuscripts alone are worth the whole journey, and we obtained permission to make prolonged studies among these *chefs-d'œuvre*. They showed us also the four Gospels entirely written, it appears, by the hand of the Emperor Theodosius. The bindings are as remarkable in their way by the richness and taste which are displayed; some of them, in carved wood, are loaded with ornaments in silver and gold, of most exquisite workmanship. Outside of the principal church, the convent is divided into an infinite number of small chapels, each of which is under the invocation of a special saint. Connected by corridors, they also communicate with the cells of the Fathers in such a way that each one has, so to speak, his own particular little oratory. The principal church itself presents the same aspect of a basilica divided into distinct chapels, the rood-loft of which is separated from the rest of the nave by a wall and richly ornamented wainscoting. A colossal figure of Christ dominates the choir, surrounded by images painted on a background of gold in the style of Russian decorations. Lamps in copper and silver, of graceful forms, descend from the vault and are doubtless very tempting to pilgrims who are amateurs, for visitors are not allowed to stay too long within reach of these precious *objets d'art*.

It would be difficult to name precisely the style of architecture which predominates in this construction. Arched vaults, and heavy, widening capitals on short columns like those of St. Sophia, are distinctive points in this church, as Byzantine as it is Roman, where the most modern restorations are seen close



POLICE VERSO.

to the débris of most primitive and incongruous ornamentation. The mosaics come, it is said, from St. Sophia, which is very possible considering its very damaged state. Suddenly the monks who accompanied us assumed a very solemn air and informed us that we were about to be admitted to the sanctuary where God appeared to Moses. The altar of this little chapel is placed at the precise spot where formerly appeared the burning bush; a night-light reflected by a gold plaque is the emblem of this apparition, and it was with terrible gestures that the monk drew back the veil which conceals this little light from the eyes of the profane. This chapel is unquestionably the most curious and richly adorned of all. Stained-glass windows harmoniously temper the glaring light which would destroy the poetic charm of this sacred spot. Persian carpets were under our feet, and, as at the mosques, we were obliged to take off our shoes at the entrance. Moses himself had given the example in obedience to the command, 'Take off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground.' Such is the biblical origin of this custom, observed to-day by all Mussulmans at the doors of all their mosques. In one of the contiguous chapels, placed, as well as the convent itself, under the protection of St. Catherine, we saw two chests of wood which contained two coffins in silver of remarkable richness and workmanship. These works of art, incrustated with enamel, gold, and precious stones, were presented by the great Catherine of Russia, and one of them contains the remains of the saint whose name was borne by the empress. Another shrine contained gold and precious stones by the bushel, gifts and offerings of illustrious pilgrims or important Russian personages. We thought of the good haul the *Mandrins du Désert*, those roving robbers, could make here, were it not for the vigilance of the monks and the formidable ramparts which protect their convent. And, indeed, several attempts at assault by surprise have been made by the Arabs, who are not ignorant of the immense riches accumulated here for centuries. The door of the church is curious as a work of art; formed of panels of sculptured wood, it is a veritable lacework framing in marvelous enamels, the effect of which is heightened by iron work silvered over.

"In going out, the monks called our attention to the ruins of a mosque, the construction of which in the interior of the convent had been exacted by Turkish authority as a sign of recognized sovereignty. The Arabs never penetrating to the spot, this fragment is useless and in a state of absolute abandonment, which the government tolerates, provided its little cupola is always surmounted by the crescent of the Prophet, a pure question of religious *amour propre*. The monks came several times to return our visits and our camp did not lack animation; the quantity of information they gave us about the country was very useful to us during the journey which we were still obliged to make before reaching Akabah. These monks, thanks to their charity and erudition, are greatly esteemed by all the tribes of the peninsula, who sometimes come to consult them and choose them as arbiters in their disputes.

"The valley of Horeb and Sinai at this point enjoys *par excellence* that grievous property of mountainous countries—great cold and stifling heat. We

had already noticed hoarfrost in the crevices of the rocks which the sun did not penetrate; to walk over snow with the thermometer at 88° had astonished us; but what annoyed us the most was the intense cold of the nights, and the mornings as long as the rays of the sun were intercepted by the mountains. We were no longer surprised at the pelisses lined with fur worn by the monks, nor at the stoves which adorned their cells.



Our first night in camp was glacial; our camel-drivers having been assembled, we proceeded to build a colossal fire. All the débris of the valley, brushwood, roots, and bushes were piled on; the flames roared up to an enormous height and threw fantastic shadows on the sides of Sinai. The spectacle was magnificent. If Moses had happened to be passing by, he would certainly have taken off his shoes and prostrated himself; but he would only have heard violent recriminations against this *Orient à la glace*, of which travelers have not spoken sufficiently, and against which one is never sufficiently fortified in these strange countries. 'Bardánn, bardánn k'ír,' 'I am frozen'; such was the chorus that issued from this burning bush. The state of our poor dromedaries was pitiable; in their distress they lay down one upon the other to obtain by this means a little more

heat. In the morning we found our water frozen to a depth of twelve centimeters, and had to go to the convent to wash our faces.

Our sojourn at Sinai coincided with a joyous circumstance which caused a momentary sally from that contemplative calm that we had vowed to preserve to the end. It was the fête of our dear Doctor, and for six days the cook and his aids conspired to organize a Sardanapalian feast which would destroy all preconceived notions as to the privations and suffering of the desert. It was to give the lie to history, and our stomachs were to put a good face on the matter. Two soups, four *entrées*, three roasts, a variety of desserts, and above all mustard *à discretion!* It was a first-class wedding feast with *bombe glacée à la manne*. At dessert on this memorable day, as on all our great occasions, all the playthings of the colony came out of their boxes: a top, Jules, loto, and cards took their turn. Our best wines were uncorked and served in glasses of all sizes; we made a formidable pool at *écarté*, where no one paid, and again the most patriotic

LOVE, THE CONQUEROR

1889

" Qui que tu sois, voici ton maître !

Il l'est, le fut, ou le doit être ! "

[Whoever thou art, behold thy master !

He is, he was, or should be !]



songs our country had ever inspired awakened terrific echoes among the mountains. The good monks had been invited and had not disclaimed to take part in our little festivity. We smoked, drank, and sang a great part of the night, and only a little calf of gold was wanting! The most beautiful *tam-tams* of the kitchen were brought into play, the tumult was soon at its height, and it was enough to break all the tables of the law. To expiate this life of disorder and darkness, the next day was entirely devoted to the perilous ascension of the holy mountain, which promised a fatigue similar to that we had experienced at the Pyramids. Here, without the vestige of an Arab to pull one up or lend a helping hand, each one had to scale for himself the angular and slippery rocks.

“Sinai, composed essentially of granite, presents the appearance of a mountain bristling with teeth, its roughness and crevasses being due to the action of fire and violent volcanic convulsions. The color of the granite is red from the top to the bottom, which increases the terribly imposing aspect of the mountain. The monks have endeavored to outline a kind of staircase, but this Cyclopean task had to be performed every year, after every fall of snow and descent of the torrents that brought down with them the stones which the fathers had used for this work. After climbing painfully Mount Horeb, which serves as a buttress to Sinai, we commenced the more difficult ascension, where the path was still less indicated and where the pointed rocks to which we clung became more slippery than ever. Our boots suffered sadly from this trip, and we wondered how the bare feet of the Prophet could have traversed these razor blades. Half-way up we came to a little isolated platform, where there is the only cypress tree to be found on the whole mountain, which serves as a sort of landmark for travelers to find their way and to inform them how much farther they have to go. We made our first halt at this spot and sat down to take breath. Sinai has the deplorable reputation of being peopled by serpents and enormous lizards. It was to the intense cold we owed the real favor of not seeing a single one. We saw on the way the plant that produces the manna, which the monks gather with the greatest care. The manna of Sinai has the reputation of being superior to all other, and the convent of St. Catherine could have obtained more than one medal if the Arabs had ever thought of holding the slightest exposition! But they are above all such trifles. To be truly Hebraic, we tasted this singular food, which enjoys, however, the peculiarity of having no taste at all! Little by little, we arrived at a very satisfactory height, for we came into the region of snow. We longed to reach the end. It was not attained without difficulty, but the spectacle which awaited us there repaid us effectually for the fatigue of the ascent. The summit of Sinai forms a nearly level plateau; one of the sides, in the direction of Thor, being perpendicular from top to bottom. From this platform a wonderfully extended panorama spread out around us; the two arms of the Red Sea and of the Gulf of Akabah uniting at the extremity of the peninsula, with the opposite banks of the two seas visible through a silvery fog which blended with the water; at our right and our left, the converging crests of all the Sinaitic chains of the Peninsula, Mount Serbal and Djerbal-Catherine seeming to overtop Sinai itself, although not presenting as imposing an appearance as the

sacred mountain. An immense flagstone of natural formation is indicated as the spot where God appeared to Moses and where the tables of the law were given to him. Certainly the locality corresponds in every respect to the descriptions in the Bible, and nothing could have been more striking than the perpendicular and jagged rocks which extended clear down to the valley of Replidim, where the people of Israel awaited the return of the holy patriarch.

"From this point one is shown the spot where Moses, supported by the two Levites lifted up his hands during the battle in which the hosts of Amalek retreated in good order before the soldiers of Israel. A little Greek chapel has been constructed on the platform at the summit, where every week one of the monks of the convent comes to officiate; the Mussulmans, jealous of the Christian souvenirs attached to this mountain, began to build a mosque which is in ruins to-day, but where they still show the footprint of the camel of the Prophet. The ascent being absolutely impossible to a dromedary, this footprint is stoutly disputed. It may have been made by the Prophet himself, but then, *what a foot!* In the Greek chapel, which is the grotto where Moses took refuge in order not to see God face to face, a pious legend calls attention also to an imprint on the wall said to be that of the patriarch's head. Here one is tempted to exclaim, not 'What a head!' but, 'What a bump he must have given himself!' After having satiated ourselves with the grand spectacle before us, we proceeded to a little breakfast in which manna figured but scantily. A tremendous religious discussion broke out at dessert and varied the fatigues of the day. There were plenty of *pros* and *cons*, and the most erudite theologians would not have been able to draw any conclusions from our arguments, which were as subtle as they were inexhaustible! The coffee and the liqueurs having been generously served, the dispute was on the point of becoming envenomed, and it required all our energy to refrain from throwing each other down the mountain, where sufficiently terrible dramas had been enacted without our adding another tragedy. One of the orators had the wit to turn this conference in the clouds into the chorus of a song, and we descended from the mountain-top in a state of perfect accord—for the time being. Our return to camp was saluted by a second great *feu de joie* and above all of *wood*: for which all the remaining combustible material was brought into requisition by our Arabs. The wail of '*Bardánn, bardánn kétir*,' again arose, and we rolled ourselves up in our blankets at an early hour with a satisfaction unequalled in history.

"The next day was passed at the convent, the garden of which we had not yet visited. All the trees were in blossom; these white and rose-colored tufts on the branches contrasted singularly with the desolation which reigned round about this little paradise. The vegetable mold, which explained its incredible fertility, had been brought from Egypt on camel-back; one can form some idea of the patience and time which the monks needed to accomplish this result. Arbors, shaded with vines and symmetrically disposed, transported us suddenly to one of those too minutely cared-for villas in the environs of Paris. In the center, a low door seemed to lead into a cave, and

in truth it was the entrance to the necropolis of the monks. It is here that the bones of the monks and brothers are heaped up in two distinct rooms. The bones of the skeletons were ranged in categories; the heads in one place, the tibiæ together, and so on, for each member. The patriarchs alone are preserved entire, in boxes which recall the sarcophagi of Egyptian mummies. The season of the year did not permit us to taste the fruits of this delicious garden, where a sample of every known tree seemed to figure; but, to judge by the blossoms, the crop must have realized their fondest hopes. In the absence of fruit, the fathers offered us some vegetables, which had an enormous success in view of the privations on that score we had endured since our departure from Cairo. They gave each of us a little bag of manna and a little tin tube filled with honey made by the bees of the sacred mountain. Considering that this little religious brotherhood, isolated among the mountains, wants for nothing and even entertains very hospitably, one is apt to wonder what is the source of this tranquil ease in the midst of these desert countries. The revenues of the convent come from farms which the communities possess in the islands of Cyprus and Crete; moreover, rich endowments have been made by several empresses of Russia and rich pilgrims. It is not without reason that the Arabs have long coveted the treasures accumulated there, but Russia watches closely over the convent and would severely punish any indiscretion. In inscribing our names on the register before leaving, we saw the signature of General Bonaparte at the bottom of a firman written by his own hand, assuring to the convent his protection, the prestige of which has not yet disappeared from among the tribes of the peninsula. Finally, our pockets stuffed with innumerable dainties, we tore ourselves away from this hospitable circle, mutually pleased with the reciprocal favors, for we did not fail to leave a bakchich, which largely compensated for our entertainment.

“The Wadi-Saal, by which we resumed our route, offered nothing new except the perspective of a new series of narrow gorges and wadis similar to those which we already had traversed. The Arabs, however, regard it as of great importance, for it incloses the tomb of a venerated sheikh. The possession of the marabout of the Sheikh Saleh is, we were told, an eternal subject of war between the tribes jealous of this privileged hearse. The country, however, has a less desolate aspect than that part of the peninsula which separates Sinai from the city of Suez. Tamarisks, and bushes with gray, trembling foliage, filled our dromedaries with a joyfulness which we did not yet share. Was it sadness at parting with the good monks or apprehension of the unknown regions before us? Like the Hebrews in the desert, we had our little discouragements, but they did not last long. The Wadi-Schkattah was preparing for us a marvelous surprise the next day. At the opening of the valley the mountains seemed suddenly to change their direction, and, widening out on each side, gave place to an immense plain of white and rosy sand. An Indian city with towers, pagodas, minarets, and domes suddenly appeared before us. Ledges superposed served for pedestals to these constructions and intensified the effect. It only needed elephants to complete the illusion, for all that we saw was simply a

mountain. Terraces and details of sculpture were so clearly outlined that we positively thought of making a long detour in order to draw nearer to the mountain and convince ourselves that it really was a delusion. But our arrangements for our journey to Akabah did not permit of alteration, to our great regret, as we should have greatly liked to make some sketches of this marvelous panorama. This Babylon seemed surrounded by colossal walls



flanked by battlemented towers; it merged on the horizon into another series of plateaus of more vivid tones, which helped to render more natural this mirage of a great city built on the side of a mountain. The Wadi-Ain, which we reached the same day, offered no compensation for the superb spectacle we were leaving, save the sight of an abundant spring, shaded by palms, where we expected to bathe. But in this limpid water lurked a danger which we happily perceived in time; it contained myriads of tiny leeches which could have produced most disastrous results. Our animals, who did not inspect the water so carefully, must have given themselves a pronounced fit of indigestion, and we had considerable trouble in making them understand that we were in haste to reach the sea in order to take our bath in turn.

Ignorantly we fled from the leeches to a greater danger, for this part of the coast of the Gulf of Akabah is literally infested by sharks. And, moreover, it was only after our second bath that the Arabs took the precaution to inform us of this interesting fact, for a camel-driver is not expected to think of everything at once! These dangerous shores owe this favor to the quantity of fish found here. The clearness of the water and its tranquillity permitted us to see the fish from the shore, and it is under these conditions that the Arabs fish with the line, the net, or, so to speak, by hand. The coast here differed absolutely from the borders of the Red Sea coming from Suez; there were no horribly pointed rocks and stones, but a fine rosy sand which made one recall the beach at Trouville. Shells of various tints were scattered around and looked like enormous flowers cast up by the waves. There we saw a great quantity of coral in formation, veritable scarlet sponges of a most brilliant hue, from which it appears the name of the Red Sea has been borrowed. The soil hereabouts is sufficiently fertile and

well stocked with springs to attract the Arabs *en villegiatura*. Their employment consists exclusively in fishing in this sea that is calmer than a lake. The first day of our arrival two fishermen presented themselves in costume ; that is to say, clad in their nets and lines. They must have belonged to the tribe of Beniguenons, for we had never imagined that men could look so much like monkeys. Their awkward gestures, their winking eyes, and the frightful contraction of their jaws made us reluctant to acknowledge them as friends and brothers. We were guilty of the *naïveté* of offering to pay them for their fish in money, but they would only exchange their merchandise for something to eat ; we had not reflected that, afflicted with an absolute absence of any pocket, they could not carry their purses with them. These two gorillas interested us greatly ; they were real savages ; we gave them something to eat and, thinking they would want to drink also, we ordered them a *gargoulette* of fresh water. 'Thanks,' replied the fisherman, 'I drank yesterday !' We little expected this lesson in temperance, translated to us by our dragoman, but the reply was so decided that we felt some scruples about insisting. He allowed himself, however, to taste a little glass of brandy, which probably caused him to see the heavens half-opened, for in his joy he executed jumps that would have achieved the despair of Auriol. Broiled on hot stones, which were applied like mustard-plasters, the fish were excellent. We made our two apes understand that we should be happy to have some more, but that, as we were obliged to resume our journey, they must accompany us ; we would stuff them with eatables and they should be attached to the caravan as grand fishers in ordinary to our Majesties. This was very agreeable to them and they started at once for the spot where we were going to camp, in order to have time to fish before our arrival. Like real frogs, they leaped into the water, disappeared, and returned to the bank to ascertain their catch. This mode of fishing was very amusing, and, while pursuing our march, we followed them along the shore ; suddenly they made us a sign to approach, pointing to a spot where our inexperienced eyes distinguished at first only a gray mass floating between two currents. It was an immense skate, about five meters long, almost stranded ; it was snapping up the thousand little fish that swarmed near the shore. The Arabs surrounded it adroitly and, having no lines, but our revolvers, we rushed our dromedaries into the water ; they entered in breast-high and we were just about to finish it when, with a single bound, the huge fish cleared itself and shot away, to our general stupefaction. To fish with pistols from the backs of dromedaries is a novelty certainly worthy to be recorded in the annals of pisciculture ! A new sight soon attracted our attention : shoals of tiny silvery fish sprang through the air, disappeared, and reappeared farther on, like clouds of butterflies ; the presence of pursuing fish explained this singular maneuver by which these poor creatures endeavored to throw their enemies off the track and escape the pursuit.

At this point on the gulf we had before us a charming little island, where the ruins of a fortress and a convent are still tolerably well preserved ; it is called Kourièh. It was formerly an important strategic point at the time when the Gulf of Akabah was more frequented, being traversed by all the caravans

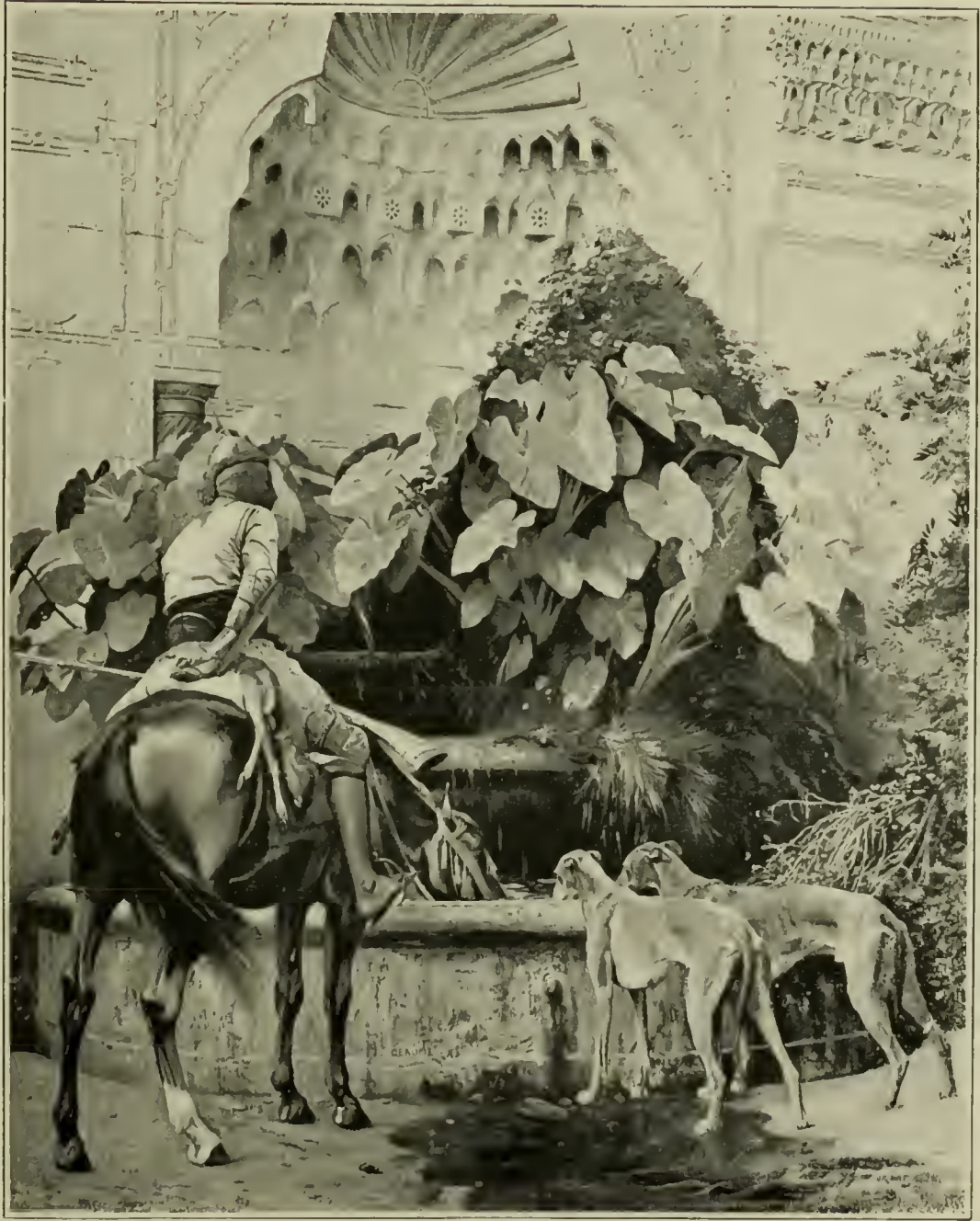
coming from Arabia and India. Unhappily it is in this spot that the sharks have established their center of operations, and numerous accidents have happened in consequence of the imprudence of travelers who have been tempted to traverse the distance between the shore and this little islet. We bathed there, however, but with the greatest precautions. (It was near this point that Gérôme made his sketch for his famous painting of *Quærens quem devoret.*) The mountains, which reach here to the water's edge, present a most imposing aspect by their grand horizontal lines; the sharp peaks and jagged rocks having given place to immense plateaus, rising one over the other, with drifts of sand here and there, so astonishingly white that from a distance it can easily be mistaken for snow. The warm coloring of the soil, the pearl-gray and light green of the foliage, give to the landscape the softest and most harmonious of tones. It was there that we saw for the first time the doum-palm, whose thousand branches, grafted on a single trunk, make it one of the strangest and most picturesque of trees. It produces as a fruit a kind of almond, which we tried in vain to eat, but to which the Arabs attribute preservative properties against illness and above all against the evil eye. At last we arrived at a point where the city of Akabah appeared at the entrance of a magnificent grove of palms, on the other side of the gulf. Our attention was distracted for a moment by singular heaps of stones ranged symmetrically across the route we were following. In a country where the mountains touch the heavens, so to speak, and form almost impassable boundaries between each tribe, the Arabs experience the need of adding these little heaps of pebbles to define more exactly the precise limits of their respective little states. Having ridden roughshod over these absurd barricades, we ceased to be under the safeguard of the sheikh who had protected us till now. We were entering on new territory and were now going to encounter civil and military authorities unknown and much more serious. The overturning of one of these boundary walls would offer a sufficient pretext for a declaration of war and be the signal for bloody reprisals throughout the entire country. Thus, being sufficiently convinced of the importance of these border beds, we henceforth made the tour of them with great respect, knowing beforehand what villainous characters we had to deal with.

"Akabah is unquestionably the point in our desert journey which made the most profound impression upon us, by the savage and picturesque character of all that we saw, from the brilliantly colored costumes of the inhabitants to the strange constructions with their marvelous decorations. Before us the blue-green sea, with palm trees mirrored in its transparent wave; an extraordinary vegetation, which reminded us of the most wooded parts of Fayoum; houses built of clay, carefully aligned, and whose doors were surmounted by Arabic ornamentations almost barbaric in style. Moreover, the types of the population differed from those we had hitherto met; tall and strong, these athletes looked marvelously well in their long red robes; a black kouffie covered their heads and heightened still further the wild expression of their manly physiognomies. There were doubtless representatives of several tribes here, for several of these Arabs had very white skins, their resemblance to Europeans of our acquaintance

being quite startling. Scarcely had our tents been stretched under the outlying palms when a numerous deputation came to bid us welcome, and, at the same time, and above all, assure themselves of the resources we could offer for their industry of thieving and pilfering. Our kitchen tent was voted the most interesting, and swarmed with amateurs, among whom the most formidable sheikhs in the country did not disdain to figure, ordering an uninterrupted series of cups of coffee and *petits verres*. Our poor cook, Ahmet, could not till half the demands of this horde, who, like a set of chimpanzees, turned over and examined everything they could lay hands on. By a system of telegraphy which the Arabs alone understand, and practice marvelously among themselves, our departure from Suez had been signaled; the quantity and quality of our official dromedaries, the number of our tents and our chickens—all had been heralded; we had been expected for a month, to judge by our crowds of visitors and the extraordinary welcome which overwhelmed us, for we were honored during the evening by salvos of firearms and a display of fireworks. Our presentation to the Sheikh of Akabah could not take place till the following day, because he had gone to steal camels from some neighboring tribes and had not yet returned from his expedition; such was the explanation given us of the absence of this prince! And it was the son himself who furnished us with these interesting details as to the occupation of his noble father! The evening of our arrival, the young Governor of the Citadel came to see us, accompanied by his Grand-Master of Artillery and the principal officers of his military household. The sole emblem of his explosive functions which distinguished the Grand-Master of Artillery from the rest was a long pole, at the end of which trembled a tiny fuse, which was to touch off the dozen firecrackers to be burned in our honor. The Governor seemed to be about thirty years of age and did not appear to be very much enchanted with the official post he held in the locality, where his authority was trifling in comparison with that of the Grand Sheikh, who was for the moment absent on his thieving tournee. His rôle as representative of the Viceroy was to see to the revictualing of the Caravan of Mecca, going and returning. It is a halt which all pilgrims are forced to make, on account of the configuration of the desert which remains to be crossed; a station where they arrive generally having exhausted their last supplies of food and water. It is to come to the aid of this pious want of forethought on their part that the government has organized this colossal buffet, without which the caravan would be obliged to devour itself *en route*, in order to reach the holy city. The little fête, the firecrackers, and illuminations had lasted far on into the night, and we were eager to get to sleep under the protection of these brigands, armed with every imaginable weapon, and with whom we were constrained to be extremely amiable.

It was about five o'clock in the morning and we were all sleeping the sleep of the just when the dragoman, greatly excited, came to awake us, announcing the arrival of the Grand Sheikh himself, the real, the only Mohammed-Gadd; at once the greatest, the most powerful, and ugliest! Mounted on a beautiful mare, covered with a cloth all embroidered in red silk and gold, the sheikh appeared *en silhouette* on the horizon, like a monument.

He was followed by a number of others, armed like himself to the teeth, and dressed in the brilliant red robes which we had noticed the day before. Dragging on the ground at the end of a leather strap was an enormous pistol, which produced a terrific clanging as it rattled over the stones; while in his left hand he held a lance immoderately long and adorned with tufts of ostrich plumes. His chibouk between his lips, he fell off rather than descended from his horse, and, with the assurance of a man who knows his importance, walked into the tent where we were to receive him; not finding us there, he passed immediately into the kitchen where he ordered, *sans cérémonie*, everything he could gulp down. This matinal visit had taken us unawares and the dragoman was very much vexed by this *contretemps*, which compelled us to make Mohammed-Gadd himself wait for us! Awakened with a start, our Colonel, greatly fatigued by the journey of the previous day, was particularly exasperated, and the dragoman, more and more anxious, recommended us to observe the greatest courtesy on account of the danger attending our stay in the territories of these brigands. While we were hastily donning the most indispensable vestments, to undergo this official presentation, he came to report the flattering words which had fallen from the lips of the sheikh, while he was swallowing everything that the cook had not been able to hide from him! If we had not soon made our appearance he would have emptied our bottles, for in our absence *he* was doing the honors of our kitchen in passing glasses and cups down the line formed by his numerous brothers and friends who had escorted him to the camp. Warned of our approach, he hastily quitted the kitchen, like a child surprised in the preserve closet! He installed himself in the salon, and, taken unawares in his turn, it was with his mouth full and a biscuit in each hand that he received us! The most extravagant compliments were exchanged through the medium always of the dragoman: in the midst of the stars, we were roving planets! a cascade of suns and stray pearls of the Occident! etc., etc. To reply to all these charming speeches, our Colonel, addressing himself to the dragoman, replied, 'Tell him that now I have seen him my happiness is complete, and in order that nothing may disturb it, I am going at once to *bed!*' No sooner said than done! The great Mohammed-Gadd seemed profoundly touched by this delicate attention! The rest of the little band remained to fill his cup and pass him the sugar-bowl, into which, by way of simplifying matters, he finally emptied his coffee! The time passed in a reciprocal examination of costumes; we took off first one thing and then another in order to pass things around more easily; our boots particularly excited his admiration. He himself had superb ones, entirely red, and so large that each of his feet must have had to take two or three steps inside of these barges in order to drag them after him. We showed him our revolvers; he showed us *le sabre de son père!* It was also the saber of his grandfather, of his great-grandfather, and in fact of all his ancestors; for this marvelous and terrifying blade dated back to Abou-Bekr. The Arabic inscriptions, admirably engraved *en relief* and inlaid with gold, made this weapon an *objet d'art* of the greatest value. The coffee, the cognac, and the liqueurs were not spared during this little exposition, and we became greatly concerned at the rapid



THE RETURN FROM THE CHASE.

disappearance of our most cherished supplies. Thinking to do us a great pleasure he promised to come again and see us ; we thanked him effusively, promising ourselves not to be caught at home. The refreshments must have struck him as being first-class, for at the end of an hour a fresh clanging of the pistol over the stones announced his return with a new series of sheikhs, redder, greedier, and thirstier than the others ! Our poor cook, raising his hands to heaven, uttered wails of despair, for the cups and glasses began a more rapid circulation than ever. Between two cups, Mohammed-Gadd presented to us his brother, the Sheikh Mak-Boul, little, thin, dried-up, and black ; it was he who was to accompany us as far as Petra and secure for us a friendly reception by the different tribes. The diplomatic intervention of the governor of the fortress was necessary before we could get rid of this always increasing invasion of thirsty visitors. The friends of friends brought *their* friends, and our canteens began to grow alarmingly light.

“Akabah is to-day the most important city in all Arabia-Petraea ; considerably more so than Petra, which is only the ruin of a great city, the haunt of the thieves and brigands who are designated by the term rebellious tribes. The exceptional situation of Akabah and the marvelous vegetation which characterizes its environs seem to prove that it is built on the same site as the ancient *Ælana*, known among the Hebrews under the name of *Elath*, and spoken of in *Exodus*. It was at the end of this gulf that the port of *Asiongaber* was situated, from whence the fleets of Solomon carried as far as the Indies the renown of his glory and his little collection of proverbs. During our stay here we were industriously employed in making a series of most interesting studies. The most important tribes of this part of Arabia held out a long time against the troops of Mehemet Ali, who revenged himself by cutting down all the palm trees in the country around the gulf, which reduced to nothing the richness of this territory for many years. To steal camels and cut down palm trees constitute the basis of the warfare indulged in by these different tribes among themselves, for, profoundly cowardly as individuals, these Arabs rarely encounter each other in a hand-to-hand fight ; they delight to pepper each other from a distance, crouching behind a rock, or to tumble down half a mountain on each other's heads !

“The governor of the fortress invited us to visit his little citadel. Surrounded by wide ditches, it occupied the southwestern part of the city. Its high walls are flanked by towers, where four cannon, disabled and useless, terrify the tribes by their mere appearance. The Grand-Master of Artillery explained to us his system of defense in case of attack, but having occasion to notice that the ammunition was three times the size suitable to load these deadly cannon, we did not place much confidence in his representations. The casemates and interior galleries of this stronghold had a savage character which delighted us ; they recalled, from a decorative point of view, the odd descriptions of *Salamambo*, by a formidable display of iron bars, of pikes, of extraordinarily long lances, and rusty sabers, which must have dated from the creation, so primitive and barbarous were their forms. As in the most thrilling periods

of the Middle Ages, there were piles of stones carefully ranged near the ramparts, ready to be pitched down on the assailants; they showed us also the copper pot for the boiling oil and the torches destined to set the village on fire at need. Greek fire was the only thing lacking in this little museum of engines of destruction. The prisons of the fortress were also very inspiring, but we dispensed with the sight of the instruments of torture reserved for the prisoners.



Besides, there were rows of posts arranged like gas-lamps in the court, which were simply gallows on which the recalcitrants of the little garrison were wont to dangle in space. The governor of Akabah is only the representative of the government of Cairo, and this post is generally very little sought for by the Egyptian diplomats. This *mission de confiance* is often the result of disgrace, or an absence necessitated by a too pronounced devotion to *roulette* and *treute-et-quarante*. We could not divine the special case of our host, but this exile weighed heavily on him, to judge by his sighs every time we mentioned Cairo or Paris. To thank him for his gracious reception we took his photograph twice, and invited him to dinner, together with his ally Mohammed-Gadd. The tablecloth again suffered woefully, for a horrible and sickening messing with the fingers began. They barely escaped maiming themselves with their forks, which they

at first tried to use; the spoons were less rebellious; but the most exquisite dishes of our cuisine were not to their taste; the English mustard, pepper, and onions, however, had a tremendous success. With a heaping spoon the sheikh saturated his throat, his beard, and his clothes; but these spots, flagrant proofs of his gluttony, were far from intimidating him, and when he had rinsed out the first pot of mustard, he asked for a second, smiling like a great baby asking for more preserves! And then commenced a vocal guttural concert of satisfaction, which from long experience we expected, and which on their part was a proof of the gratitude with which their stomachs were overloaded. During our sojourn we had made one friend; it was the nephew of Mohammed-Gadd himself, and son of the Sheikh Mak-Boul, who was to accompany us as far as Petra. This child, about ten years old, had a remarkably fine and expressive face; his gentle disposition had won our affection and consoled us for the ferocious aspect of his relatives; he took neither coffee nor brandy and that was,

of itself, sufficient title to our esteem. He also was to form part of our escort with his father, but only as far as the principal encampment of his tribe.

Our departure for Petra was fixed for the next day, and it was not without regret that we abandoned our superb dromedaries to bestride common camels, much less swift and less easy of gait. The adieux to our camel-drivers from Sinai and to the original drivers were touching. The two soldiers who had accompanied us received a *bakchich* which so far surpassed their most eager expectations that they became almost crazed with joy, for our Colonel had counted out to each a hundred francs in ten-franc gold pieces. As each little piece jingled down, their eyes widened with admiration, and when the count was finished, the Arabs stood petrified, with open hands and gaping mouths, unable to believe that this fortune was for them; in all their lives they had never seen so much gold at one time. The joy of these good people was indescribable, and they could not find expressions sufficiently extravagant or Oriental to testify to their regret at leaving us. A last grasp of the hand, a last look, and we started in different directions, promising ourselves to meet again somewhere, some day. We passed up above the village in a northeasterly direction and entered on a new series of wadis; the mountains were a succession of plateaus of a deep yellow coloring, more bizarre than agreeable to the eye. No incident broke the monotony of our first encampments save the apparition of some coveys of partridges, which gave us an opportunity to polish up our guns which had lain untouched since we left Fayoum. These partridges, as large as our largest fowls, are not hunted by the Arabs for the want of powder; they differ from the European birds, their flesh being quite tough; but we were happy enough to have them. Their gray color makes it difficult to distinguish them at first from the soil, but the Arabs have good eyes and they delighted to point them out to us. The tribes to which our new camel-drivers belonged were of a much more restless character than those of the Sinaitic peninsula, and they loaded the camels and put up the tents to the sound of a war song. This was about the style: one of the Arabs chanted a couplet and all the rest took up the chorus; there were questions and responses as in the tragedies of Sophocles. We asked for the translation of some of these strophes, whose poetic fancies and Oriental metaphors have a wondrous resemblance to the cheerful sublimities of—some modern writers! Here is a specimen:

An Arab alone: 'He is there, he is there, he is there!'

Chorus: 'Who? who? who? who?'

The Soloist: 'The enemy of our tribe; I do not see him; he sees me. Presently I will see him and he will not see me!' And so on for entire hours without cessation.

Another idiocy of the same quality: 'There is a lion who is a wolf, for I, a wolf, am a lion, and I will conquer him by my strength. And his children will be the slaves of our children, unless they are their masters.' Which shows clearly that if M. — had not died in France, he would still be living among the wadis of Arabia-Petræa! Moreover, these war songs *à la gomme* are entirely *en rapport* with the harmless combats which the Arabs wage among themselves, a specimen of which we had at Petra; they are so afraid of getting hurt that

they content themselves with uttering piercing cries and making terrible gestures, after which they embrace each other desperately, invoking Allah and thanking him for the victories they have gained over—themselves! It is generally in this final embrace that they relieve each other of all valuables in sign of reconciliation, in order not to lose their skill and to keep their hand in. These periodical and obligatory vocal concerts amused us for several days and we sometimes even took part in them, improvising stanzas; but at the eighth encampment we felt that we were going crazy, and it needed several diplomatic *tours de force* to persuade these artists that their *poetry*, though ravishing, was beginning to give us an attack of the nerves! The very evening that we expected some relief, we were greatly surprised to hear them recommence more furiously than ever: astonished by our reproaches, they informed us that this time they were singing *prose*; and that to please us they had even *changed the music*. We did not wish to annoy them further, so we endured to the bitter end, only begging them to lower the tone an octave! Lance in hand, the great Mohammed-Gadd had accompanied us; mounted on his steed of battle, he indulged in extraordinary cries and gestures to quicken its pace, for the poor animal, staggering under his weight, could with difficulty keep up with the long stride of our camels. At the entrance of the Wadi-Guerra, the sheikh took leave of us, intrusting us to the care of his brother Mak-Boul and the latter's little son. The child rode *en croupe* on the paternal saddle, holding in his arms a little gazelle which he dandled like a doll. To inspire our new guide with a more perfect confidence, we invited him and his son to take their meals with us. We did not regret this move, for it assured us all his zealous authority in the dangerous environment which attended our departure from Petra. In order to return our hospitality, he invited us to dine with him when we reached the principal encampment of his tribe; it was a horrible repetition of the slovenly repasts we had already endured in the tents of these Bedouins: diving up to the elbows into a dish of rice-balls and passing a sauce in a kind of wooden sabot, in which each one dipped his rice-ball before putting it in his *neighbor's mouth!*

As we left the desert of Thi farther and farther to the left, the country became more and more verdant. Tall grasses and flowers of every color softened the yellow and red tints of the rocks; against the background of these warm-toned mountains, the silvery-leaved shrubs looked even more metallic than on the sand, where we had already seen them. On the horizon, a little to our right, rose Djebel-Isagra. We had ordered our tents pitched in a natural amphitheater formed by the rocks; we found there several flocks of sheep, camels, and goats which, like us, had sought shelter from the wind. From this Noah's ark of animals we could make our choice, and we adopted a young camel which had been abandoned by its mother; it looked like a large goat, and its youth was an excuse for its absolute lack of education, for it soon became extravagantly familiar with us, entering our tents and not disdaining to roll on our beds! This foundling we baptized with the name of Young Eliakim. The country became more and more green; it was an ocean of bushes at almost equal distances, the quivering foliage giving to the desert the appearance of a foaming and agitated sea.

"We followed the Wadi-Delâga and the Aïn-Rëisin between two white walls formed by the natural bed of the torrent. This chalky formation greatly resembled the plains of Champagne: numerous partridges were the only inhabitants of these rocks, overgrown with plants, grasses, and bushes, and the hunters slaughtered them by the hundreds for the benefit of the Swedish marmite. At each turning in the ravine we encountered herds, without any guardians, horses, and particularly superb mares and their foals. We would have been glad to buy one of these lovely animals but the difficulty was to find the proprietors, of whom we had not seen the slightest vestige. We had not seen them, but probably they could not say the same of us, for from behind a rock the faithful shepherd is wont to spy upon the country and watch the travelers, to rob them when convenient! These herds of horses, which have an air of being entirely abandoned, are all numbered, and when one is wanting, the tribe to which its proprietor belongs rises in its entirety to find and reclaim it, if need be, by force of arms. The stealing of animals constitutes the perpetual occupation of the country and keeps up the disagreeable relations between the tribes, who, of course, are forced to steal again what has been taken from them. At our preceding station the Arabs had presented to us one of their friends, a shepherd of the country and known as the most skillful thief in the whole region. In their eyes he was a great personage, and they professed for him the profound admiration they always entertain for the author of a theft or skillfully executed surprise. One more day among the stones and chasms and we were going to study at our ease the most remarkable types of these worthies, and especially their merits *après nature*, furnishing them with many involuntary tributes; all that was left of our coffee and sugar, in fact all our most cherished supplies, were appropriated by them, and if we did not complain more bitterly, it was because we were thankful not to be gobbled up ourselves."

In a continual state of anxiety as to the intentions of these marauders, who each day grew more impertinent and aggressive, sketching became a really dangerous amusement, since one could scarcely have "one eye centered on the beauties of nature while the other kept watch on these crafty wretches." The master succeeded, however, in making various studies, one of which, *Spring-time in Arabia*, represents a lioness rolling on a bank dotted with flowers, that in their vivid coloring remind one of the Alpine flora. Her mate looks down from a neighboring height on the rocky plains of Petraea, which resemble petrified billows, while the rising sun flecks with rose the cloudlets that fly before the wind.

Gérôme himself described to us one morning, in his atelier, a droll episode which occurred at this time.

"I remember once [said he] we were camping in the forum at Petra, where the Arabs are brigands, veritable brigands. They stole everything they could see by day, and at night they would creep up so close to us, in hopes of finding

something else that they could carry off, that we could feel the tents shaking as they moved about. It is an astonishing fact that these miserable wretches are without any moral sentiment save that of modesty, which is developed to an extraordinary degree. So that when their nocturnal attentions became insupportable, we could always drive them off by sending one of our little band



to confront them clad only in his boots! One night, Lenoir, poor Lenoir! was so exasperated at having his sleep disturbed, that in language more energetic than elegant, he called out to one of the intruders whose voice he recognized, bidding him begone! We were all convulsed to hear this Arab, whom we called Agamemnon, repeat like a parrot the last three words, with a perfect accent, although he was entirely ignorant of their meaning. This tempted Lenoir to try another experiment. He sat up in bed, and shouted 'I.' 'I' echoed the Arab. 'Am,' continued Lenoir. 'Am,' said Agamemnon. 'A scoundrel!'—'A scoundrel!'—'A

thief!'—'A thief!'—these self-accusing words re-echoing in the forum with marvelous distinctness to the intense delight of our whole encampment."

While relating this anecdote, Gérôme rose up and, with inimitable gesture and tone, mimicked in turn Lenoir and his Arab in a manner worthy of the Comédie Française. Then followed other stories, gay and grave, of artist friends who had passed away: of Fortuny, who painted for two months, in this very studio, on his *Spanish Marriage*; of Barye, whose *chefs-d'œuvre* lie on every table and cabinet in the ateliers, and who owed his election to the Institute largely to the warm affection and personal efforts of Gérôme. "For years they allowed him almost to die of hunger!" said the master, flushing with generous indignation. "It was only after he was gone that his genius was fully recognized, and *now* they will pay any price for pieces cast by his own hand."

Then he spoke of Baudry, also one of his intimates, whose talent he greatly admires and whose loss he deeply mourns; and of Fromentin, one of his near neighbors and good friends, of whom he said: "A remarkable man, a writer of the first order; but, as a painter, he unfortunately lacked the advantage of serious study in his youth. No one realized this more keenly than he himself.

THE MARABOUT

1889



One morning I came into his atelier and found him making a simple rudimentary study. 'Why are you doing that?' I asked. '*To learn!*' he replied frankly. And in that spirit he worked till the day of his death. He was only fifty-five years old—a very remarkable man!"

And then he chatted of his beloved pupils. Of Bargue and Aublet, of Dagnan-Bouveret and Courtois, of those Americans, Bridgman, Stewart, Harrison, —all of whom have almost become Frenchmen!—and with especial interest and affection of our own Abbott Thayer and De Forest Brush.

The following extracts from letters by well known American artists bear witness to their deep appreciation of the exceptional qualities of their chosen master and friend.

Abbott Thayer writes :

"The thought of Gérôme arouses first of all, in an artist's heart, the sentiment of truth-worship. Whatever the degree of appetite for his paintings, they must forever magnetize each fellow-artist by their stamp of a great nature's austere fidelity; and their purity in those respects, which was plainly his aim, destines them to last among a very few to represent his epoch hereafter. As a man, he is so imposing that it may be dangerous to speak. When he came into the schoolroom, his presence hushed the crowd, even to the roughest Communist element, so that you could always have heard a pin drop, save for his own serious voice—a homage emphasized by their different treatment of many other dignitaries. One of my innermost longings will always be to get his approval of my work."

Says Will H. Low :

"Five months in the atelier of Gérôme is so short a time that I have never presumed to call myself his pupil, but, under the influence of so strong a nature, it is possible to receive in that brief period a distinct and abiding impression of the man. His personal presence, alert, erect, and keen, is that of a soldier, and, amid his colleagues of L'École des Beaux-Arts, clad in their uniform of dark-green, embroidered with silver palms, he appears a veteran surrounded by conscripts. His art is tinctured with the like qualities, and against the invading armies of modern realism he has stood—valiant soldier—firmly at his post. And in the future, when the wheat is winnowed from the chaff, it can hardly be questioned that the typical reality which he has upheld will prevail against the accidental reality of the protemporary *modernistes*. One of these last—Georges Rochegrosse—exhibited at a late Salon a *Death of Caesar* where the assassins clambered over one another in their effort to reach the prostrate emperor, as beggars scramble for a penny pitched in the midst of them. Such a representation, however possible or probable, can never supplant the dignified and simple tragedy portrayed by Gérôme, any more than the *Venus of Milo*, with her typical beauty garnered from a thousand perfections, can be supplanted by a cast from nature!"

J. Alden Weir writes :

"It is with great pleasure that I subscribe my profound respect and admiration for Gérôme. I shall always consider it my good fortune to have had his counsel and advice—just, severe, and appreciative. Differing greatly in the phase of art which I follow, yet I cannot but esteem him as one of the masters and most distinguished men of his age."

George de Forest Brush says :

"As a teacher he is very dignified and apparently cold, but really most kind and soft-hearted, giving his foreign pupils every attention. In his teaching he avoids anything like recipes for painting; he constantly points out truths of nature, and teaches that art can be attained only through increased perception and not by processes. But he pleads constantly with his pupils to understand that, although absolute fidelity to Nature must be ever in mind, yet if they do not at last make imitation serve expression, they will end as they began—only children. There are people who pass by Gérôme because he is not a 'colorist,' or because he does not paint *lovable faces*, or something which they would do if they could paint! But these people do not see over him; *they have not yet seen him*. I believe he is one of the greatest masters, not of modern times, but of *all* times, and that he will be venerated more and more as we grow up to him."

The master's admirers who have not the happiness of a personal acquaintance with him are legion, and he is the constant recipient of letters and souvenirs testifying to the respect and affection of his unknown friends. In several cases a profound and touching friendship has thus sprung up, notably with the well-known artist and professor in the School of Design at Philadelphia, Stephen J. Ferris, to whose intense appreciation of Gérôme and enlightened "propaganda" the writer gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness for her first glimpse of the great artist, and the ineffable honor of having been chosen to be his biographer.

But we must return to Petra and our artists there in camp. On the day of their final departure they were obliged to mass their forces and, with revolvers at full-cock, slowly retire across the boundaries beyond which these brigands did not venture to follow, Gérôme and two of the "best shots" closing up the rear and keeping off this howling crew, who were only prevented from surrounding and massacring the entire party by the imposing calmness and strategic skill of the Colonel.

"On my return from this journey [Gérôme writes in his private journal], I exhibited two very different pictures which caused me all manner of annoyances: *La Mort de Maréchal Ney* and *Golgotha*. Apropos of the first one I was very near having a serious affair with the Prince de la Moskowa, son of the Marshal. The superintendent of the Beaux-Arts begged me several times not to

exhibit this picture ; but I steadfastly refused to yield, for the sake of the principle involved, declaring to him that painters had as good a claim to write history with their brushes as authors with their pens, which is incontestable. Besides, this picture was only a statement of a well-known fact, without comment of any kind. The Administration might put its veto upon it. It did not do so, but chose a middle course—the picture was hung in a corner. It was none the less looked at, and started the tongues of the various political factions to wagging. The *Legitimists* said, ‘What a toady of the Imperial Government!’ etc. The *Bonapartists*, ‘What harm have we done him? Isn’t he contented yet, when he has just been made Officer of the Legion of Honor?’ etc. What do you think of these two ways of speaking? If I had wished to displease the Legitimists, I should have served the purpose of the Bonapartists, and *vice versa*!

“As to the subject of the second, there was great astonishment because I had only painted the *shadows* of Christ and the thieves, thus running full tilt at ancient and venerated traditions. It seems to me, however, that there was a certain poetry in this view of Calvary, a new manner of treating it, well within the domain of painting; but my innovation was not to everybody’s taste, and I was made to feel it keenly.”

Gautier writes :

“The *Death of Marshal Ney*, exposed under the title of *The 7th of December, 1815, 9 o’clock in the Morning*, will certainly attract an unceasingly renewed crowd of spectators. It is a historical picture, but not in the sense in which this word was formerly understood. In the first place, the canvas is as small as for a scene of *genre*, and the subject is not drawn from the remote past; it still palpitates and bleeds, so to speak. The artist has treated it in the modern historical manner, which traces things back to their origin, throws aside all vague phraseology, and seeks for absolute reality of detail. With a terrible conciseness and gravity, more thrilling than a dramatic *mise en scène*, M. Gérôme depicts this lugubrious execution just as it must have taken place. One would say, a *procès-verbal* painted by an eye-witness. A dirty wall, a common plastered wall, scribbled over with political inscriptions which efface and contradict each other, and studded with white stars by a volley of balls, occupies diagonally nearly the whole length of the picture. It is scarcely daylight and this gray morning in the month of December shakes off, as best it can, a night of fog. In the angle of the wall a street-lamp swings its expiring yellow light, and we have a glimpse, in the shadow, of a picket of soldiers marching away with hurried step, almost as if fleeing. In the foreground, a black object, flattened against the ground, attracts the eye, restless in the presence of this sinister solitude; it is Marshal Ney, fallen forward like all those whom the balls pierce to the heart, the face turned a little to one side, the body covered with the mantle, not so completely, however, but that one can see the silk stockings and pumps, for the bravest of the brave had made a full toilette to go to his death; admirable coquetry of a hero! Several paces away lies his hat *à la Bolívar*. This hat, in the fashion of the time, produces the same tragic effect as the shoe in the foreground of the *Barricade* of

Meissonier; this form, which would be absurd to-day, takes on a terrible gravity in its minute rendering. It dates the scene and mingles the *bourgeois* life of the time with this sober drama. On the muddy ground and the meager blades of grass that shoot up at the foot of the old walls, the torn papers of several cartridges are still smoking. In falling, the Marshal seems to have created around him solitude, abandonment, and terror; everybody, in the shock and stupor consequent on the murder, has fled from the body that but now was living and which the bullets on so many battlefields had spared. According to history, the body of the Marshal remained alone ten or fifteen minutes; it seemed that no one dared to return. It is this moment that M. Gérôme has marvelously depicted. One shivers before his picture as if it were a reality. The painting is forgotten in the spectacle. Doubtless everything is rendered with the fine, precise touch which characterizes M. Gérôme. But one does not pay attention to it; the eye returns constantly to the frightful black spot. Whether the impression produced is the result of the fact itself or of the art with which the painter has portrayed it, one thing is certain, that one cannot pass before *The 7th of December, 1815*, without painful emotion and oppression of the heart."

Scott, the eminent English critic, comments on this remarkable canvas as follows:

"Some artists, like some fashionable physicians, take the high places at the feast by qualities quite apart from their abilities. These, such as many in our Royal Academy, if they live too long, have an unpleasant experience of neglect and even derision in their old age. Others grow in honor the longer they live, and of these is certainly Gérôme, the first living painter in all the world for power in reproducing a dramatic moment on canvas. Unity of sentiment and color, it appears to me, is the crowning quality of several French painters. In our Burlington House Exhibition, just closed, Gérôme's *Death of Marshal Ney* was a notable example of this. The bluish-gray, misty morning, with the street-lamp burning down and dimly gleaming (the old oil-lamp that exhausted itself in the dawn); the pallid wall inclosing the *caserne*, against which he was placed to receive the volley; the black figure lying quite straight on the sordid ground; these were the elements of the picture, and the sentiment was preserved in its integrity, the picture maintained as a true work of art by the colorless self-denial of the painter, that would not even let him accent the blood that was discoverable beginning to ooze from beneath the dishonored hero. This simplicity of color and propriety of color in relation to sentiment we find very obvious in the landscape-painters of the French school as compared to ours—in Troyon, for example—and, among figure-painters, most admirably displayed in all the works of Gérôme. The *Death of Marshal Ney* I have described because it was before the English public so lately; but in his *Gladiators—Ave Caesar, Imperator! morituri te salutant!* it was no less ably preserved."

During the painting of the *Golgotha*, otherwise known as *Consummatum Est* or *Jerusalem*, the critic of the London *Athenæum* wrote as follows:



THE ARAB AND HIS SELLD.

"M. Gérôme has recently been occupied in carrying out a novel pictorial conception of the *Crucifixion*. This consists in rendering, with the utmost of his extraordinary power, the terror and pathos of that awful subject as they were expressed in the features and actions of the spectators, who, soon after the event, were assembled at the foot of the cross. The figures of Christ and his companions in suffering are represented in the picture by shadows that fall before the spectators. The city of Jerusalem is shown in the background of the picture."

Gautier devoted to this impressive scene a long column in his Salon review. He says :

"It is customary to begin a critique of the Salon by general reflections upon art, more or less eloquent, but ordinarily gloomy, from which it would appear that we are in a state of absolute decadence and that our best artists would be scarcely worthy to mix the colors in the atelier of one of the old masters. We do not share this opinion and we have a decided esteem for this poor nineteenth century, so much despised, but which will, however, be one day ranked among the most glorious and precious epochs. In these jeremiads, one forgets that an exposition is not a museum, and that, in former times also, there was a great deal of bad painting which has not been preserved for us. It would be unreasonable to exact that the labor of a year should equal the productions of all schools during several centuries, and yet this is almost demanded by those who compare the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Italy, Flanders, and Spain with the canvases which our contemporary painters bring at a certain time to the halls of the Palais de l'Industrie. So then, without entering into these idle discussions, we shall at once attack our subject and speak of the paintings which seem to us the most remarkable. We shall pass them in review as they present themselves, and shall not attempt to arrange them in impossible classifications now, when all styles seem to leave their special limits and tend toward a general blending.

"It is a singular composition, the picture which M. Gérôme entitles *Jerusalem*, the view of which is taken from Calvary. The artist has chosen a moment neglected by the painters who have so often reproduced the great drama of the Passion. This work, to speak truly, is more picturesque than religious, and, besides, it does not exceed the dimensions of an easel-picture; a wise limit, in a time when the habitations of men resemble the cells of a honeycomb, and when grand proportions should only be employed for the mural paintings of churches and palaces. The tragedy is consummated; the executioners, the Roman soldiers, and the curious crowd that is always attracted by a spectacle of punishment, are returning to the city. In the foreground of the picture formed by the summit of Calvary, in the wan light of an eclipse, three strange, mournful shadows stretch out over the chalky ground. What are these trees of death with their ghastly burdens, which project these black silhouettes? The three gibbets, placed by the artist *outside* of the picture into which their shadow falls. We can recognize the cross of the impenitent thief by his more convulsed profile. This manner of indicating the invisible gallows shows an original and striking

power of invention. The shadow of the torture is more frightful than the torture itself; but perhaps the idea is too ingeniously literary for a painter! Many another artist would have simply painted Christ between the two thieves, with all possible care, representing the crosses from the rear in order to conform to the point of view; but then, it would only have been a Calvary like all the others! In subjects treated in so superior a manner, it is after all thoroughly

permissible to seek for something new, above all when the work has not an especially religious destination.

"The rest of the composition spreads downward from this plateau of Calvary, like a panorama around the platform on which the spectator stands. The Roman cavaliers, who follow the winding road and half turn upon their horses to point to the cross of the Christ, have a positively superb *tournure*, and, in spite of their smallness, are of the most beautiful antique style; they well represent the Roman power in Judea, and by their calmness protest against the old Jewish fanaticism. The death of this just man, whom they would gladly have spared, has profoundly moved them; the wonders that follow his death amaze them. In truth, the sun is eclipsed and a livid twilight envelops the land. On the summit and sides of the hill on which it is built lies Jerusalem, with its ramparts, its towers, its gates, its dwellings, and its massive temple, which dominates the other edifices. Against the reddish and misty

background of the sky, it stands out in a vague sulphureous glow; some olive trees with pale foliage are touched by a bluish-green light, and in the valley, like a black serpent, winds the already distant procession. The effect of this composition is strange and bewilders the judgment. One scarcely knows in what category to place it, for the figures and the landscape are of equal importance. It will best come under the head of 'picturesque history.'

Gérôme also drew upon his Oriental portfolios for another canvas which he finished this year. Masson describes it, and one of similar theme, in an article written for *Les Lettres et les Arts*.

"*General Bonaparte at Cairo* and *General Bonaparte in Egypt*, like the *Ædipus*, are excellent historical pictures. In the first, Bonaparte, mounted on an Arab

horse, regards the immense city extended at his feet. The meditative features are outlined on the pale azure of the sky stretching over the warm undulations of the Mogattam in the distance. Below the citadel, the Muezzins are calling the faithful to prayer, and the minaret of the grand Mosque pierces the heavens. In the canvas entitled *General Bonaparte in Egypt*, the simoon blows upon the army on its march in the desert; perched upon a white camel, whose neck is stretched out desperately under the hot breath of the wind, the General appears *de face*, his meager, yellow countenance framed by long black hair. The coat, buttoned up, makes a somber spot accentuated by the white leather breeches and the yellow-topped boots. The body erect, the great hat posed as if in battle array, he moves on, correct in his severe uniform, while behind him, succumbing to the heat and the burning sand which blinds them, the officers of his staff, whose dromedaries vainly seek for some tuft of moist herbage, abandon themselves to weary postures. Near the General, a Turk on foot, and several Arab horsemen in their striking costumes; in the background, the army slowly defiling. Never has any one more truly rendered the golden mist raised by the khamsinn; never has any one thus perfectly expressed the frightful lassitude which takes possession of the best trained men save those who have compelled the body to be the docile slave of the mind. What is remarkable in this picture is, that the thought one reads upon this emaciated face is evidently far from the desert. It has left the body and, while the eyes fixedly regard the horizon, it goes on crossing rivers, climbing mountains, traversing seas. Bonaparte is no longer on the road to Syria—he is on the way to India! He hesitates between these two halves of the world which he holds in his hands; he ponders upon the fate of Alexander and of Cæsar; he asks himself if Asia, of which he holds the key, is worth this Europe from whence he comes; and, unconscious of suffering, his dream embraces the universe! It is a bit of history that the author of the *Age of Augustus* has painted for us here, plainly showing, as in many other celebrated pictures, the philosophical power of his mind."

He has also given another view of Bonaparte on the heights above Cairo, which is but little known and which does not equal in power the two just described.

At the Salon of 1869 he exhibited only two pictures and a pencil-sketch, in which, as Gautier says:

"He again reproduced the sculptural form and grand style of those races which civilization as yet has not changed, which are like medals that have preserved the clear imprint of the primitive stamp. The *Strolling Merchant of Cairo*, at this Salon, maintains a rare majesty while selling his bric-a-brac; one could easily use him as a patriarch, Abraham or Jacob, in a biblical picture. The *Promenade of the Harem* shows us a *caïque* flying swiftly along the Nile under the united efforts of ten oarsmen; in a cabin on deck is a group of mysterious beauties, half visible behind the curtains; and, crouching in the stern, a musician chants to the accompaniment of his *guzla* one of those nasal

songs that possess so keen a charm for barbarous ears, and which we confess ourselves fond of, even should this frank avowal arouse the contempt of our musicians. The boat slips over the clear transparent water along the misty shore, in a sort of luminous fog which produces a magical effect. The bark seems to float at the same time in the water and in the air. These effects, which appear almost impossible to eyes that are not accustomed to the tender tones of the 'land of light,' are rendered by M. Gérôme with absolute fidelity. An admirable pencil-sketch, which belongs to the Baron de Boissieu, represents a peasant from the region of the Danube, doubtless a souvenir of the artist's first journey."

The disasters of the years 1870-71, and their mournful effects on artist circles and life in Paris, have left so indelible a souvenir that we need not dwell upon them. Gérôme had removed his family to his villa in Bougival, and, like all his countrymen, full of confidence as to the ultimate result of the struggle, he endeavored to continue his quiet routine of work in his summer atelier. The unexpected and rapid approach of the hostile forces compelled him to make a hasty retreat. Gérôme hurried to place his wife and little ones in safety in England, and started back, intending to share the fate of his comrades in the defense of Paris. But the beautiful city was already encircled by an impregnable cordon of vigilant foes, and he was finally obliged to return to London, an involuntary and unhappy exile. He accepted the hospitality of an English studio, and endeavored to utilize the time of his enforced sojourn in a strange land. He found many devoted friends there, and under other circumstances would have thoroughly enjoyed his stay. He often recurs with emotion to those days when, although unable to speak a word of English, he learned to know and appreciate the warmth of English hearts. But grief for the irreparable misfortunes of France, anxiety for the future, and the difference in climate, told unfavorably upon him. One of his distractions may be inferred from the following extract from a letter written by him some years later in reply to some questions. It touches several points of interest:

"Leon G — was one of my pupils; he painted my portrait (very badly!). It was exhibited, but achieved no success, which was just. As to my *bust*, that is another affair. It was executed by Carpeaux in the year of the war. I was at London, Carpeaux also; he proposed to model my bust; I naturally accepted, as he was a sculptor of great talent. This bust is a *chef-d'œuvre* and artists buy it, not, you understand, in order to have my effigy, but because it is a most remarkable work of art. I will show it to you when you come, which I hope will be soon. I did not reproduce the *Phryne* in sculpture; it was Falguière, who, by the order of the Maison Goupil, modeled this little figure after my picture and my studies. The two little statuettes representing the *Danse du Ventre* and the *Danse du Sabre* are by Mercié, both after my pictures, and ordered by the Maison Goupil."

As these exquisite figurines have been ascribed in several biographical sketches to Gérôme, it is satisfactory to hear the master himself give "honor to whom honor is due." Apropos of Carpeaux's work, Timbal says :

"Carpeaux excelled in the bust; he gave it life; the eyes of his figures sparkled with a brilliancy which till now it seemed that painting alone could imitate. And then, this son of a workingman had an aristocratic talent, and, under a rough exterior—strange contrast with which Nature sometimes amuses herself—a fineness of intuition which revealed the gentleman in art. He knew how to place a beautiful head on shoulders royally modeled by nature, and to let wavy tresses fall naturally upon the velvet or ermine of a state-portrait. The beautiful bust of Madame la Princesse Mathilde soon made Carpeaux the sculptor in ordinary to the Imperial family. The full-length statue of the young Prince, accompanied by his celebrated dog Nero, consecrated before the eyes of the public this title which he did not bear, but whose office he filled. What has become of this charming work, not more fragile than the good fortune of him who had commanded it? Poor artists of France, who imagined they were working for history, dogged in the shadow by the *pétrole* of social progress! Among the busts which will perhaps escape the spiteful conspiracies of the future, we hope at least that of Gérôme will find a favored place. None will afford a more perfect specimen of the manner of Carpeaux. It is an instantaneous sketch which, with two strokes of the chisel, has caught the fleeting moment of a happy expression; a rare good fortune, the force of which has not been weakened by after study and labor of perfection."

Maxime Da Camp also writes: "Life circulates under these thoughtful features, the glance darts two lightning-flashes of intelligence and will. This head is cast in one's memory as it is in the bronze."

In November, 1870, several small pictures appeared at an exhibition of English art and were chronicled in the London *Athenæum*.

"We may turn now to examine and laud the elaborate and learned work of M. Gérôme, which is styled '*A Bashi Bazouk*.' It is a half-length figure of a negro warrior. On his head a high and twisted turban with pendants, on his body a superbly painted robe of deep red-rose color, which, having a sheeny surface, reflects the light, melts its glowing tints in the shadows, and flushes strongly in the intermediate folds. Thus this work is more potent in color than usual; it is not, however, less solidly and finely modeled. A still more interesting picture is the *Pifferari*, two Neapolitan men and a boy standing in a very inhospitable-looking street, during frosty weather. The house to which the noise of their bagpipes is directed is thoroughly unsympathetic, although probably musical. Recently painted, this picture looks dull and flat, so that most of its subtle wealth of color is lost for the while, but enough is visible in parts of the whole to show how strong and beautiful much of the rest must be. The faces are full of striking and suitable expression; the drawing is worthy of the artist,

which is all we need say. The drapery shows science and learned thought, and a profound sense of the obligation to be truthful. With these qualities the result stands solid, rich, sound; an artist's work such as, when we have been looking at the series of pot-boilers to which we have above referred (productions though they are of two of our most successful and able painters), is certain to give the English critic unpleasant notions of how much better it might be for art among us if the example of M. Gérôme were all-powerful. He stays among us for a little while and should receive that homage which is due to his honored, honorable, and rare power in art. In no better way can he be welcomed than by observing his fine example."

In April, 1871, appeared another small canvas, entitled *An Eastern Girl*, which was immediately acquired by the Duke of Wellington. The *Athenæum* calls attention to the "superb flesh painting, perfect modeling, and intensity of expression" as being difficult to surpass.

In reply to a letter regarding the *Pifferari*, received many years later, Gérôme writes as follows :

"*Dear Sir* : When I arrived in London the year of the war, with my wife and children, I had neither brushes, canvas, colors, nor costumes. I soon made the necessary acquisitions, and as I found some Italians near at hand, I hastened to profit by this in employing them as models. I recollect the picture, but it would be difficult to estimate its full value considering the time that has elapsed, but I remember that it had much success at Mr. Wallis's exhibition in Pall Mall. I know that I painted it carefully and worked on it sufficiently to finish it properly, so I may say, without fear of mistake, that the work is respectable, worthy of me, and worthy of figuring in any serious collection of works of art."

The third picture represented a corner of the arena at a bull-fight, where the *Picador*, from whom the canvas takes its title, sits motionless upon his horse, resolute, keen, alert, firmly grasping his long lance, ready at any instant to repel the attack of the infuriated animal, who has just succeeded in unhorsing one of his comrades. The skillful matadors on the opposite side of the arena have momentarily drawn off the attention of the bull, and afforded the unlucky horseman the necessary opportunity to limp to the gate which opens for his retreat behind the scenes. Each face in the crowd of onlookers is a study, and the coloring truly Spanish in its warm tones. The *Athenæum* also records at the London Exhibition of 1872 two canvases drawn from his inexhaustible store of Oriental sketches :

"M. Gérôme's pictures will attract all visitors. The first of these is a *Street Scene in Cairo*. There we have architecture in sunlight and shadow; booths and shops; a long vista of broken pavement; half a score of dogs dozing; deep shadows in the recesses. The chief human figures are two superbly armed and

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mounted Arabs in conference with a merchant, who hands to one of them a bottle of cool water; the third Arab leans up against a bulk; a tall woman, clad in dark blue and veiled from head to foot in black, bears on her hip a basket filled with oranges like globes of gold; astride her shoulder (his flesh making delicious 'color' with her blue robe) sits a lively and entirely naked boy; she grasps his ankle and makes nothing of her double load. This is a charming group, exhibiting some of the noblest qualities of M. Gérôme's art. Before the mother trots an older boy, who is naked but for a green veil streaming from his head; he carries a fresh branch of palm. Clad in light blue and walking behind the last goes a tall negress, bearing a great water-jar on her head. Beyond these, two women, muffled in white from head to foot, are bargaining with the owner of a booth; men are chaffering just on the verge of the gloom which obscures more than half the interior of a nearer shop. The boy donkey-driver and his beast have brought to the door of a private house a visitor, who is reconnoitered from an upper window by a servant. It is a precious example of



delicate and elaborate workmanship. Its careful drawing will be enjoyed by all lovers of form, who will also like its sound and profoundly studied modeling, which is everywhere observable in the rendering of textures, light, and shade."

This *Rue au Caire* was one of the famous twelve seen at the Universal Exposition of 1878. Paul Lenoir, strolling day after day with Gérôme through these fascinating streets, and with him stopping to note all the peculiarities of life in this typical Eastern city, thus records their impressions:

"Cairo is more the capital of Egypt than Paris is of France, for the good reason that Paris is only a city, and Cairo is in itself a whole province. Indeed it is more than a province, it is a *world*; it is all the Orient, past, present and to come --as complete as at the time of the Mamelukes, as brilliant as at its zenith, as picturesque as it was under the caliphs. To think that one could see everything,

study everything, during a three years' residence there, would be a great mistake. Our impressions and notes then can only be the thousandth part of the notes and impressions unrecorded. So much premised, 'Yallah! Yallah!' and forward! The Mouski is an admirable type of the most animated and brilliant streets of Cairo. This immense avenue offers a *résumé* of all that is picturesque and striking in the busy city life of the East. An endless row of shops, crowded with goods, most extraordinary in their variety and profusion, *cafés*, hairdressers, butchers, antiquaries, shoemakers, and kitchens in the open air—each follows the other in most unexpected succession—borrowing from their incongruous neighborhood a new *cachet* of oddity. Everywhere one sees open chests and boxes, half capsized in the street to attract customers. To make the amateur walk over the merchandise, in order to force him to pick up some article, is the admirable industrial problem successfully solved by the greater proportion of these thousand and one Ali-Babas. From the old Jew in spectacles, who waits to be implored before he will disturb his bits of antiquities, hidden away in mysterious little coffers, to the shoemaker of the sheikhs—for whom the congress-gaiter is the last achievement of civilization—all seem to be serving in a kind of priesthood. One does not hear the fatiguing and impertinent harangue of small shopkeepers; a most religious stillness presides over all purchases, all transactions in the street. The zeal of our 'counter-jumpers' in France, the gesticulations and dissertations with which you are pursued as long as you are within sight, apropos of a meter of grenadine or calico, would be considered here a most shocking breach of good taste; it is almost the holy silence of the mosque that reigns among the shelves and counters of the Mouski. Do you want to buy a kouffie? You hold the object in one hand and your money in the other, according to the value placed on it by your dragoman, unless sufficiently skillful to make your bargains for yourself. After having offered on an average the half of the price asked for an article, you retire with the calmness of a man who knows the value of the thing he wishes to buy, and you do not insist; the merchant recalls you by an almost imperceptible sign; he consents to displace his pipe, accepts your money and tosses you the goods with the plaintive sigh of a woman robbed of her child! If your proposals are unacceptable, the tradesman manifests his bitter sorrow by smackings of the tongue which recall the experiments of an amateur in wines. And, with tears in his voice, he pushes back his merchandise, cursing, as if you had beaten him. 'La, la, la, mafich!' he murmurs between his teeth and his pipe—for the chibouk or the narghiléh is the indispensable accessory of every self-respecting Cairo merchant. The stuffs of the country, with their changing colors, pearly reflections, and marvelous embroideries, necessarily attract our attention, and we would still be in those shops had our desire to explore the city not got the upper hand of our admiration of yellow silk! Later, becoming more expert, we used to buy, almost at full gallop, several of those silky foulards called kouffies, that the Egyptians use as headdresses. Yellow, striped with green and red, or yellow upon yellow, embroidered with floss in the same tones, these stuffs shine in the sun in an astonishing manner. Imperceptible threads of gold or silver, artistically mixed in the texture, produce a brilliant metallic effect. One of

the most striking features of this street-life is the peculiarity of the noises. The absence of paving and consequent rumbling of vehicles, the dull sound made by the footfalls of the dromedaries on the hard ground, all this gives a mysterious and almost religious character to the spectacle which absorbs us. The cry of the donkey-boys, sharp and clear, the music of the *café*, the neighing of the asses, the snort of the dromedaries, furnish the substance of the orchestra that accompanies this perpetual representation; for the Arab walks silently through the street, the merchants only cry their wares in special bazaars, and almost the only ones who avail themselves of this privilege are the strolling old-clothes-men and the auctioneers of cast-off garments. The methodic gait of each individual accentuates still more this mysterious effect. The donkey-drivers run in a kind of short trot favorable to respiration; the donkeys are on the trot or very often a full gallop; the horses generally walk at a slow pace, as do the camels and the dromedaries, since it would seem to derogate from their dignity were they to increase the already frightful swaying of the enormous burdens they carry."

One day, in passing under an archway, they caught a glimpse of a group that Gérôme immediately transferred to his canvas, and which appeared at this same exhibition under the title of *A Discussion*. The *Athenæum* gives a brief outline of it:

"A gaunt, sun-dried old Nubian camel-driver, clad in white, and girt with a rude sword, grasps the halter of his patient waiting beast and, because he is irate beyond other modes of expression, dashes his goad on the stones of the street. He grins like an angry tiger because two Cairene men, one of whom is a descendant of the Prophet, have, as he thinks, tried to cheat him. They remonstrate with different and marvelously expressive action, and all three seem to be speaking at once. Through the archway we have a glimpse of a narrow street, with veiled figures lingering in the shade—of balconies and windows and far-off sunlight. The camel, like the human figures, is admirably drawn; the tones of the picture are richer than usual, and the effect is more than commonly happy."

Gérôme did not exhibit again till 1874, the interval being occupied in traveling and sketching. He went with Fromentin to Egypt, with Gustave Boulanger to Spain and Africa, and back to Egypt with several friends, among whom were his dear pupils Paul Lenoir and Jules Stewart. It was on this last journey that the ill-fated Lenoir was suddenly seized with a chill while sketching in the environs of Cairo. In spite of Gérôme's earnest entreaties, he lay down in the warm sand and fell asleep. This was the beginning of an illness that proved fatal, and he was interred at Cairo.

The Salon of 1874 was a memorable one, the master receiving the Grand Medal of Honor for the second time, the first being in 1867, in which year he was also promoted to the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honor. Says Bergerat:

"Since this epoch, which ended for him the militant portion of his artistic life, Gérôme has enjoyed the tranquil exercise of a talent sure of itself, masterly and undisputed. With Baudry and Meissonier he marches at the head of the French School, and his last expositions have assured him veritable triumphs. Thus in 1874 he obtained for a second time that medal of honor which an artist may consider himself happy to have merited once in his life. He had sent to the Salon three canvases, equally remarkable, and which displayed three different aspects of his talent. I wrote as follows in the *Journal Officiel* of *L'Eminence Grise*, the most popular of the three: 'No one is ignorant that the chief personage in this scene is that famous Father Joseph, whose occult power, the shadow of the Cardinal's, inclined the haughtiest of heads at the court. With his eyes fixed upon his breviary, he slowly descends a monumental staircase; a motley train of courtiers, bowing to the earth, presses close to the balustrade to give him room. Their sparkling costumes contrast with the capuchin's frock, girt with a cord from which hangs a rosary. It is in this contrast that M. Gérôme has sought to point the satire against the life of the court which he wished to indicate. It is indeed biting, and the Cardinal, who, on the upper step, turns to dart a furious glance at the humble monk whom he has just obsequiously saluted, is an irresistible conception. What has most evidently tempted M. Gérôme in this subject is the occasion that he finds to paint all the backs of these courtiers, and to show all these profiles succeeding each other in the same expression of smiling servility. The curvature of the spine, in all its degrees of flatness, this has been his study, his pictorial *motif*. He has assembled all the phases which the disposition and temperament of each individual could give to these backs bent in salutation; he has graded their diverse silhouettes, and, covering the whole with satins, velvets, and laces of all shades, he has written a grand scene of high comedy, very human, very real, and very ironical. It is a masterpiece, not as a historical picture, but as a perfect anecdote, where one can find no faults, but where there is almost everything to admire.'"

Masson refers to it as "that marvelous picture, so full of purpose and acuteness, of color and life, where Father Joseph, in his voluntary poverty and monkish simplicity, is so skillfully opposed to this gilded, iridescent, sparkling court." And the London *Athenæum* says "the characterization is perfect, the figures are triumphs of design, and the picture is, as a whole, the best of Gérôme's late productions." But we might multiply indefinitely the laudatory criticisms of this well-known picture. Let us pass to the second, of which the *Athenæum* writes:

"We come to the chief attractions of the Salon when we pause before M. Gérôme's pictures. *Rea Tibicen* makes every one smile. All must admire the intensity of the design and the humor of the artist, who has shown King Frederick of Prussia in his cabinet, working away at a flute, for the love of which he has thrown aside fatigue as well as business. He stands with bent knees



ANACREON (SCULPTURE).

before an *escritoire* on which he has propped up the music-sheet, and, clutching the magic tube with the finger-tips of both hands, he sets his meager lips to the orifice to produce, one would imagine, harsh, unmelodious music, for he will blow, it seems, *too hard*, and his lean cheeks try to compel the sweetness they cannot utter; as it is, up go his eyebrows, and the eyeballs are uncovered in his eagerness, while the cue of his wig quaintly rises on the stiff collar of his coat. So thirsty for melody is the soul of the king that he has not stayed to take off his dirty boots! Just returned from lunting, he has stepped into the cabinet followed by the dogs, whose muddy feet have left marks on the polished floor and rich carpets; but before each weary animal can throw himself down to rest, one in the king's own chair, the others on the ground, Frederick has torn open, read, and crumpled up the dispatches that waited his coming, cast them on the floor, and grasped the intractable instrument. What will Mr. Carlyle, whose soul enters not with zest into the enjoyment of such frivolity as flute-music, say to M. Gérôme for thus making fun of his model conqueror? Above the desk is perched a bust of the sarcastic Voltaire! The ridicule of the picture is not the less pungent because it is keen enough to penetrate the thickest skin without giving an excuse for blustering. The irritable captor of Silesia himself could hardly have made this jest an excuse for war. As a design it is perfect; as a satire, one of the best modern examples."

"In 1875 this same picture was exhibited in London," says the *Art Journal*, "together with Corot's *Souvenir d'Arleux du Nord*. A grand gold medal was to be given, and the votes were equally divided between Corot and Gérôme *six successive times*; ultimately, by the casting vote of the President, it fell to Gérôme."

The third picture was the famous *Collaboration*, where Gérôme, who adores Molière, shows us the young playwright in close confab with the venerable Corneille. This is one of his choicest canvases in this *genre*, remarkable for quiet thought and concentration, masterly drawing and harmonious color.

In the London *Art Journal* of 1875, we find the following article, entitled "The French Gallery in Pall Mall."

"The present generation of untraveled Englishmen owes more perhaps of its art culture, in a large and catholic sense, to what it has learned on the walls of the French Gallery, than to almost any other London exhibition that could be named. The Royal Academy and other kindred institutions do noble educational service and keep up annually the national interest in art; but while teaching us in a hundred pleasant parables that 'man does not live by bread alone,' their tone is apt to become monotonous, their stories twice-told tales, and the fare set before us runs thus the risk of losing its savor from the simple fact of its *sameness*. Much has been done, however, to improve all this lately; but when the French Gallery was first opened, our native exhibitions seemed to strive unwittingly quite as much after perpetuating our insularity as disseminating art!

What the French Gallery began, the International Exhibition of 1862 completed, and ever since, London, as a home of the Fine Arts, is perhaps the most liberal city in Europe. It is then with peculiar satisfaction that we call the attention of our readers to the twenty-second annual exhibition of Continental pictures at the French Gallery. . . . But, after all, *the* picture of the exhibition is the *Danse du Sabre* of Gérôme. The head of the girl posturing so lithely before the great



man and his guests, who are seated in an alcove, is veiled in green gauze, her bosom is covered with gold pieces and the upper part of her figure is enveloped in diaphanous white; around the lower portion is bound a thick blue garment, yellow-edged, and beneath it peeps a petticoat of black. In her right hand she holds a naked scimiter and balances another on her head, and all to the music of those seated in the half-shadowed recess behind. The scene is in a sense barbaric, but by no means unpleasing, and Gérôme, by his masterly details, the cunning way in which he throws the light on them, and the evenness which, by beautiful, harmonious lines and changes and counter-changes of color, he gives to the whole composition, simply spirits us away with him, and reveals to us a scene which has all the reality of concrete fact. It is too late in the day, even if our space permitted, to affect detailed criticism of a man of Gérôme's stamp; suffice it to say, the picture is as complete an example of the master as we have ever seen, and that the four thousand

guineas for which it was commissioned have received at his hands ample justice and consideration. The artist has given another and simpler aspect of the same theme in the *Saber Dance in a Café*, which possesses, however, the same inimitable qualities as the more elaborate canvas."

There were but two pictures at the Salon of 1876, *A Santon*, begging at the door of a mosque, and *Turkish Women at the Bath*, both of which were re-exhibited at the Universal Exposition of 1878. The first represents one of those religious fanatics so graphically described in the Procession of the Carpet; the second is vastly more attractive. The same strength and delicacy of treatment, so often commented on, is noticeable in this scene at a public bath, where a great variety of postures, always graceful and natural, displays the artist's unrivaled powers as a draughtsman. The imperious beauty sitting on the warm-toned

carpet seems inclined to chide her swarthy attendant, and the ebon-hued damsel, in her turn, vigorously protests as she clutches the narghilchs, which perhaps have made too tardy an appearance. The low-browed, fair-skinned daughter of the Orient, reclining indolently upon the warm marble step of a fountain to the right, has just fastened a bracelet on her arm and is toying with some jewels as she listens languidly to the discussion. In the background, which is lighted by floods of sunshine, are other bathers in different stages of their ablutions. There is a general impression of well-being and comfort, which is the invariable result of these elaborate baths with their accompaniment of hot and cold douches, brisk rubbings and skillful massage, followed by a delicious siesta from which one rouses to enjoy the crowning delight of the agreeable programme—a cup of steaming amber-colored Mocha, and an occasional whiff of perfumed tobacco. In coloring and grouping, this is a charming canvas.

The Universal Exposition of 1878 marked one of the most noteworthy epochs in the life of this great master. In an eloquent page Claretie writes, "It was at the close of the Salon of 1874 that M. Gérôme obtained for the *second* time the Grand Medal of Honor; it was indeed the hour of his supreme sway. Gérôme was fifty years old, and he seemed to have arrived at the zenith of his renown. But not yet; since then, he has reserved for those who loved best his rare talent, new surprises, and it was thus that, besides admiring his pictures, the world assembled at the Universal Exposition of 1878 saluted him as 'Sculptor!' Yes! this same hand, which used the brush with such delicacy, had molded the clay *par grande masse*, and aside from his numerous and most interesting paintings, perfectly finished, masterly in their exquisite beauty, and always supreme, Gérôme as sculptor offered to the public a superb group—this *Combat of Gladiators* which, with its powerful and virile composition, commanded universal admiration. It is at once the work of a savant and an artist." And indeed, even those who divined to a certain degree Gérôme's vast reserve power were astonished and confounded. That a painter should be tempted by the more plastic art is not surprising, and we have on record several who have achieved success in both specialties. But that a *first* attempt should prove him the peer of those who had spent a lifetime to acquire their reputation—this was startling, and utterly overthrew the theories of a faction which exists everywhere, whose creed seems to be, "Thus far and no farther!" and their aim, to restrain and limit the manifestations of genius. Dubosc de Pesquidoux, in his "Art of the Nineteenth Century," a review of the Universal Exposition of 1878, writes:

"We find in this first series the remarkable work of a new athlete who, from many points of view, belongs in the pleiad I have just reviewed. M. Gérôme, weary, no doubt, of seeing sculptors invade the domain of painting, has wished, like M. Doré, to take a painter's revenge in the realm of sculpture. M. Doré and

M. Gérôme on one side—M. Falguière and M. Dubois on the other! The struggle is interesting, and the champions worthy of each other. M. Gérôme has chosen for his *début* an epoch that he knows thoroughly and a subject that he has treated many times. Who has visited the world of the ancients oftener than he? Did not the artist in his youth make anew the fortune of unfashionable Olympus and restore neglected Greece and Rome to honor? Is it not he who resuscitated Bacchus and Venus, Anacreon and Theocritus, Daphnis and Chloe, the Cæsars and the Gladiators, the sacred woods and the amphitheaters, the arches of triumph and temples, for a generation dotingly fond of plumes and tournaments, of chatelaines and men-at-arms, of feudal towers and Gothic color?

“To be sure, M. Gérôme owes much to antiquity, but the antique world owes him something! He has reconciled our epoch with worn-out types by presenting them under a new aspect. It is assuredly a merit to make an original translation of an old *motif* and crown it with success. After having been the chief of the *Néo-grecs*, I am aware that M. Gérôme brusquely abandoned his followers and played truant—burning incense before other gods. But the ancient deities only reconquered their pedestals through him, and to-day, resuming in Sculpture the subjects that brought him good fortune in Painting, the grateful artist worships again before antiquity and borrows for historic statuary a beautiful theme, which has already furnished him with the subject for a beautiful painting—the *Gladiators*. M. Gérôme returns thus to his point of departure and renews the loves of his early manhood. Happy privilege of art, which permits one never to grow old! And in fact the artist has not grown old. The *Gladiators* is worthy of his best days. More rugged perhaps than the work of experienced sculptors, it has in its picturesque mass an individual *tournure* and style which are worth infinitely more than polish and *préciosité*.

“The mirmillon, a figure in bronze, larger than nature, has thrown off his coat of mail, a part of which remains hanging to his belt. He has broken the formidable trident of the retiarius, and at this moment, with his right foot on the throat of his fallen and panting adversary, he holds him down. The latter writhes like a boa-constrictor in the clutch of a lion. He has seized the leg of his conqueror and tries to force it aside. Vain efforts! the foot presses like a rock upon his breast, the sandal is welded to his neck! The retiarius retains scarce force enough to raise his arm toward the assembly and hold up two fingers in a desperate appeal to the clemency of the spectators. The mirmillon, triumphant and superb, the haughty head masked by the large visor, the body erect, with shield on arm and sword in hand, turns toward the seats and awaits the popular verdict that shall deliver or slay his adversary. Everything betrays the intoxication of victory and pride in his strength. Under his armlets one divines the muscles of steel developed by daily exercise, and beneath the heavy armor lurks the agility of a wild beast. Such is the group, and it would be difficult to impart to it more accent, more passion, more movement. It would be difficult to render more strikingly, on the one hand the pitiless tranquillity and brutal pride of the victor in the arena, and on the other the anguish of defeat and the terror of death. The science of the *mise en scène*, the exactitude of the accessories, —natural fruit of the archæ-

ological studies of the author,— the arrangement of the contours, the adjustment and the style, unite to insure the incontestable superiority of this intensely dramatic work. This masterly group well merits the place of honor assigned to it under the Trocadéro. Dare I confess my whole thought? This creation has a spirit and a power that throw the exquisite and incomparable pictures of the artist into the background and place the sculptor before the painter."

Charles Blanc, in speaking of sculpture, says : " It is a great art and at times one is tempted to believe it the greatest of all, because it is at one and the same time like the reality and far superior to nature, substantial and ideal, palpable and divine."

In later years, when Gérôme had revealed, by the most varied masterpieces in marble and bronze, his marvelous powers in this new sphere, we have heard him say more than once, with a sigh of mingled regret and satisfaction, " Ah! I was *born* to be a *sculptor*," and he had lived more than fifty years before being able to give reins to his *grande passion*! One of the most touching souvenirs in our memory is furnished by his description of his timidity in undertaking this first group. His preparations for it lasted a year, and he scarcely ate or slept after having once begun to mold the clay. He worked with desperate energy, trembling, hoping, fearing, and at last the mighty group was cast in one piece, producing a *chef-d'œuvre* that placed the artist, with one stride, in the front rank of the sculptors of this century. Though tempted by munificent offers, he has many times refused to part with this, his " first-born," as he laughingly calls it, which won for him his first medal for sculpture. It remains on the lawn of his country-seat at Bougival, overshadowed by majestic trees, the magic touch of sun and wind and rain having bestowed on it a deep rich *patine* that art could neither originate nor imitate!

In the painting of *Pollice Verso* the chief combatants have this same pose, and the tragedy is intensified by the unanimity with which the Vestals in their pure white robes, which seem to typify grace, mercy, and peace, *reverse the thumb*, and savagely demand the instant death of the supplicating victim.

But we must not forget the paintings which the master also sent to this exposition, an array so imposing that, in addition to the medal for sculpture, he received for the *third* time the Grand Medal of Honor, and was promoted to the rank of Commander in the Legion of Honor. The cross of Officer is worn on the lapel of the coat, that of Commander is suspended around the neck. Apropos of this promotion, Gérôme received the following charming note of congratulation from his friend Edmond About : " *Cher ami, je fais comme votre croix—je vous saute au cou!*" [Dear friend: I follow the example of your cross, and fall upon your neck!] In a résumé of this exposition De Pesquidoux writes :

"M. Gérôme, whom we place at the head of picturesque *genre*, exhibits twelve paintings, seven of which appear for the first time. We will not pause to speak of *L'Éminence Grise*, *A Santon*, and *Women at the Bath*, long since appreciated. We must be content with a rapid survey of the others. In all of them we admire the purity of drawing, the precision of modeling, the delicacy of touch, and the solidity of coloring; besides, they are all eminently picturesque, sometimes touching history in a familiar way, and borrowed from a magic country, source of all light and all beauty as of all truth—we mean the Orient! *A Bashi Bazouk*, with turbaned head ornamented with motley baubles, is very vivid and 'fetching,'

as he grasps his damaskeened gun and dances to amuse his companion, while the roast of meat, fruit of their last robbery, is cooking, suspended on a tripod. Notice his old comrade with the gray beard, who takes the long pipe from his mouth and smiles at the gambols of his friend; from his sash, mixed in pell-mell with his arsenal, hangs the poultry which will furnish the repast when they again come to a halt. He is the far-sighted purveyor of the band. Half soldiers, half bandits, and indeed less soldiers than bandits, these scamps are more amusing here to travelers than in reality!

"The Turkish sportsman in a rose-colored jacket, in the *Return from the Chase*, stopping to let horse and dogs drink from a circular basin surmounted by arabesques and shaded by green boughs, with a deer slung over the croup



GATE OF BAB-EL-ZOUEL

1886



of the horse, is equally telling in local color. He bends with solicitude to watch the movements of his animals, and does not stir lest he should trouble them. It is an excellent picture, of a supple firmness and a soft, charming relief."

This last picture, otherwise known as *A Circassian at the Fountain*, is a peculiarly personal souvenir. Returning from a hunting expedition, Gérôme's weary horse and hounds halted to quench their thirst at this picturesque fountain. The combination was tempting. He slipped from the saddle, and the sketch then taken furnished the *motif* for this effective group.

"The lion, couched in his den, surrounded by gnawed bones and moving his tail, is superb in his majesty, as calm as a lion in Egyptian granite, as alert as the untamed denizen of the Atlas. Whoever has seen the sapphire eyes of this monster shining in his tawny head, will not soon forget them." [This canvas, also known as *The Lion of the Phosphorescent Eyes*, was painted for the Sultan Abdul Aziz, who was so treacherously assassinated.]

"The lion on which St. Jerome is taking so sound a nap is not less powerful and serene, but he is evidently civilized by the neighborhood of the Saint! The artist has wished to prove that he understands animals as well as he does men; he can paint every species. The African sloughis, who form the Camp Guard, squatted on their paws or seated on their haunches before the row of tents whose occupants are wrapped in slumber, with ears pricked up and watchful eyes, show an all but human attention heightened by the simplest *mise en scène*. The Flemish masters have not bequeathed creations more distinct nor in a better environment; M. Gérôme, like a true master, grows as he advances. He has never done better, and it seems as if it would be difficult *to do better!*"



The *Street Scene in Cairo* has already been described. Of the *Moorish Bath*, a negress assisting her mistress who has just emerged from the water, De Pesquidoux says:

"The ebony body of one and the ivory form of the other, the first with a yellow Madras kerchief on her head, the second with her wealth of golden tresses, are bathed by the ambient air, the high lights being adjusted with remarkable flexibility; there is nothing to criticise in this little gem, no fault of style or orthography; one could write *perfect* from one end of the canvas to the other. The drawing, the color, the action, are equally irreproachable.

"As for the melancholy duo in the midst of the desert, entitled *The Arab and his Steed*, is it not a real drama? How gravely he sits, this Arab, mute in his grief, worthy son of Mohammed! What a *tour de force* of draughtsmanship and anatomy is the body of this great quadruped, still saddled, and stretched out at full length, his head inertly reposing between the hands and on the knees of the cavalier who is sadly bending over him. And all the details of the work, the hands, the feet, the mane, the hide, the stirrups, the *pelisse*, the turban, the burnous, aside from the actors, are portrayed, not only with accuracy but with breadth."

Several of these pictures, exhibited some years later in London, aroused universal admiration; the art journals calling especial attention to the "finely drawn and solidly painted group of *The Arab and his Steed*," and to the *Moorish Bath* as a "masterpiece of plastic art; the modeling of this figure, so subtle and yet so vividly strong, is a study for the English artist, over the deficiencies of whose academic training we have so often to mourn."

The same qualities are notably displayed in the *Women at the Bath, with the Narghiléh*, an additional charm being added by the skillful reflections in the water.

At the Salon in 1881, Gérôme's exhibit renewed the universal wonder and applause of 1878, and again obtained for him the Medal for Sculpture. The London *Athenæum* writes: "M. Gérôme has won a new laurel by his admirable group in marble of *Anacreon, Bacchus, and Love*. Here the joyous poet, with a face abounding in humor, walks with a lyre at his back and carries a godlet on each arm. Bacchus dozes, while Cupid, a lovely boy, plays with the poet's beard and is regarded by him with tenderness exquisitely mixed with satiric laughter." This remarkable group, which confirmed the artist's title of Master-Sculptor, was purchased by Mr. Jacobsön, a well known lover and patron of the fine arts in Copenhagen, and placed in the fine museum which he has generously presented to his native city.

About this time Gérôme also finished the *Raphael and Bramant in the Sistine Chapel*, and again took up a canvas for which he had years before made a sketch, the *Burning of Shelley's body in the presence of Lord Byron*, but it still remains to-day with many other unfinished canvases in his studio, among them the *Conspirators*, of which we are happily able to give the original drawings. We remember that Claretie, being called upon for a biographical

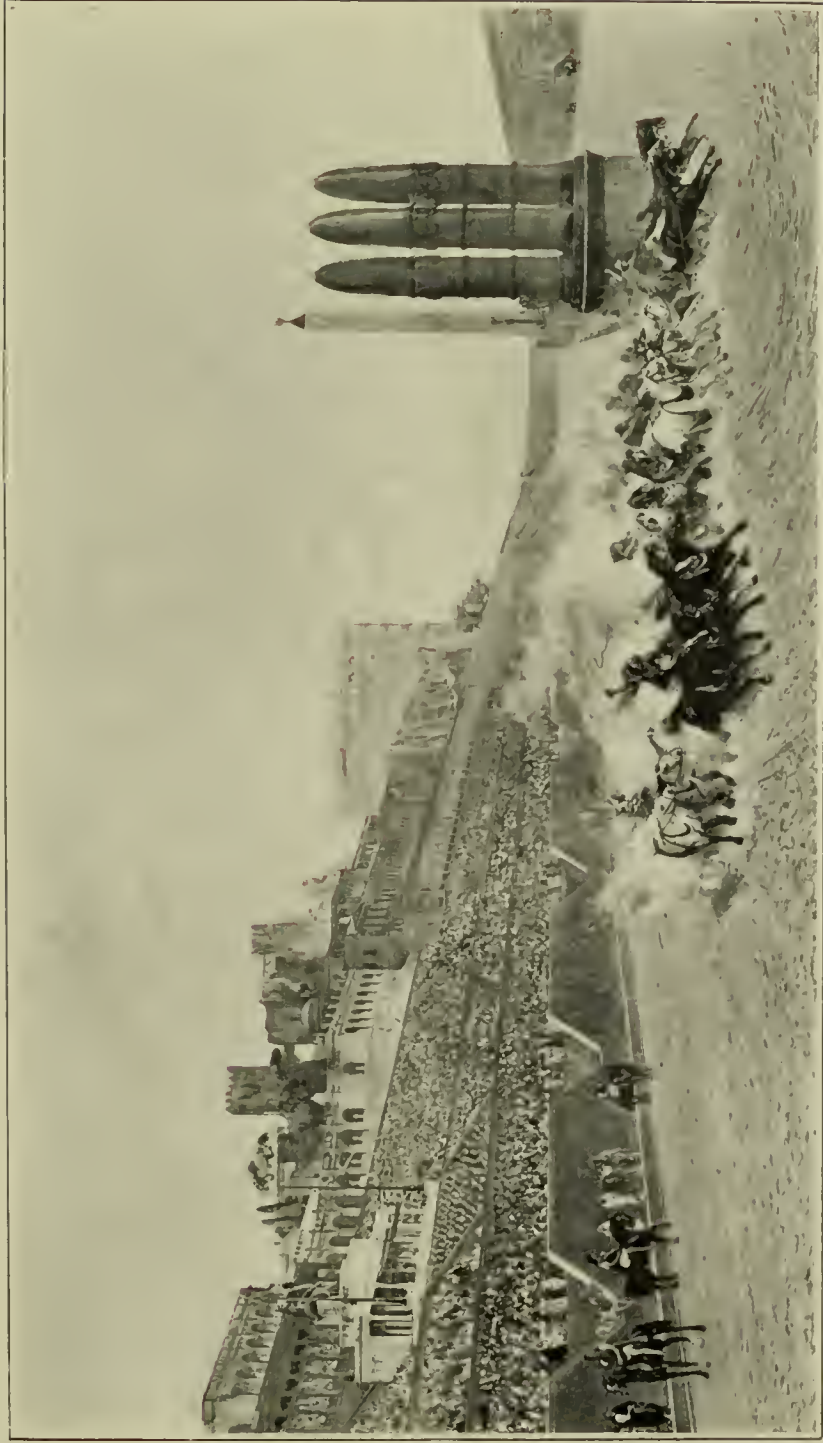
sketch of Gérôme, was so astounded at his vast achievements, that even this facile writer was obliged to treat most of them *en masse*, feeling that to cite merely the names of such masterpieces would be enough, so well are they known to art-lovers all over the world. The period between 1870 and 1890 has been his most prolific one. Working at the same time on many different paintings, it is difficult for the artist himself to give the exact date of the completion of many of his beautiful creations, which were often sold without having been publicly exhibited in his native country, passing directly into private collections abroad. Most of these are souvenirs of his various journeys, for Gérôme is continually on the wing; all are intensely interesting and worthy of detailed description, but owing to their number we are forced to pass some with a very brief outline, and many with mere mention. All of his Oriental themes are taken directly from nature, and give an absolutely faithful idea of the scene or personages represented, and so inexhaustible are his portfolios of sketches, that he can always produce a charming variant of any desired theme and avoid the repetition so distasteful to him. Passing often from one collection to another, the original names of the paintings have been changed, and the same canvas is known under several different titles, necessarily producing much confusion in the lists of his works hitherto compiled. We have given to each work its baptismal name, received from the fountain-head. So inimitable is Gérôme's style and draughtsmanship, however, that there is little danger of any spurious work appearing under his ostensible signature, whereas even his unfinished work bears the unmistakable imprint of this master-hand. A notable proof of this came in a very curious manner to our personal notice, an unfinished and unsigned canvas, abstracted from the artist's atelier during the Franco-Prussian war, having been recognized as his work, thousands of miles from Paris, by a well-known American amateur, the Hon. M. P. Kennard, for many years U. S. Sub-Treasurer of Boston. It was bought by him on faith, and afterward authenticated by the master. As the work in question is the sole example of Gérôme owned by the Art Museum at Boston, the circumstances of its discovery and authentication are of public interest, as verifying the genuineness of this beautiful canvas. Several years ago, while dining in Paris at the hospitable house of Mr. J. Buxton-Latham, a well-known English journalist, the host, in relating some of his exciting experiences during the siege of Paris, mentioned an occurrence which aroused our curiosity and eventually led to the discovery of the missing canvas. After dinner, the following brief outline of the story was jotted down on a card and signed by our host :

“During the first days of October, 1870, I went to Bougival and visited the atelier of M. Gérôme. My companion took away a canvas (nude slave). We

were living with a M. Duerot, a lawyer, No. 8 Place Hoche, Versailles, and he was to have taken charge of the picture till the end of the siege.—J. B. L.”

Armed with this card, we repaired to Gérôme's atelier, where we were then gathering the material for this volume. Leading the conversation back to the time of his hasty flight to England with his family, without giving our reasons, we obtained from him a full description of the canvas on which he had been at work, and which, as he discovered on his return, had been *cut out* of its frame on the easel! Inquiry proved that M. Duerot at Versailles had *not* received the painting in question, and the only clew remaining was that the roving journalist, who had thus easily become the owner of a *chef-d'œuvre*, hailed from Chicago. Owing to the interval that had elapsed since the abstraction of the canvas, its discovery seemed hopeless; but it is always the impossible that happens! The little card was carefully preserved, and exactly seventeen years from the October of 1870, we chanced to be dining again, this time at the house of Dr. Charles Gilman Smith, one of the best known physicians of Chicago. Himself an ardent admirer of Gérôme, it was but natural that the conversation should turn in that direction. By a strange fortune, it happened that we had just related to a little circle in one corner of the drawing-room the story we had heard in Paris, laughingly inquiring if all Chicago journalists were of that stamp. Our host, who had heard nothing of this conversation, joined our circle a few moments later and, with a “By the way—apropos of Gérôme,” that promised much, related to us that some years before he had strolled into an out of the way shop in Chicago, attracted by some bits of bric-a-brac in the window. The owner of the shop, in rummaging behind the counter for some of his wares, dislodged a canvas which unrolled itself upon the floor, and although it was hastily returned to its hiding-place under the counter, the doctor had seen enough, even in the dim light, to arouse his attention. The dealer evaded his questions and declared the canvas was left only on storage. It happened that the Hon. Mr. Kennard was visiting Doctor S. at this very time. Being an ardent lover of the fine arts, his curiosity was also aroused, and the next day he took occasion to stroll down to the shop. Long before our host had finished his story, we had divined that he was unconsciously furnishing the “missing link,” and that the waif was found! The following week we started for Boston, and traced the treasure to its present home in the Art Museum. At Gérôme's request, Mr. Kennard wrote the following account of the circumstances under which he bought the unfinished canvas:

“The story has obtained some circulation that the atelier of Gérôme at Bongival was broken into and sacked by the Germans, or the Communists and ‘petroleuses,’ during the demoralized condition of affairs in the environs of Paris incident to the lamentable Franco-German war. This is erroneous. The report



THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS.

arose, however, from an incident which may be worth relating. Unhappily, the atelier of Gérôme had not that exemption from the possibilities of the war accorded to Bonliens at Fontainebleau and to Ed. Frère at Ecouen, obtained from the German government through the influence of the business agents of those illustrious artists in London. Gérôme had not demanded it. It is, however, now well understood that in an unprotected moment his atelier was entered and a small unfinished canvas surreptitiously carried off.

"Some years subsequently this canvas was discovered in a small art-material and picture shop in a western city of the United States, by a well known Boston gentleman, who instantly recognized the touch of the great master as the canvas was unrolled before him, and who purchased it upon the assurance of its possessor—a German newspaper correspondent—that during the siege of Paris he rescued a number of the works of Gérôme from the action of a mob, and upon depositing these treasures at Versailles, the *authorities there gave him this imperfect work in recognition of this service!* On this canvas one figure only, a female slave, was apparently finished: for the rest, there was simply a foreshadowing of the background, with certain pencilings indicating the perspective design. This history of the wail, found so far away from home, was implicitly believed by its Boston owner till a recent personal acquaintance with the master in Paris revealed the absolute facts. It some time since passed from his possession to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and now hangs upon its walls.

"Its author, pleased that his work should be so readily recognized in a foreign land, and that his canvas had thus fallen into appreciative ownership, yielded to the fortunes of war, and very courteously and generously offered to his newly found friend to authenticate the work with his signature should he desire it."

Mr. E. H. Clement, the accomplished editor of the Boston *Transcript*, wrote at the time of the discovery the following exquisite description of the picture:

"The Hon. M. P. Kennard, of this city, last spring purchased of a picture dealer in a western city a little half-finished painting which has had something of a history. It was represented by the art-dealer that it was a Gérôme, taken from the studio of that famous artist, together with other canvases, to save it from becoming 'loot' for Communards, and subsequently brought to this country by the correspondent of a western paper. The western picture-dealer parted with it for a comparatively moderate price, and Mr. Kennard received his prize here last summer. On being shown to artists and connoisseurs in this city, it was universally pronounced a genuine Gérôme; Gérôme was written in the subject and the execution as plainly as the master's autograph signature could have been attached in a corner. The canvas was about twenty by thirty inches. In the center stood the only figure completed, and that fortunately was finished with all the perfection that characterizes the head of the French school of figure painters. It was a nude Greek or Circassian slave girl, stood up on a dais in a dealer's quarters. The penciled sketches in outline of two or three men were

perceptible around this central subject, which is by some declared to be from the same model that furnished Gérôme's *Phryne* and *Cleopatra*. No description can begin to do justice to the painful beauty and thrilling pathos conveyed in the figure of the shrinking victim. The tristful story was told, not only in the face half hidden by the sidewise bowing of the head, with its rich black locks, upon hand and arm pressed close to breast and cheek; not only in the knitted brow and swollen but tearless eyes and quivering, half-closed mouth, upon which the long drawn out horror and agony had fixed an immovable anguish; but in the



whole tender, brunette-hued form, painted with Gérôme's relentless realistic fidelity to skin and flesh. The whole quivering figure plainly breathed and palpitated the mute suffering of the ordeal, and sent forth a protest against the unnatural indignity too deep for expression save in an equally unnatural patience of dignity and endurance.

"The suggestion was only of the purest, entirely one of sympathy and compassion. The painting was last week placed without note or comment in a private exhibition of artists at the Union League Club in New York. It at once attracted the marked attention it deserved, and was almost unanimously pronounced a genuine Gérôme. It was especially interesting to the artists as showing the master at work, and his peculiar effects in process of development."

After receiving the account from Mr. Kennard, we made another effort to trace the journalist, this time with success; and, on writing to him to ask his confirmation of these facts, we received a lengthy letter, giving full details of the expedition to Bougival. Aware, however, that his statements could easily be verified, he did not venture to assert, as he had previously done, that the

authorities had given the picture to him, but justified his retention of it on the ground that he had assisted in saving other valuable paintings, and with a sublime disregard of the difference between "meum and tuum" he calmly adds that on this occasion he "acquired other interesting mementos, among which are letters from high-standing persons to Gérôme!"

So profoundly was the name of Gérôme honored that the invading Germans and even the riotous hordes of Communists respectfully left his town and country residences and studios untouched, and even voluntarily established a guard over them, and we were not a little chagrined to be obliged to confess to the master that our research had proved one of our own adopted countrymen to be the delinquent!

We refrain from giving



the name of this enterprising German-American, but congratulate the journalistic profession that he has transferred the exercise of his peculiar talents to another sphere, although their loss will hardly be considered a gain by the Chicago Board of Trade!

After passing through several hands this precious fragment was donated, as we have said, to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where we found it carefully "skied," the authorities being unwilling to accord it a prominent place *on its merits*. We were happy, however, to notice that at the recent spring opening, in 1890, of the enlarged Museum, it had obtained its rightful place of honor "on the line," close to a highly finished Meissonier, and, though still lacking the master's signature, it is registered in the catalogue as a Gérôme. Mere sketch as it is, it has been pronounced by more than one connoisseur the gem of the collection.

One of the finest of Gérôme's finished paintings, with this same theme, is *For Sale*, of which we give an illustration. A later variant with the same title has two figures and the droll form of a baboon leaning against a sleeping negress. A less mournful scene from Eastern life is portrayed in the *Souvenir of Cairo*. An almée sits in negligent attitude on a stone settle outside of her house, her hands clasped around one knee and the babouche half slipping from her raised foot. A gauzy veil, only half concealing her truly Oriental face, heightens the beauty which will doubtless be thoroughly appreciated by the approaching soldiers. Her dimpled, bejeweled arm is exquisitely drawn, and the voluminous trousers are most artistically massed about her. A thin spiral of smoke rises from her chibouk, as, with half-closed eyes, she yields herself up to a day-dream which, let us hope, may have a less disastrous ending than that of Alnaschar the Visionary!

A realistic scene is furnished by the *Gun Merchant in Cairo*, a swarthy old Arab in white turban and striped mantle, who, comfortably resting on his cushions behind the low balustrade which separates his booth from the street, is delicately testing with thumb and forefinger the sharpness of a scimitar, while his shrewd, piercing eyes are lifted to the questioning warrior who has paused before the shop, doubtless tempted by the glittering array of arms which cover the walls and dangle from the ceiling, catching and reflecting the light and brightening the otherwise obscure recesses of the booth. A branch of palm is thrust behind a full suit of mail hanging outside of the door, beside which a deliciously ugly Cerberus has mounted guard, and where the inevitable long-stemmed pipe stands ready for a friendly smoke after the bargain shall have been concluded. The gorgeous costume of the helmeted soldier, the coloring and quality of textures and the effects of light and shade are most admirable.

The *Wall of Solomon*, which now forms part of the Mosque of Omar, is a composition remarkable for religious feeling and absolute simplicity. Only a high, weather-beaten wall, with tufts of grass springing here and there from the interstices between the stones, and a group of motionless figures absorbed in prayer or mournful meditation. But what memories attach themselves to this consecrated spot, intensifying, by force of contrast, its present desolation! For the glory of the House of Israel has departed, and the unbeliever desecrates this once Holy Temple of Solomon by the worship of strange gods. Beside the sacred wall, with garments tattered and travel-stained, a weary pilgrim leans his forehead against the cold stones in an attitude of utter abandonment and hopelessness; a little farther on, an old rabbi reads aloud comforting promises from Holy Writ, which are reverentially listened to by a woman clothed from head to foot in spotless white, while an ardent believer, who looks for the literal fulfillment of the Scriptures, peers through a crevice in the wall, if haply he may descry the Prophet whose advent has been so long awaited. Farther still, a fifth, with folded hands and bowed head, is reciting his prayers, and, in the background, another woman, whose face and form are entirely concealed by her ample draperies, stands quite apart, not daring to "raise even so much as her eyes unto Heaven!" In the immediate foreground a typical son of Abraham, with uplifted countenance and concentrated gaze, seems to look also for the literal coming of the Prince of the House of David, before whose presence the hated idolators shall fly like chaff before the whirlwind, and under whose reign the chosen of the Lord shall again chant in peace their praises of the Most High.

The artist has painted another view of this sacred wall with only one old rabbi at his devotions. A sharp contrast to this quaint figure is offered by *A Bashi Bazouk Chief*, a picturesque specimen of a brigand, who has thrown himself down in an indolent attitude on a wooden settle, his left hand resting lightly on

the exquisite carving, while his right grasps the stem of a chibouk. His bronzed features are admirably set off by a huge turban, and the different textures of the rich costume are rendered with the artist's usual fidelity and skill.

A most attractive group is entitled *An Arab and His Dogs*. One smiles in instinctive sympathy with the pleasant-faced Moslem standing in his doorway, and affectionately regarding two superb greyhounds who lift their heads and return his glance with absolutely human intelligence. Aside from the incomparable drawing and plastic pose of these animals, one easily divines the affection that has guided the hand of the master, who has reproduced again, with such startling fidelity, the portraits of his inseparable companions. The graceful attitude of the Arab as he leans against the massively carved door, the various details of the rich costume, the jeweled weapons in the embroidered belt, even the tiles upon the wall, are rendered with the perfect taste inseparable from the least of Gérôme's studies.

A strange mixture of effeminacy and vigor is the *Bischari* with crisp, wavy hair standing out from his head, tawny complexion, heavy eyebrows, dreamy eyes, firm, well-shaped nose, and thick lips, with just a suspicion of mustache, and which, parting, reveal teeth of dazzling whiteness. His mantle, slipping from his shoulder, shows a muscular, well-knit frame. With his shield of hippopotamus-hide slung around his neck, a formidable sword held by a thong passed over his right shoulder, and a sheathed dagger thrust into a leather band around the wrist, he is an adversary by no means to be despised, in spite of the sleepy languor of his glance.

But one lingers longer over the grim-visaged Greek called *Botzaris*. Robed in rich apparel and bristling with costly weapons, he sits on his carven and cushioned chair, somber and listless, gazing moodily into space. Who can divine his thoughts? Does he, like Alexander, sigh only for more worlds to conquer, or has the spirit of modern life, with its weariness and satiety, its melancholy refrain of "*tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse*," penetrated even to this favored country, where gods and goddesses in their immortal and joyous vigor once deigned to consort with humanity? Whatever the tenor of his gloomy reverie, he furnishes a fine *motif* for a picture. The tiled wall, with its dado of matting and little niche containing a jar of odorous spices and rose-leaves, forms a pleasing background, and the minor accessories, such as the pendant saber and cord, the narghilèh with the stem coiled like a huge serpent upon a tray, the rug stretched upon a floor covered with strange arabesques, present a most harmonious *ensemble* of coloring and design.

In the painting *Horses Held by a Slave* we have a characteristic group, upon which the artist stumbled while strolling through the quieter streets in Cairo. Before a door studded with massive nails and iron plaques with heavy rings,

and sheltered by a curiously carved portico, stands an ebony-hued slave swathed in the folds of a snowy burnous. One brawny arm is bare from the shoulder, and in the hand are loosely gathered the bridles of three fleet-footed Arab coursers. The favorite, the "pride of the desert," carefully groomed and richly accoutered, turns his eye to watch for the coming of his owner, whose morning occupation is easily divined by the presence of the fine fowling-piece hanging from the pommel of the saddle. Beyond the deep shadow cast by the overhanging stories of the adjacent buildings, the sun shines warmly through an archway that leads to the narrow street at the left, and, perched up aloft on the tiles of the roof, *en silhouette* against a cloudless sky, a solemn old stork stands on one leg, enjoying to the full a delightful sun-bath. A simple scene, full of light and warmth, and betraying, in spite of its unpretentious realism, the hand of the master in the inimitable draughtsmanship and perfect adjustment of values.

Who does not know the *Circus Maximus*, with its wild, mad rush of gallant steeds through clouds of dust that almost entirely conceal the rumbling chariots and their sinewy-armed drivers, who are urging on the foaming horses by frenzied shout and stinging lash! We hold our breath with the crowd that is massed in this great arena, intently watching the furious onward sweep of these superb animals, who are straining every nerve to gain for their owners the coveted laurel-wreath. Never has Gérôme exhibited his complete mastery of motion more vividly than on this spirited canvas. To the left rises the old palace of the Cæsars, with the theater curving toward the center from which a subterranean passage led to the grand *loge* where the Emperor was wont to sit, surrounded by his favorites. The *septizonium* towers loftily in the background against the delicately outlined hills. The stalls for the chariots, not visible in the foreground, are so placed that no one of the competitors will have any advantage over the rest in reaching the starting-point, which is on the right, parallel to the *meta*, which, with its three towers, marks the goal, and in the interior of which the favor of the gods was invoked before the commencement of the races. To allow sufficient space for the turning of the chariots, the *spina* traverses the arena obliquely and terminates where the half-way point in the course is marked by the second *meta*, the towers of which are barely visible behind the great obelisk, which to-day adorns the Plaza of St. Peter's in Rome. Profound research was necessary for the reconstruction of the vast arena with its imposing architectural entourage; this, with the spirited drawing of the horses, the delicate finish of the miniature-like figures of the spectators, and an astonishing variety of detail, harmonized under the mellow light of late afternoon, form an *ensemble* worthy of the great master, and which places this canvas among the *chefs-d'œuvre* of historical paintings.



LOUIS XIV AND THE GREAT CONDÉ.

More than once it has been said that one involuntarily smiles and sighs with Gérôme. This power extends even to his minor pictures, which often portray only the simplest events in the daily life of the dwellers in the land of the sun. What, for instance, could be more ordinary and less inspiring than the sight of an Old Jewish Merchant, disputing with some Arabs over a common saddle and trappings! Yet what complete and subtle knowledge of race and character is expressed in the drawing of these strange physiognomies, in these postures, in the very turn and bend of the fingers! Look at this Arab with the glittering eyes and regular white teeth, his hands crossed quietly over his sheathed saber and his burnous thrown back, revealing his bronzed neck and chest. One can almost hear the incredulous, mocking laugh that issues from his open mouth. His friend and companion-in-arms, most probably also his aider and abettor in all kinds of mischief, whose left hand firmly grasps the stock of his gun while the fingers of the right are extended and eloquently expressive of figures, is giving vent to a vigorous opinion concerning the merchandise that lies on the ground. A third Arab, the muscular development of whose arm is calculated to inspire one with a certain respect, stands behind his comrades and contents himself for the present with listening attentively to the discussion. The shrewd son of Abraham, far from allowing himself to be intimidated or even moved by the noisy protestations of his clients, leans upon his staff and lifts his hand with a gesture of quiet superiority intended both to repress their vehemence and indicate his entire indifference to their arguments. One can imagine that the articles tossed so carelessly upon the ground have been brought back as a bad bargain, and an indescribable something in the attitude of the old Jew suggests that his indifference is assumed and that he is perfectly and rather uneasily conscious of having over-reached his swarthy customers. Very likely, in accordance with the old maxim "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," he has only succeeded in paying off an old grudge against these wily sons of the desert, whose reputation for upright dealing leaves much to be desired. And on looking more closely at their faces, one is convinced, in spite of their show of righteous indignation, that it is a case of "pot and kettle!"

In *Louis XIV. and the Great Condé*, we have one of Gérôme's effective historical incidents. The staircase in the Palace at Versailles, at the head of which the monarch stood to receive his illustrious visitor, exists no longer, but the Escalier de la Reine is intact and has the same decorations. Owing to an attack of the gout, the Grand Condé ascended the steps slowly and furnished the King with an opportunity for the flattering remark, "'Tis not astonishing, my cousin, that you walk with difficulty, you bear so heavy a burden of laurels." As in *L'Eminence Grise* and the *Molière*, the grouping of the court and the rich costumes furnish graceful contours and warm coloring to this striking scene.

In the *Arabs Crossing the Desert*, we have again the stifling heat, the pitiless glare, the interminable wastes of the wilderness; but this time its monotony is relieved by vivid bits of color and glint of steel, for the tribe of Abou-ben-Adhem has broken camp and is marching across the trackless plain, guided by that strange instinct which rarely betrays the ever wandering Bedouin. The white-bearded patriarch and chief, armed to the teeth and mounted on a thoroughbred,



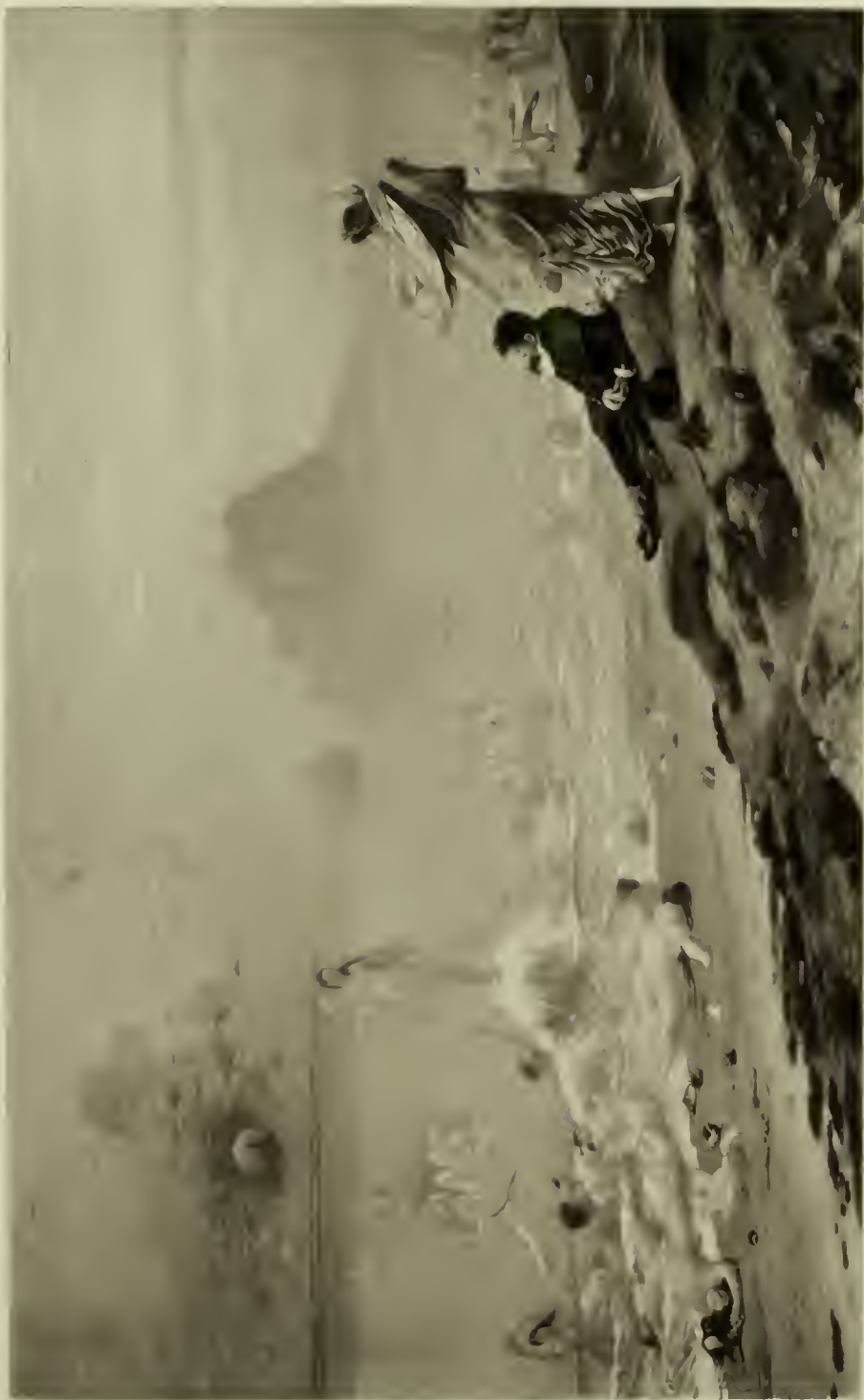
gazes steadily forward as he paces over the shifting sands. His escort ride at his side, their faces sheltered from the heat by the folds of their burnous, but their keen eyes sweeping the horizon with incessant vigilance. To the left, several white-robed figures sway to and fro on their lurching dromedaries, but the greater number march vigorously on foot, seemingly undisturbed by the clouds of dust through which their forms are hazily outlined. This picture is full of life and motion, and the atmospheric effects fully equal the faultless drawing.

The Negro Keeper of the Hounds is a striking type, as he stands surrounded by his superb animals, the effect of his swarthy complexion being heightened by his snow-white turban and the background of dark green cacti and palms. *L'aveugle* is the portrait of a sightless patriarch who came daily with his youthful guide to bring a supply of Nile

water to Gérôme, then encamped close to the Sphinx, on one of his many journeys through Egypt. The picture of *Jean Bart*, a Frenchman who gained renown upon the sea fighting against the English, recalls a droll incident related by Gérôme. On the eve of leaving for Egypt, he employed a few leisure moments in sketching this figure from a favorite model. While thus occupied he received a visitor, Monsieur X., who, after arranging with him a matter of mutual interest, wished him a *bon voyage* and left him, still busily painting. Several months later, Gérôme, arriving at Marseilles on his return, according to custom telegraphed his model, took the night train, and, on reaching his atelier in Paris the next morning, found the fictitious Jean Bart

THE POETS' DREAM

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dressed in his costume and ready to pose. Without delay, the artist seized his brushes and began where he had left off.

His friend Monsieur X., having read in the evening journal the announcement of Gérôme's arrival at Marseilles, hastened to his atelier early in the morning, intending to be there to receive the wanderer. Entering unannounced, his look of joyful anticipation was changed to a stare of surprise on seeing Gérôme quietly painting and Jean Bart in the same posture, with the same expression on his face! His perplexity became positive stupefaction when Gérôme, whose quick wit had seized the possibilities of the situation, instantly began, "As I was saying," and, without looking up, resumed the topic of conversation which had occupied them at their last interview! Utterly mystified, the visitor sank mutely into a chair and listened to the artist, who talked on composedly, while painting, only raising his eyes now and then to glance at his model. Finally his friend could bear the situation no longer. Striking his forehead despairingly, he sprang to his feet and cried, "Tell me, in Heaven's name—have you been in Egypt for six months, or *have I gone mad?*"



A hearty peal of laughter from the master and a hearty embrace relieved his mind of all doubt, and Jean Bart took a holiday, while the two friends went out to a *petit déjeuner*, where they celebrated the safe return of the traveler and the success of his impromptu comedietta!

The *Harem in the Kiosk* is a charming scene with a luminous atmosphere, the favorites of the Sultan being gathered in a picturesque pavilion overlooking the rippling waters of the Bosphorus. In the *Guardians of the Sultan* and the *Grief of the Pasha* (after Victor Hugo) the artist displays his incomparable drawing of wild animals, the lifelessness of the pet tiger being most skillfully rendered. In the *Serpent Charmer*, the pose of the central figure, the convolutions of the great snake, and the varied types and expressions of the fascinated audience, combine to make this one of Gérôme's most remarkable works.

"*Nominor Leo*," another magnificent lion, the artist has presented to the Museum of Fine Arts at Vesoul, his native city, where he is beloved by old and young and where he has numerous pensioners for whose wants he generously provides. The *Flag Makers* is a small canvas remarkable for the classic contour and pose of the figures. *A Chat by the Fireside*, with one figure standing and another crouching by a chimney-place in blue *faïence*, is one of his most effective interiors in coloring, grouping, and textures, and in *Au Arnaut Smoking*, and blowing the smoke into the nostrils of a superb dog, we have one of his best examples of this *genre*. These two pictures were especial favorites with the artist. Other phases of his talent are shown in *Waiting* (one figure, epoch of the Restoration), *A Bacchante*, *Seigneur Louis XIII.*, *A Retiarius*, *A Gallic Gladiator*, *Mademoiselle Lili* (a portrait of a daughter of Dumas), *Pas commode* (ancient officer), *Cave Canem* (Roman prisoner of war chained), *Portrait of the Artist's Daughter with her Dog*, *Personnage—Louis XIII.*, *Portrait of Baudry*, and *Portrait of M. Rattier* (view from his villa, with Gérôme and daughter coming up the avenue). Besides the paintings we have already described in detail, a *Bashi Bazouk Drinking*, *Egyptian Café*, *Young Greeks at the Mosque*, *Treading out the Groin in Egypt*, *The Sentinel at the Sultan's Tomb*, *Dante*, *Almées Playing Chess in a Café*, *Diogenes*, *The Runners of the Pasha*, *Cairene Horse Dealer*, *The Albanians with their Dog*, *A Game of Chess* (interior), *A Duo* (Arnaut and bird), *Moorish Bath No. 2*, *The Tulip Folly* and the *Relay of Hounds in the Desert*, are among those best known to the public through reproduction by photogravure. Less familiar are a *Bashi Bazouk* (from near Smyrna), *Cairene Butcher*, *Arnaut Chief*, *Almée of Cairo*, *Greek Woman*, *Casting Bullets* (interior), *Call to Prayer*, *Woman of Constantinople* (lower design on wall in background), *Music Lesson* (Arnaut and Raven), *Cairene Merchant*, *Arnaut with two Dogs*, *Greek Smoking a Chibouk*, *Cairene Women*, *Arnaut in front of his Tent*, *Conversation by a Stove*, *The Standard Bearer*, *Bashi Bazouk* (high turban, hanging ornaments, thick lips), *Reading of the Koran in a Mosque*, *Woman of Constantinople* (seated), *Woman of Constantinople* (standing), *Prayer at Bronssa*, *Egyptian Recruiting Officer* (on a donkey), *Armenian Lady* (veiled, beautiful face and hands), *Field of Rest* (cemetery of Green Mosque at Bronssa), *Almée at her Door* (smoking cigarette), *Study of a Jewess*, *Butcher of Jerusalem*, *Arnauts before the Door* (one playing on mandolin), *Syrian Shepherd*, *Return of the Lion to his Den*, *Greek Herdsman* (playing on flute), *Black Panther on the Watch* (belongs to M. Théophile Gautier), and *Winand Foking* (drinking curaçao in Holland, admirable effects of light after the manner of the Dutch masters).

In 1883 Gérôme completed one of his most famous works, which needs no further comment than that furnished by the following letter, sent with the canvas to its owner, Mr. W. T. Walters, of Baltimore :

"*My Dear Sir:* I send you a few notes about my picture *The Christian Martyrs' Last Prayer*, which you have bought. I regret to have made you wait for it so long, but I had a difficult task, being determined not to leave it until I accomplished all of which I was capable. This picture has been upon my easel for over *twenty* years. I have repainted it from the beginning *three* times; have rehandled and rechanged both the effect and the composition, always, however, preserving my first idea. This, therefore, is really the third canvas which you receive.

"The scene is laid in the Circus Maximus, which might readily be mistaken for an amphitheater, as in the picture only the end of the circus, and not the straight sides, is visible. But you will see on the left the meta, which ends the spina, and is the goal around which the chariots made their turns in the races, as I have indicated by the tracks of the wheels in the sand. The Circus Maximus was one of the mightiest monuments ever built. It held more than one hundred and fifty thousand spectators. Its left touched the Palace of the Cæsars, whence a subterranean passage led directly to the Emperor's loge. In the time of the Cæsars Christians were cruelly persecuted, and many were sentenced to be devoured by wild beasts.

"This is the subject of my picture.

"As they were religious enthusiasts, to die was a joy, and they cared little for the animals, their only thought being to remain firm to the last. And rarely indeed was there found a case of apostasy. The Roman prisons were terrible dungeons, and Christians, being often long confined before the sacrifice, when led into the circus were emaciated by disease and covered only with rags. Their hearts alone remained strong, their faith alone remained unshaken. In the middle distance I have placed those destined to be burned alive. They were usually tied upon crosses and smeared with pitch to feed the flames. Alluding to this, Tacitus says, 'These Christians should certainly be put to death, but wherefore smear them with pitch and burn them like torches?' His sympathy, however, went no further. It was the custom to starve the wild beasts for several days beforehand, and they were admitted to the arena up inclined planes.

"Coming from the dark dens below, their first action was of astonishment upon facing the bright daylight and the great mass of people surrounding them.

"They did then, as does to-day the Spanish bull when turned into the arena: entering with a bound, he suddenly halts in the very middle of a stride.

"*This moment I have sought to represent.*

"I consider this picture one of my most studied works, the one for which I have given myself most trouble.

"Is it a success?"

Very truly,

"J. L. GÉRÔME."

In this year appeared also *La Danse Pyrrhique*, which united in a most amazing manner many of the artist's best qualities. Careful study will reveal, at every instant, hidden beauties which escape notice at a first glance, so harmoniously adjusted are all the values. It is greatly to be regretted that the accompany-

ing illustration cannot render the fine coloring of this canvas. This was soon followed by the *Danse du Bâton*, in which the lithe, beautiful almée uses a staff instead of a saber. The wonderful effects of light and motion in these exquisite canvases testified that the master's incomparably skillful hand was daily acquiring new and more subtle power. In 1884 we find the following notice in the London *Athenæum*:

"No painter has been more heartily welcomed on his return to the Salon than M. Gérôme. He has this year favored the world with two remarkable works. In his *Slave Sale at Rome*, the leading figure, that of a young female slave, is standing on a lofty platform, so placed that not one feature escapes the light and the eyes of the shouting crowd of bidders, whose extended hands indicate their eagerness and their admiration of her beauty. Each hand is a study of character and, so to say, biographical of its owner, not only in its peculiar form, but in its action. Few of the men's faces are shown, and of their bodies only the shoulders covered by variously colored garments. Wonderful skill and care have been expended on the modeling of the virginal figure; over every contour, line, and changing hue, the artist's pencil has lingered so that no part is incomplete. Immense study has been expended upon the foreshortening of the limbs. Her right arm is raised to shade her face from the glaring light. Conscious of her fate and careless of her nakedness, devoid of that *coquetterie* which every French painter except M. Gérôme attributes to all the daughters of Eve, her air, attitude, and expression are those of an antique statue. The shadow of her arm is her only covering, and out of that her glance reveals retrospection of the home which is broken, but not a gleam of hope for the future. Here lies not a little of that deeper pathos of M. Gérôme's design, which illustrates Greek recklessness of fate and willful blindness to the future. Nevertheless, her people are here. By the side of the desk on our right stands the girl's mother in a black toga, holding a babe, and nearer still are three naked children. The oldest of them squats on the platform, her chin resting on her knees, which both her arms embrace, while in a stolid way she gazes into vacancy beyond the crowd, and waits her turn to stand where her sister is, and be sold. The bold, hard-featured Roman who sells the family wears a yellow toga with a red *trabea*. He stoops by the side of his human chattel, toward the crowd, while with one hand outstretched he replies vociferously to the bidders. Clerks of the market seated at the desk and a second group of slaves complete the design."

"*Night in the Desert* [continues the *Athenæum*] is a calm, moonlit scene near a pool, where a huge tigress lies at ease, like a grand Egyptian statue, upon the sand, and seems to purr with grim content, while not far off her two cubs gambol. The picture is full of sentiment, and it has a vague grandeur due to the vastness of the landscape and its simple forms, which, although but half visible, loom up in the uniform, almost shadowless twilight of the moon."

A Roman Slave-Market, which was finished about this time, but not sent to the Salon, shows the reverse side of the *Slave Sale at Rome*—the faces of the



NIGRO KLEPER OF HOUNDS

bidder, with all their variety of lineament and expression, while that of the beautiful slave is turned aside. It is almost as effective and pathetic as the first canvas.

It was in this year, in celebration of Gérôme's sixtieth birthday, that Chaplain, engraver in metals, executed his famous bronze medallion portrait of the artist, an admirable woodcut of which was made for the *Century Magazine* of February, 1889, by a well-known American artist and former pupil of Gérôme, Wyatt Eaton. The same number contains other engravings after Gérôme, several of which are worthy to be cut out and framed, especially those executed by Henry Wolf, an Alsatian, we believe, who begged the favor of reproducing the masterpieces of his illustrious countryman. Gérôme, in turn, pronounced Wolf's work, especially in *L'Edipe*, to be the finest he had ever seen, and was delighted to find that the engraver was a Frenchman.

Gérôme sent but one canvas to the Salon of 1885, but it aroused the most enthusiastic admiration for the amazing and evidently steadily increasing powers of this veteran of sixty; it is probably the most remarkable of his pictures in this *genre*. We well remember strolling through the Palais de l'Industrie, on a gloomy, rainy morning, that reminded one of London, and suddenly exclaiming, "The weather must be clearing!" But the sound of the steady downpour soon undeceived us and we found that the warm light shone out from a large *canvas* on the opposite side of the room. It seemed to fill the whole gallery with its sunny rays, so wonderful was the refraction from the great pool of water and the rising vapor. The London *Athenæum* says:

"The *Grande Piscine de Brouse* is a larger work than M. Gérôme usually gives us, with more figures, and not less elaborate than his wont. The scene is the interior of a vast Romanesque octagon of stone; its solid arcaded walls are fixed with seats in the recesses, and, in front, a wide platform of colored stones incloses the bath proper. The place is illuminated by brilliant rays of sunlight which, entering by openings in the solid roofs and traversing the vapor-laden atmosphere of the building, strike the floor to be reflected on the numerous nude or half-nude bathers who sit on benches, loiter with their feet in the water, swim, or stride on high clogs across the pavement. A tall, fair maiden, thus mounted and leaning on the shoulder of a black attendant, crosses the place with unsteady steps. This young bather is one of the best figures M. Gérôme has ever painted, so clear, firm, elastic, and rosy. It is exquisitely drawn and modeled with the utmost choiceness, refinement, and research. Some of the minor figures also have all these charms of delicacy, vitality, and grace. The best group sits on a bench on our right in the mid-distance and is illuminated by cool, direct rays—still others by warm, reflected light."

The illustration we give conveys but a faint idea of the beauty of this canvas.

About this time appeared also that grandest of all his desert scenes, *Les Deux Majestés*, which has been described in an early part of this volume. These two paintings are well calculated, in their absolute dissimilarity, to emphasize the varied and perfected powers of the artist.

The year 1886 was again a most memorable one. Our readers will remember the encampment in the desert where Lenoir, heading the merry crew, started before daybreak to make the ascent of the Great Pyramid with

the assistance of their Arabs, leaving the master alone to watch the shadows melt away and the unimpressionable mass of stone in these eternal monuments blush under the *First Kiss of the Sun*. The canvas which reproduces this perfect scene appeared at the Salon of 1886. Says the *Athenæum*, "Simple as it is, this picture is grand and poetical," and Mrs. Stranahan writes, "The

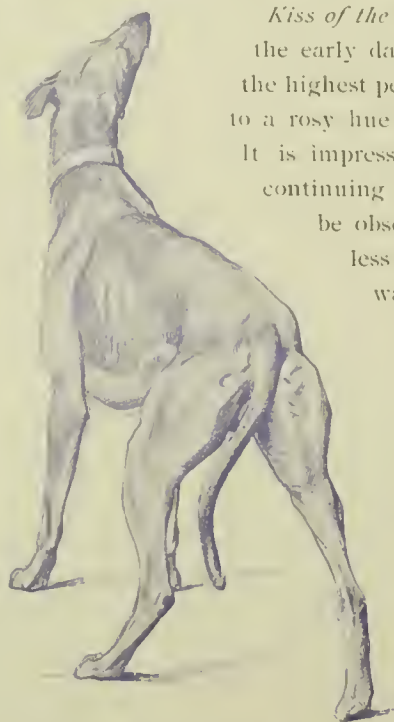
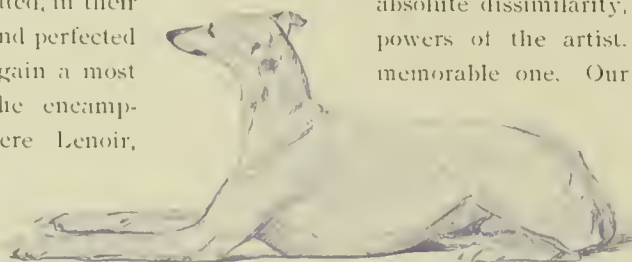
Kiss of the Morning Sun is full of poetry. "In the hush of the early dawn a caravan lies sleeping in the desert, as the highest peaks of the Pyramids and the Sphinx are turned to a rosy hue by the first rays, the kiss, of the rising sun.

It is impressively suggestive of the processes of nature continuing with their full effects of beauty, whether there be observers or not, even while man sleeps regardless of the rare and passing instant."

But Gérôme was not the one to sleep away the hours when Nature reveals herself to her true worshippers in her loveliest moods, one of which he has reproduced for us in this exquisite landscape. Charming as it is, it was almost eclipsed by another desert scene, the famous *Edipus*, which we have also sketched in the early portion of this work. The London *Athenæum* writes as follows :

"As M. Gérôme's pictures depend greatly on the expression and character of their landscapes, we shall notice them in the present connection among the other

landscapes with figures. No. 1042 is named *Edipus*, and gives us Napoleon on horseback before the Sphinx, which is a prominent object on the vast plateau where, in squadrons and lines, dark-blue masses of the French army are seen as



far as the eye can reach. The time is late afternoon, when the sun is well on the north. Beyond the margin of our picture, on our left, the Emperor's guards are assembled, but only their shadows are distinct on the sands in front. The execution of this picture is so minute and veracious that the effect is stereoscopic. The delineation of the enormous Sphinx could hardly be more striking; it gives a shadow of a clear sapphire blue on those contours which face the sky, and shows them to be brown where they front the ruddy or the yellow earth, the local color of the stones being, of course, a pale brown. The modeling is as solid as in a photograph. The foreshortening of the outlines of the shadows, as they lie on the varying surfaces of the statue, could hardly have been studied with greater delicacy. Napoleon's figure, and that of his beautiful horse, are quite like miniatures, and have been depicted with the same research which is apparent elsewhere; his air and face inform us that he is demanding of the statue the answer it has given to none."



In connection with this canvas the following extract from a letter to a friend is interesting:

"To reply to your question as to the Sphinx, I made his acquaintance a long time ago; I was camping all alone near the Pyramids, with my cook and my dragoman. I lodged under a large tree where, in spite of the great heat, for it was in the month of May, I was very comfortable. I was at the gate of the desert; the cultivated lands end just there and the desert begins, consequently I made sketches of everything that surrounded me; the Sphinx, the Pyramids, the sandy plains, which from this point extend far into Africa. I did not know beforehand what I was going to do with these studies, nor with all the others that I have brought back from my travels. It is only later that ideas come; there is an unconscious labor in the brain and, suddenly, they are born! At least, so it is with me, and I suppose the same thing happens to many others."

In an original pen-and-ink sketch of the *Edipus*, the Eagle is proudly perched upon the Sphinx, as if to imply the absolute dominion of the First Consul. In the painting, this feature does not appear. The fortunate owner of the sketch saw this remarkable canvas for the first time under circumstances which reveal so evidently, as in the story of "*Jean Bart*," the master's love of a practical joke and his skill as *comédien*, that we venture to reproduce this scene in the artist's atelier, quoting from the original version of the episode:

"The talk one morning turns to the Salon of 1887 and the preceding year, and a much desired opportunity comes to me.

"Do you know where your pictures go when they are sold?' I ask, as he leans back among the cushions, this time really smoking, not matches, but a simple brierwood pipe.

"Sometimes, but rarely beyond the first purchaser, if they change hands.'

"But don't you care to know?' I persist.

"When they are finished, they are finished,' he replies, with a shrug of his shoulders, 'and there is an end of them as far as I am concerned. But why do you ask?'

"Because there is one I have not yet seen, and cannot trace, but which I am determined to find if I have to make a special pilgrimage.'

"Ah—and that is—'

"*L'Edipe, Bonaparte before the Sphinx*, which you exhibited at the Salon in 1886. I was not here, and I have only seen a wretched woodcut of it; but the idea, the composition, made so deep an impression on me that it haunts me.'

"There is a sudden flash from the slumbrous eyes.

"*Tiens! C'est curieux!*'

"What is strange?'

"Everything in life,' is the sage reply, 'But I find it especially strange that I should happen to know where this very picture is at this moment.'

"I spring up in excitement.

"Tell me where? Is it here in Paris? Is it far away? Where shall I find it? Tell me, quickly!'

"*Touons—voyons! Soyez tranquille!* It is here in Paris, just around the corner. It belongs to one of my friends, and you shall see it as soon as you like.'

"I begin to draw on my gloves.

"I will go at once, and you, *cher Maître*, you will write a line to say "Please admit bearer to see the *Sphinx!*" Make haste, oh, *please make haste!*'

"My impatience has no effect on the imperturbable smoker, who regards me steadily, a very sphinx himself, with the addition of an amused twinkle in the enigmatic eyes.

"A card is not necessary. You have simply to ask, and you can see it. You may say I sent you.'

"Oh, truly! I think I see myself demanding to enter private apartments,

and saying, "*Gérôme sent me!*" It is likely that I would be admitted! What objection can you have—it will take but a second! Come, here is paper, ink, a pen!

"Thus I plead, not a little surprised that it should be necessary, so quick is this generous nature to respond to the slightest appeal. Finally he rises, but instead of going to the writing-table, he crosses the room to a corner where hang his coat and hat. Ah, the good master! he is going to accompany me himself! I seize my parasol and, in obedience to a gesture, hasten toward him. But to my astonishment, instead of passing into the hall, he turns a brass knob till then unnoticed by me, and a door in the wall swings back, revealing a dim passage. A courteous wave of the hand invites me to enter. Not daring to question, I step in, followed by my host, grave and mute as the *Memnon and Sesostris* who guard this mysterious, movable panel which closes noiselessly behind us. The sudden transition from the bright atelier to the obscurity of this narrow gallery confuses me and I stand irresolute, till a light touch on my shoulder urges me forward. My heart beats with eager anticipation of, I know not what, but assuredly it will be something delightful! I advance, step by step, turning to the right, to the left, then sharply to the right again, and my outstretched hand strikes an obstacle.

"'A door!' I whisper.

"' *Ebbèn! ouvrez!*' There is a quiver of suppressed merriment in the voice.

"I grope for the handle and turn it. Darkness still. A faint perfume hangs in the air, and my foot sinks in a luxurious rug. In mingled enjoyment of this mystery and impatience to end it, I cry:

"'Where are we?'

"The words have scarcely escaped me, when I hear the harsh grating of a bolt, the shutters are thrown back, and a flood of light falls upon the *Sphinx!*

"' *Eh bien!*' The master sits quietly in a chair, enjoying his little plot; for he, himself, is the owner of the painting which is truly 'just around the corner,' and the obscure passage turns out to be a plain everyday corridor, which runs along his ateliers and connects the rooms where he stores costumes, books, casts, etc., with his own apartments, darkened to keep out the summer heat and glare, and in one of which hangs the long-sought-for *Edipus*.

"'It is for my children,' says the artist. 'I would never sell it. I love it too well. We are old friends,' he adds, rising and passing his hand affectionately over the mass of yellow stone. It is impossible, while looking at it, to think of *paint and canvas!*

"And then he falls to describing his life in the desert, alone, in the twilight and the early dawn, under the blazing sun and in the midnight stillness, with this mysterious being who has revealed to him 'marvelous things.'

"I can well believe it!

"After this, the little door stands always open to me, and I slip in often alone, to look at this masterpiece, which, with its tender tones, renders the Orient so much more faithfully than the flaming canvases of other painters of

Eastern subjects. And as I study these inscrutable features, I fancy that I catch, now and then, a fleeting, semi-ironical smile which seems to say, 'Why search elsewhere? Behold in *me* all *mystery* and the *key* thereof!' I speak of this to the master. He replies quietly, '*Mais, sans doute!*' and smiles at the Sphinx, who positively returns his glance! There is certainly an understanding between them!"

In November, 1886, Gérôme finished another well-known painting, *La Porte des Boulets*, now in the Powers Art Gallery at Rochester, N. Y. The following letter from the artist to Mr. Powers accompanied the canvas:

"*Dear Sir:* Excuse me for not writing to you in English, but I only know two words of that language, 'yes' and 'no'! As you see, my vocabulary is very small, and does not permit me to express my thoughts. Your picture was finished to-day. I have given great care to it in the hope of pleasing you, and I trust you will find it altered to its advantage. When you honored me with your visit, only a few of the figures were drawn, and the principal ones were not finished. It is sent to you in a very bad state, like all the work that goes out of an artist's studio, that is to say, that it is covered with spots and blotches that will disappear in the *varnishing*. I took pains *not* to varnish it because it is freshly painted, and that would have been disastrous in the future. Do not pass judgment on it for the present; wait until it is varnished, for it will be completely changed, but do not submit it to this operation before two months. By that time it will be completely dry.

"The scene is laid at the Gate of Bab-el-Zouel, which ends the large bazaars of Cairo. This place is always filled with people of all countries. One sees here fellahs, Jews, inhabitants of the borders of the Red Sea, people from Central Africa and Abyssinia, men from the Soudan, traveling merchants, purchasers, loungers, and Europeans. It is the liveliest sight in the city.

"The two personages dressed in white are runners, or *saïs*, who precede a pasha on horseback. Riders have always one or two *saïs*, who clear the way and who hold the horse when they go into a house or shop. Formerly there were only two means of locomotion, asses and horses; carriages did not exist. Then the number of *saïs* was large, but to-day, as there are many vehicles, they have singularly diminished, but still a few remain.

"Contrary to my usual custom, and to accede to your wish, I have signed this picture *twice*, the first time with my *name*, and the second time with my *portrait*, in the right-hand corner, the person dressed in blue. On my head there is a green turban, to which I have no right, because only those who have returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca may wear it. It is true that I have been very near that holy city! This work is therefore doubly authenticated, and I shall be pleased to meet your approval.

"Please accept, sir, with my cordial salutations, the avowal of my best sentiments.

"J. L. GÉRÔME."



THE HARI M IN THE KIOSK

Two other superb canvases, finished this year for a personal friend of the artist, Mr. Elbridge T. Gerry, of New York, were *L'Entrée du Taureau* and *La Terrasse du Sérail*, which are ranked by Gérôme as two of his best works. They are certainly triumphs of color, pose, and light; never has the master displayed to better advantage in small figures his inimitable draughtsmanship than in the lithe, well-knit bodies of the toréadors in the first picture and the graceful forms of the harem beauties in the second, which presents a faithful reproduction of the interior of the Old Palace at Constantinople.

In this same year Gérôme, who was then at work on the statue of *Omphale*, conceived the idea of reproducing on canvas the unfinished figure as it looked at the close of the day's labor. He has produced a most effective scene called *The End of the Séance*, showing his model flinging wet cloths over the statue to keep the clay from drying, while the sculptor himself bends over a pail of water and wrings out the linen bandages. The contours and pose of the model are replete with grace, delicacy, and strength, and the arrested action is startling in its realism. The posture of the artist also is eminently novel and interesting. At the Salon of 1887 appeared *Omphale*, of whose beauty we have already endeavored to give some idea. Masson writes of this exquisite creation: "Gérôme has found also in sculpture that which he has so long sought for and found in painting—beauty and grace. He himself has bestowed *the informing idea*." Placed in the garden of the Palais de l'Industrie, its charm was heightened by the near neighborhood of that terrible and powerful group entitled *The Gorilla*, executed by Gérôme's intimate friend Frémiet, who this year obtained the Medal of Honor.

Although the master had seriously undermined his health by uninterrupted labor, having worked on the *Omphale* many days from seven in the morning till eleven at night, he did not permit himself any rest, and this year he produced also two remarkable and very finished canvases, *The Carpet Merchant* and *The Rose*, both of which were immediately acquired for American collections, where, indeed, the greater number of his masterpieces may be found to-day. In letters to a friend, received during the autumn and winter of 1887 and 1888, there is the same record of unremitting toil, betraying in and between the lines the unflagging energy of this man of indomitable will, under the most trying circumstances of mental and physical suffering. Even when he refers to his own cares and anxieties, there is no trace of egotism, and his generous heart, burdened by personal griefs, interests itself for the poor and needy, the sick and suffering, be they in want of succor and comfort for body or soul. To divert their minds, he forces himself often to be gay. Always inspiring, always uplifting, he leads the way by precept and practice, in the struggle toward the ideal. We translate several passages from these letters

in the hope of stimulating the ambition of students and workers in every sphere of usefulness, and encouraging them to accomplish truly serious and conscientious work, whatever the difficulties and drawbacks of their environment.

In May, 1887, writing of a young artist in whom he had expressed a deep interest, he says :

"I had advised young F—— not to go to Spain, but to remain here in order to study seriously. I regret that he did not listen to me, so much the more since I learn by your letter of his unfortunate journey. It is money, and above all, *time lost*. I am much pleased to know that he is busy, and trust his work is serious, with an eye to his future. When he decides to return to Paris, you may rest assured that I will interest myself to the utmost to serve him and to be useful to him in every possible way. I regret that he did not long since carry out his intention of returning to France. It is here that one finds all that one needs in order to pursue truly *anstere* studies, which re-echo through the entire career of an artist—*for good principles inculcated in a young mind are never effaced.*"

In June, he writes from Bougival :

"I am in my atelier in the country, working in the open air, getting ready for the winter. I endeavor to console myself by *incessant labor* for the misfortune which has befallen me and which always weighs heavily upon me. . . . To amuse you a little, I send you a bit of verse that I have made about the sketch I had the honor to show you the last time you came to my atelier.

"L'ESPRIT ET LA BÊTE.

"Le Poète est assis mollement sur la grève,
À l'heure où le soleil va se coucher ; il rêve.
La Muse l'a touché ; la Muse lui fait voir
Tous les *Dieux de la Mer*, comme dans un miroir.

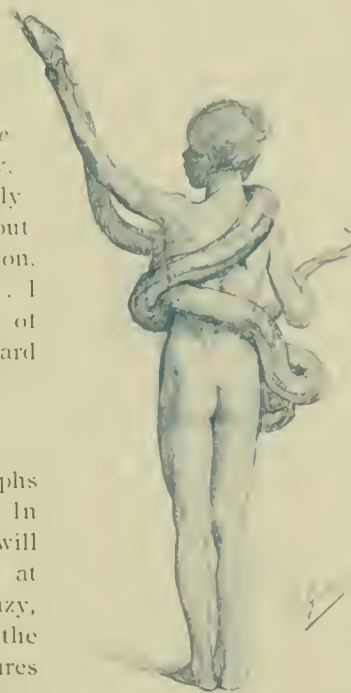
Émergeant de l'écume, c'est *Venus Astarte*,
Pivot fécond, sur qui tourne l'humanité ;
Neptune, sur son char au cavalles humides,
Les *Tritons*, les *Dauphins*, les blanches *Néréides* ;
Le *Cyclope*, au repos sur les monts soureilleux,
Icare, déplumé, tombant du haut des cieux,
Les *Sirènes* perfides, *Protée*, gardant ses phoques,
Glancus, *Melicerte*, et les monstres baroques ;
Le vieux *Nérée*, la tête ceinte du nénuphar,
Et *Phabus*, dans les flots précipitant son char.

Il n'est déjà plus jour, il n'est pas encore nuit.
La vision s'efface, le rêve se finit !
Les *Dieux* ont disparu, pour ne plus se montrer ;
'*Ah ! j'ai grand faim,*' dit l'Homme— *il est temps de rentrer !*'"

The sense of the ridiculous and love of abrupt contrast which are to be found in many of the master's paintings crop out in the last line of this impromptu "Envoi"—which reminds one of Heine, in its unexpected *dénoûment*.

In September, he writes :

"I am very much behindhand—forgive me. For some time I have been greatly oppressed with sorrow and melancholy—a sort of nostalgia. I have no courage to do anything, and do not like to burden others with my weaknesses. . . . I have just returned from a short journey to the shores of the Mediterranean, where I made some studies of the sea which I need for a picture I am painting. And here I am again installed in Paris, preparing work for the winter *for it is work alone which satisfies the mind and consoles the heart*. . . . One cannot, in the course of a day, entirely re-create one's self. Still, one must not feebly succumb, but resist to the utmost; not yield without a struggle, but always seek to regain full self-possession. *The spirit should always dominate the flesh*. . . . I shall send you some photographic reproductions of some of my paintings and will keep you posted in regard to my future work."



In October, he writes :

"I have just sent you a collection of photographs of some of my pictures. I hope you will like them. In any event, I shall esteem myself happy if you will receive them favorably and occasionally glance at them. . . . I have begun again to work with frenzy, to forget my grief and melancholy. Since I had the pleasure of seeing you I have finished several pictures which have gone to your country, and I have begun several others which will probably follow the same route. I also have a mind to model another figure in order not to lose time during the months of November and December, when the light is too poor to paint, but sufficient to model in clay."

In November, he writes :

"We are having days so gloomy that one might imagine one's self in England, and it is almost impossible to work. Nevertheless, I keep at it desperately, and expect to *fight on to my last breath!*"

In December, 1887 :

"Your letter just received. I hasten to reply. You are giving yourself too much trouble for me; I am not worth it. I fear your conversation with

the editor of — can have no effect, for journals and reviews often *follow* the taste of the public, instead of *directing it*, and they are obliged to reflect the opinions of their readers, otherwise their articles would not be read! And when one is a journalist, one must take care of the subscribers! As to this question of *nudity*, it is useless to argue about it in your country. Many people who are not better than others desire to *appear* so. They are simply *Jesuits!* The *nude, in itself*, is not indecent—but the manner in which it is rendered *may be so*, through the evil intention which has guided its execution. Are the *Venus of Milo*, the *Venus of Medici*, etc., *immodest statues?* On the contrary, nothing could be more chaste; and often certain figures, dressed in a certain manner, are more calculated to awaken improper ideas than figures which are entirely nude.

“It is not the nude,” says Diderot, “that is indecent; it is the *retroussé.*” And he was right. . . . As to my *method of teaching*—it is very simple, but this simplicity is the result of long experience. The question is to lead young people into a straightforward, true path; to provide them with a compass which will keep them from going astray; to habituate them to *love Nature* (the *true*), and to regard it with an eye at once intelligent, delicate, and firm, being mindful also of the plastic side. Some know how to copy a thing and will reproduce it almost exactly; others put into it poetry, charm, power, and make of it a work of art. The first are *workmen*, the second are *artists*. An abyss separates the *mason* from the *architect!* To-day, in this epoch of moral and intellectual disorder, there seems to be a sovereign contempt for those who seek to *elevate* themselves, to move the spectator, to have some imagination; for those who are not content to remain fettered to the earth, dabbling in the mud of realism! It is to-day the fashion, to which all the world sacrifices, because it is only granted to a few to have a well-balanced mind, and because it is easier to paint *three fried eggs* than it is to execute the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel! But all this will pass like a shadowy phantom, and it need not make us uneasy. As Lamartine says:

“Le cygne qui s'envole aux voûtes éternelles,
Amis, s'informe-t-il si l'ombre de ses ailes,
Flotte encore sur un vil gazon?”

[Does the swan who wings his flight toward the eternal vaults, question whether the shadow of his wings still floats o'er the sward below?]

“The method of instruction should above all tend to protect the young mind from the influx of these paltry sentiments, which, having generated here, have crossed the Atlantic, and are in a fair way to infect America. I claim the honor of having waged war against these tendencies, and shall continue to combat them, but what can one do against the current? A young painter, who begins his career, has need of great strength of soul not to be swept away by it, and even those who resist cannot entirely ascend against these rapids, but suffer in a certain measure from their influence. Yet I am far from being a *retardataire*, an exclusive, and I have always loved all experiment, all effort,

in whatever direction; these indicate in a country a *force of expansion*. I love *movement*, for *movement is life*. Only, these revolutions should be made by people of talent, who have understanding and knowledge, and I must say that many painters of the modern school, the impressionists, the *plein-air-istes*, the independents, etc., are more or less *fumistes*, some of them humbugs, and some, ignorant as carps! To-day, when a work is insipid and badly executed—badly drawn, badly painted, and stupid beyond expression—it stands a good chance of being a success, since it is *on a level with those who admire it!* To-day when one walks through the halls of the Exposition at Paris, one is struck first by the *great number* of works produced—works which often have not cost their authors any great pains in any respect, either as to subject or execution. The *Common-place* is in honor, and *Poetry* has fled to the skies! Will she ever descend again?"

Later he says:

"I send you, with this, a letter written some time ago apropos of the thirty per cent. duty placed on works of art on their entry into the United States of America. It has been printed in some American journal, I do not know which one. Thanks for all the trouble you take for me, of which I am unworthy. . . ."

". . . . In writing these reflections on the subject of the thirty per cent. duty imposed on foreign works of art on their entry into the United States, I regret that I am not of American nationality; for, being a Frenchman and suffering from this measure, my opinion may not appear disinterested. It is none the less so, however, for I am accustomed, when I have to pronounce judgment, to eliminate my personality. I will give you, then, my views in all frankness, without prejudice, with entire freedom.

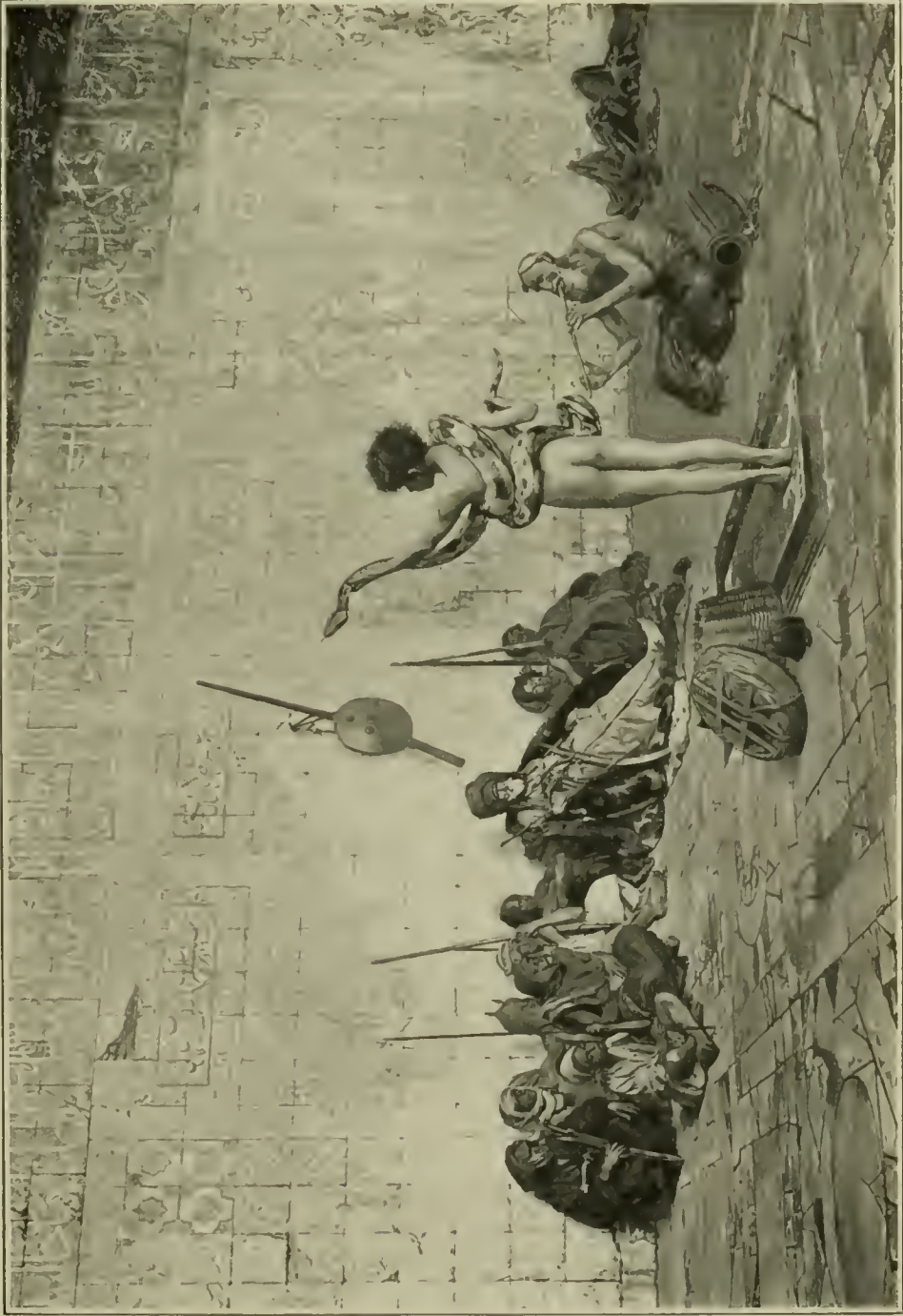
"What is the *object* of this measure? What will be the *result*? Will it *enrich the Treasury*? Will it *benefit American painters*? The reply to these last two questions can only be negative. In the immense revenue of the United States, the sum gained by this entry-tax on paintings,—whose number will inevitably be diminished by this species of prohibition,—will be as a drop of water in the sea, and your vast country, so rich through its agricultural and industrial products, will make but a few dollars more. As to the sale of the works of indigenous painters, it will be no more and no less active than in the past; if they are *good*, they will find purchasers, for the taste of Americans is already singularly well cultivated, and they only seek works of art desirable on account of their invention and good execution, without troubling themselves as to the nationality of the authors. If the works are *bad*, they will inevitably remain on the hands of the producers, and this will be just! Those who buy works of art are generally rich people, who sensibly prefer to pay well for a good picture, than to buy cheaply a canvas which they would scorn to hang on the walls of their houses beside a masterpiece acquired elsewhere. These two points seem to me clear: the *object* has no *reason for existing*, the *result* is *null and void*. There is a *moral* side to this matter, which I would like to emphasize, and which

seems to me not without importance, namely: that it is in France and in Germany that many young American artists have received their instruction; we have given them their education *gratuitously*; they have been treated like native pupils in our State Schools. It is then to *foreigners* that they owe what they know, and without these *foreigners* there would have been neither painters nor sculptors in the United States. Is it *just* to treat the productions of these foreign artists and teachers with so great a severity? Is there not a little *ingratitude* in this kind of ostracism? I know well that it is said 'Nations feel no gratitude—they care only for their own interests.' Perhaps this is true; in any case, this is not to their credit, and I regret it above all in this special case, where their interests are so very badly comprehended.

"At the time of the announcement of this custom-house law, which, let us confess, is a trifle uncivilized, there was great agitation among the artists in Paris. In order to consult as to what was to be done, I called together an assembly of French and American painters at my house and, I must say, the position taken by the latter was eminently correct and irreproachable. They were almost as discontented as we were, and they proved it by their petition addressed to the Congress of the United States, a petition whose tenor bore witness to their gratitude to us, and their regret at the adoption of a measure which damaged our interests so seriously. They recognized clearly their obligation to us; that we had treated them well in every respect; that they had been admitted to our Academy of Fine Arts on the same terms as our French pupils; that they enjoyed the same privileges at our Annual Expositions as our native exhibitors; that they received rewards when they merited them, and good places at the Salon when they were worthy of them! Why were we, then, thanked for our kind services by such lion-like proceedings?

"In short we have only praise for these young people in regard to this matter, and I desire to repeat loudly, so that no one may be ignorant of it—they all employed every possible means to induce Congress to repeal so unreasonable a law; they did not succeed, but this lack of success cannot be laid at their door! It gives me the more pleasure to bear this testimony, in that certain contrary rumors have been put in circulation. I had it at heart to deny them; it is done!

"In all countries in Europe, works of art are entered free of duty; this system of non-prohibition has already been fruitful in results. It is by this means that different Schools of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture have been formed in Germany, in Italy, in France, in Belgium, in Spain. It is the study of the works of their predecessors that has developed the men of genius who are the glory of their country. It is only after protracted efforts that a nation succeeds in establishing serious Schools of Art. It is little by little that the sentiment of beauty is infused into a people, as a result of an education which is the work of time and of the beautiful and good creations placed before its eyes. What would be worth more than a *prohibitory tax*, to America which has no *past*, would be measures *favoring* the entry of paintings, statues, etc., which would permit individuals to form private collections, and cities to possess public museums!



THE SERPENT CHARMER.

"One day it will be said: 'It was at the end of the nineteenth century, in the full expansion of civilization, that there arose a strange, incomprehensible idea of classing the productions of the mind with sardines in oil and smoked ham! In all countries works of art were free from duty in all save *one*, where they were burdened with an exorbitant import-tax by the youngest, the greatest, the richest of nations!'"

This eloquent protest needs no comment; its trenchant justice must be apparent to every one who has thoughtfully considered this subject. But when we remember the almost superhuman efforts that were needed to overcome the obtuseness and obstinacy of our law-makers, who disgraced the nation for years by their repeated rejection of a law to repress theft and enforce common honesty in the matter of International Copyright—we despair of opening their eyes to perceive this lesser but still humiliating blot on the American escutcheon. Until it, also, is wholly effaced, those who were once our warm allies and admirers may rightfully accuse us of injustice and ingratitude.

Arriving again in London in the early spring of 1888, the master's correspondent found a letter of welcome in which he writes: "You Americans are intrepid travelers. I admire the courage of your mother who, at the age of sixty-nine, has crossed the ocean with you. As for me, I have not left my easel since I saw you, save for that one little trip to the Mediterranean, where I went to make some studies of the sea for the picture which I have at the Exposition. I am well, only a little tired by the steady work of the winter, and I really need a little rest, but I *have no time for it!*"

The painting referred to as at the Salon of 1888, was *The Poet's Dream*, which the artist himself has so charmingly sketched in the impromptu verses previously quoted. We find the following description in a Paris art journal:

"A deserted strand on the coast of Greece. In the distance, emerging from the depths of the sea, two rocky islets whose steep sides are colored by the setting sun with tints of sapphire and amethyst. The poet, clad in *la dernière mode* of 1804, top-boots, brown coat with metal buttons, white necktie and lace cuffs, is reclining on the sands while he dreams, contemplating the infinite heavens and the boundless sea; his Muse, draped in green, crowned with laurel and carrying a lyre of ivory, arises behind him and gently touches him. Immediately the hosts of Poséidon become visible to him. The Nereids lie upon the sand; the Tritons blow into their shells; the three Sirens, Parthenope, Hygeia, and Leukosia, advance singing; Aphrodite surges up on a jet of foam, and from each bitter drop that falls from her tresses a Cupid is born! There is already a veritable swarm hovering around the goddess! Seated upon a rock, old Proteus guards his herd of prophetic seals. Further off, Phœbus skims the liquid plain with his chariot drawn by horses, as light as the halyon breeze and as swift as the tempest. Arion is borne away on the back of his tuneful dolphin, and Icarus, stripped of his wings, falls from heaven into the gulf below."

This was not the only exhibit of the master. Near by hung a small canvas with one solitary figure, which, however, impressed the observer with a sense of illimitable space and concentrated vitality. It was entitled *Thirst*, and was described in the London *Athenæum* as follows:

"A grand desert scene, charged with a whitish glare; the blank brilliancy of torrid noon dominating a waste of sun-blanchèd sand and stones. The desert extends nearly to the horizon, where a group of palms and other trees forms one long line, and beyond that a dim purple range of mountain-tops looms in the air. The effect is stereoscopic, and the atmosphere perfectly painted. Near the front are a few shallow pools, at one of which a huge lion laps the water in an ecstasy of thirst well expressed by the design of the animal. His haunches are drawn up, his tail is extended straight along the sand, and his mane drops forward as he drinks."

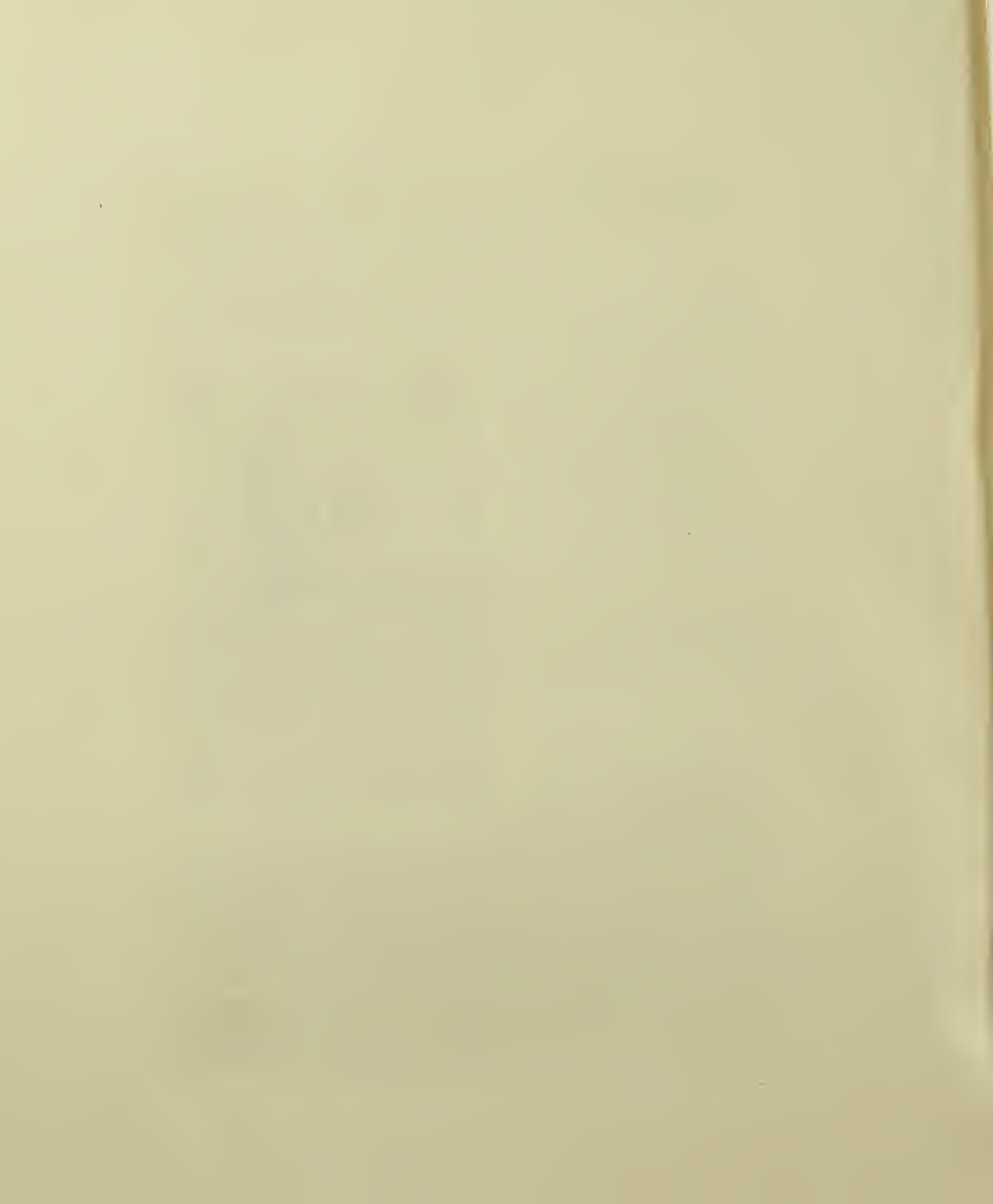


It is needless to say that these *chefs-d'œuvre* found immediate purchasers, the first passing into the already rich collection of the Czar of Russia.

Gérôme also exhibited this same season, at the Royal Academy in London, a *Negro*, draped in a rose-colored burnons, on a background of blue *faïence*; at Copenhagen, *Le Hammam—Vapeur sèche*, which obtained for him a royal decoration, and in Moscow, the *Vapeur humide*; in addition to which he had finished three other canvases, respectively entitled: *A Bath*, *Woman Bathing her Feet*, and *The Awakening*. Each one is a masterpiece in which the artist seems to have surpassed all his previous achievements, especially of modeling and flesh tints. Words can give no idea of the marvels of texture and coloring, the effects of light and vapor, the solidity and grace assembled in each of these canvases. The contrast between the flesh tone in the *Vapeur sèche*, where the body is rosy from the exertion of the bath and massage, and the warm brunette hues of *The Awakening*, where the half-roused beauty slips from the couch to her knees, stretching her exquisite arms luxuriously above her head—shows Gérôme's

TANAGRA

1890







absolute mastery of the most subtle secrets of color. We should but multiply adjectives in endeavoring to give an adequate description of these later works, the skill revealed in them amazing even those who are best acquainted with his work and have followed him step by step.

In the midst of his absorbing occupations, Gérôme was ever ready to respond to almost daily appeals for advice and help. President and member of many different societies, he was prompt and punctilious in the fulfillment of his official duties. His private charities were innumerable, and of him it could be said truly that his right hand knew nothing of the generosity of the left. When chance laid before him an opportunity for a good action, he never evaded it, though it might cost him infinite trouble and annoyance. How many poor souls has he saved from the destitution and misery that, in a great city, result too often in crime! He would not only give liberally of his money, and, treasure of inestimable value, his time, but would take the greatest trouble to interest his friends for his needy *protégés*. The following brief notes furnish an outline of but one of many instances that have come under the writer's personal notice:



"I send you a letter from Mme. la Baronne Salomon de Rothschild, with some money for our poor *protégée*. Have her write a line of thanks. I am writing myself, but that is not sufficient."

And again, "Translate as soon as possible into French the certificates of our *protégée* and have them stamped at the Consulate of——. For, if we find her a situation, this is indispensable." It is almost needless to say that the situation was found.

One bitterly cold and stormy day we entered the atelier, where he was coughing heavily. Knowing that he was one of a few guests invited to meet a personage of high degree who was passing through the city, we expressed our

concern that he should expose himself in such unfavorable weather. "I have just sent a regret," replied the master. "I am not well and should be sure to take more cold, and then I could not talk to my children at the *École des Beaux-Arts* to-morrow." While he was speaking, there came a timid knock at the door. A man, prematurely aged, haggard, and illy clad, entered the atelier. He hesitatingly addressed the master, who greeted him with marked warmth and, after a few minutes' murmured conversation, said, "I will come immediately." With a look of gratitude, the man bowed low and left the room. Pulling on his great-coat, Gérôme continued, "You must excuse me. I shall probably not return till late. He lives at Belleville. It is one of my old pupils who is in trouble; poor devil, he will never do anything! I must go and see how I can help him."

"But your cold!" we remonstrated.

"I must risk it; he needs me."

"But you gave up the reception —"

"They did not need me!"

"And the *École* to-morrow?"

"The boys must endure my *growl!*"

"You will at least take your breakfast?"

"I have no time—he is waiting! I am off—*à bientôt!*"

The *concerge* told us, the next day, that Gérôme returned late in the afternoon, utterly exhausted, having eaten nothing all day, and that he had gone to bed with a violent chill. "He went out to the *École* this morning at half-past seven, all the same," added Thomas. "He would go *there* if he were *dying!*"

We were at work in the studio when the master came in, pale and fagged, and, after lecturing two hours, unable to speak above a whisper.

"What about your old pupil?" we asked, while he was preparing his palette.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* he needed me badly enough; he was painting a *Venus*, a *Venus of the Batignolles!* It was *frightful!*" A look of profound commiseration overspread his face.

"Was that all?"

"Oh, no! they had no fire, no clothes, nothing to eat! that was soon remedied! But that *Venus*, *nothing could ever remedy that!*" And from time to time during the day, the master paused in his work and, overcome by the remembrance, sighed, "*Oh, that Venus! it was frightful!*"

Wearied by his toil, and worn by anxiety for a member of the family who for some time had been seriously ill, Gérôme accompanied his household, in July of 1888, to one of their summer residences, in Calvados. But even here he did not become an idler. From St. Martin aux Chartrains, near Pont l'Évêque, he pens the following characteristic letter to a friend:

"I had hoped to send you in this letter a little sunshine, for during the last two days the weather has been very fine, and I had begun to work in the open air; but I have been forced to follow the caprices of the barometer, and retreat indoors, for the wind has turned to the southwest and it has rained all night. So I am compelled to begin something else that I can paint in the house. I am the more annoyed by the bad weather, because all my children are here and we can neither ride nor walk, which is a pity, for the country is superb, a veritable garden—too well watered just now! I wrote you to Bella Vista. Did you receive the letter, which arrived possibly after your departure? The bad news of the health of your mother has grieved me deeply, and I hope that by the time you receive this letter she will be much better. I wish it with all my heart. I know too well the anguish one endures beside a beloved invalid, and I pity any one who is in this sad situation. It is unfortunate that you cannot work, for *work is the grand remedy for all evils, a way of escape from all griefs*. Happily I am still in sufficiently good health not to be condemned to inaction, or I should be the most miserable of mortals! You are wrong to read so much, when your eyes are not in good condition. The eye is an instrument that must be taken care of, since we can do nothing without it. Repose is often the best medicine for this organ. Take care also of the *spirit, the soul!* Do not let yourself be disturbed. One must always react, regain full self-possession, not allow one's self to be led; *be always master!*"

Later in August, "Rain,—rain,—always raining! What abominable weather! Soon I shall have to dress in a *diving-suit* in order to go out at all. I am sitting before my canvas as stupid as a goose, unable to work. Decidedly I must make an effort to get a fresh start!"

Later still in August:

"I have received the proofs you sent me, and, in accordance with your suggestion, have written Mr. Fraser, giving him some advice as to changes in the reproductions. I've made up my mind to come back to Paris at the end of this month. The weather has been wretched here all the time and I have scarcely been able to work, and that *very badly!* Just now I am making a study of a horse, and this animal won't stand still a second! I fear I shall be obliged to give it up, which would annoy me very much, as I need it."

On his return to Paris, Gérôme devoted himself to his *magnum opus*, the *Tanagra*, which electrified the world at the Salon of 1890. At the same time he worked on the *Trumpeter*, which represented one of the musicians who were wont to head the procession of gladiators, as they marched around the arena before engaging in the deadly struggle. This figure, cast in the bronze, is a most astonishing anatomical study. The inflation of the cheeks, the contraction of the chest, the tension of the muscles in the limbs, the sturdy planting of the feet, as he marches carrying his mighty tuba, combine to produce a most

realistic as well as thoroughly artistic work. Not content with having two models at work, one posing while the other rested, in their respective ateliers, the master began with a third, for the exquisite *Head of Diana*, which was finished about the same time as the *Trumpeter*. He went from one to the other, his models often exhausted, he never pausing for rest! The *Diana* was cast in dead silver bronze, a highly burnished crescent moon forming an admirable background for the lovely head.

His joyous labor was interrupted by the sudden death of the artist Boulanger, which affected him most seriously; stunned for days into inaction, he eventually flung himself into his work with a feverish energy that evidently sought to stifle sorrow and leave no time for vain regret. His own health visibly failing, his friends besought him to take absolute repose. But the answer, half-sad, half-smiling, was invariably the same: "I have no time!" adding more than once, "It is *my turn next* and I *must* finish the *Tanagra* first!"

But even his busy and dexterous hands could not keep pace with the conceptions that thronged his brain, imperiously demanding form and expression on canvas, or, still more satisfying to his inmost desire, in the clay, afterward to be firmly fixed in bronze or marble. We well remember standing in the inner atelier, in the early twilight of a winter evening, and looking at the half-finished *Tanagra* which Gérôme had unswathed to show us his progress. At her feet was a mass of clay which the porter had just brought for the next day's work. Suddenly seizing a double-handful, the master looked at it as one regards a beloved friend, and cried, "Ah! the beautiful earth!" with such a fervor of tenderness, that it seemed impossible the senseless clay should not have thrilled into instant and sentient being, under the vivifying touch of this Nineteenth Century Pygmalion!

But the artist forced himself to reserve the brightest days for painting, and, as a change from the figures he was modeling, he again returned to the desert and his much loved lions.

Before the New Year, *Solitude*, a scene representing a majestic lion, *couchant* and gazing into space, was finished. The mysterious charm of this picture, even greater than that of *Les Deux Majestés*, has been felt by all who have seen it. At the same time four or five other paintings were on different easels and the master passed from one to the other, working with a sure, firm touch and incredible rapidity; never confused, carrying out the design that had been absolutely finished in his mind before the scene was sketched upon the canvas. To study these and watch their gradual completion was an absorbing and enjoyable occupation. One of the most fascinating was the lion prowling on the shores of the Red Sea, *Quærens quem devoret*, for which Gérôme made the sketch, as our readers will remember, when camping with Lenoir



THE TULIP FOLLY.

by the Gulf of Akabah, on the Red Sea. The fleecy clouds pile up and melt away toward the horizon, while, through the haze, one perceives alluring paths leading up from height to height upon the mountain. At its base, masses of rock in warm tones of brown, and drifts of yellow sand, reach to the water's edge. The lion, with lowered head and eye intent, powerful, subtle, alert, steps softly yet firmly, his shadow sharply projected on the stony beach, where waves of a deep yet tender green break in delicate foam. This canvas, absolutely flawless in idea and execution, was finished in the early summer of 1889, and, we believe, immediately found an American purchaser. *Spring-tide in Arabia*, the lioness rolling among the flowers, which has been already described, was exhibited in the spring of 1890 at the Cerele Artistique in Paris. A remarkable painting, the background of which never satisfied the artist, and which he altered frequently, represented *Negroes Carrying Home a Dead Lion*. The absolute lifelessness of the great beast, —suspended, limp and inanimate, on the shoulders of the savages who stagger under its weight, is expressed with surprising verity. Among others were *The Love Letter*, in which Cupid guides the hand of a charming young girl; *Cupid and the Vestal*, who blushes in her sleep under the potent gaze of Love, who lifts her veil; *Anacreon and Cupid*, in three scenes: Anacreon warming the wet and shivering god, who has begged him for shelter; Anacreon pierced to the heart by an arrow from the quiver of the ungrateful and fleeing traitor, and Anacreon aged and bent, beholding in the embers of the smoldering fire the roguish, tantalizing features of the fickle Love of his early youth! *A Lion Pursuing Antelope*, leaping in the air in his endeavor to reach the last straggler in the fleeing herd, and another lion snapping at a troublesome wasp.

The political agitation of the winter of 1889 occasioned some spirited discussions in the atelier, and, contrary to his custom, Gérôme allowed himself to be interviewed concerning the elections that seemed pregnant with danger to his beloved France. In reply to the question, "Ought we, in the interests of the country, to vote for General Boulanger?" he wrote as follows:

"To speak truly, I know nothing about it, but I *think*, *No!* I fear that those who vote for the General in order to strangle the Republic, will send us from the 'frying-pan into the fire.' As for me, I shall vote neither for him nor for Jacques.

"General Boulanger has denied his signature, on the tribune; he is surrounded by people of very bad reputation, and he inspires me with no confidence in the future.

"Monsieur Jacques is perhaps a good man; I do not know, for I have never heard him spoken of. But I mistrust him, for he represents the Communists, that is to say, incendiarism and assassination!

"I shall vote for *Pasteur*, in the hope that he will cure us of the political madness which, since the advent of the Republic, has deranged our country!

" PARIS, 24th January, 1889.

J. L. GERÔME."

This characteristic letter was published in *Le Matin* and aroused considerable attention by its brief but trenchant exposition of the real situation. As a matter of fact, Gérôme did actually vote for Pasteur, for we happened to be in the atelier

on the morning of the elections, and can testify that he went, in company with the sculptor Frémiet, to deposit his vote for the great specialist!

The master, in spite of persistent entreaties, declined to send an exhibit to the Universal Exposition of 1889, on the ground that all of his later works were so widely scattered—from Russia to America—that it would be impossible to reunite them. The owners were reluctant to risk them, and the artist did not insist. But he accepted a position on the jury, and faithfully discharged his onerous and fatiguing functions.

To the Salon of 1889, however, he sent *Love, the Conqueror*, an admirable canvas,

full of poetry and strength, representing the all-powerful god of Love entering a cage full of wild beasts, who at his advent begin to roar "as gently as any sucking dove." There is a look of surprise and respect for his daring on the dignified features of the African lion, and into the eyes of a fierce lioness steals a strange tenderness; a magnificent Bengal tiger rolls upon his back as if wooing the beautiful child to join in his gambols, and a treacherous black panther, utterly subdued, lengthens out its little form and protrudes its red tongue to lick the dainty bare feet! Among these superbly drawn animals is a spotted jaguar, with glittering green eyes, who approaches with stealthy tread but does not attempt to attack this universal conqueror. Confident of his power, the lovely boy smiles at one and all, and fully justifies the quaint couplet of the sagacious



Voltaire which underlines the canvas: "*Qui que tu sois, voici ton maître! Il l'est, le fut, ou le doit être!*" (Whoever thou art, behold thy master! He is, he was, or should be!)

At the Cercle Artistique hung the *Quærens quem devoret* and a *Hunting Scene in the Forest of Meudon*, a charming landscape, the central figure of which is the hospitable friend over whose preserves Gérôme shoots regularly, twice a week, during the season.

The other figures are also portraits of well-known Parisians, among them the artist himself. The smoke drifts away among the almost leafless trees, the trophies of the day's sport are laid in comely rows upon the ground, while down the avenue come the gamekeepers with hands well filled, to add to the collection. It is a genial, attractive scene, worthy of our best landscapists and possessing an unusual feature in the masterly drawing of men and dogs.

The Universal Exposition of 1889 brought all the world to Paris, and many were the visits we made to the atelier to present friends to the master—Americans, English, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, Germans, and Japanese! He received them all with his unvarying and exquisite courtesy, and though his official duties on the jury made the time for work doubly precious, he never allowed his visitors to feel that their coming was inapropos or that he would prefer to abridge their stay. The effort to make up for time lost through innumerable and unavoidable interruptions told seriously on his health, but in spite of constant suffering and increasing weakness, he persisted in the performance of many wearisome duties entailed upon him by his artistic and social position. In a note dated July, 1889, he writes:

"I am greatly grieved to learn that you are again ill. I pray for your prompt recovery. I too am sick, having taken a severe cold at the Exposition, and for three days I have been very miserable. What troubles me most is, that to-morrow, in spite of my wretched state, I must absolutely go to the Palais des Champs-Élysées, where my presence may be useful to certain



pupils of mine who are competing for the traveling purses. I wish your dear mother a *bon voyage!*"

Attendance at this meeting, where he interested himself beyond his strength in behalf of his pupils, seriously aggravated his condition, and a violent fever suddenly reduced him to a dangerous state of prostration. To a friend, then in London, who was greatly alarmed by the rumors that crossed the Channel, he penned with feeble hand the following lines :

"Your good letter, which has deeply touched me, this moment received. I reply at once, hoping mine may find you in good health both of body and soul. Do not be anxious about me. The crisis has passed, and I am better. I shall yet be able to put a little color on canvas or scratch a bit of marble! It is a long time since I retired into my tent, *désillusionné* as to men, women, and things. Youth has passed—*il faut être philosophe!* Not regret too keenly what is gone, and thank Nature for what she leaves us. In spite of everything, there still remain to me precious things—the enthusiasm of youth and love for art! I would like, before passing to a better world, to create in *sculpture* a series of works equal to those I have made in *painting*. I have always sufficient courage, and, if my health does not fail me, I do not despair of accomplishing this. *Work is the sole consolation of old age!* Happy those who are able to devote themselves to it."

In all his stress of suffering he always had a thought for those who depended on him. He forgot no one, he neglected nothing, however seemingly trivial, as we have seen by these fragments of correspondence. He sent a cheery message here, a feebly-scrawled line there, exhorting all to patience, courage, perseverance, self-possession, and above all, to *unflinching industry*. It was his sovereign cure for all ills! His indomitable spirit, which he had trained to rule his body, asserted itself now. He looked at the work that crowded three ateliers, and said to himself, "*I must finish this.*" Thanks to a temperance of living, in every respect, which bordered on abstemiousness, there remained to this youthful veteran an astonishing recuperative power. But there was no doubt, in the minds of the few friends who saw him daily during this anxious time, that his *determination to get well* was the chief factor in his recovery, which was as surprising as his illness had been sudden and severe.

He worked much at Bougival, on the roof of his summer atelier, which was arranged so that the trees and shrubbery inclosed and sheltered it from curious eyes, enabling him to pose his model in the open air and obtain wonderful atmospheric effects. A *chef-d'œuvre* painted here this summer is called *Bathsheba*, and represents the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite, bathing on the terrace-roof of her house. This figure is a marvel of plastic grace and delicate flesh-tints, and the effects of light are equally amazing.

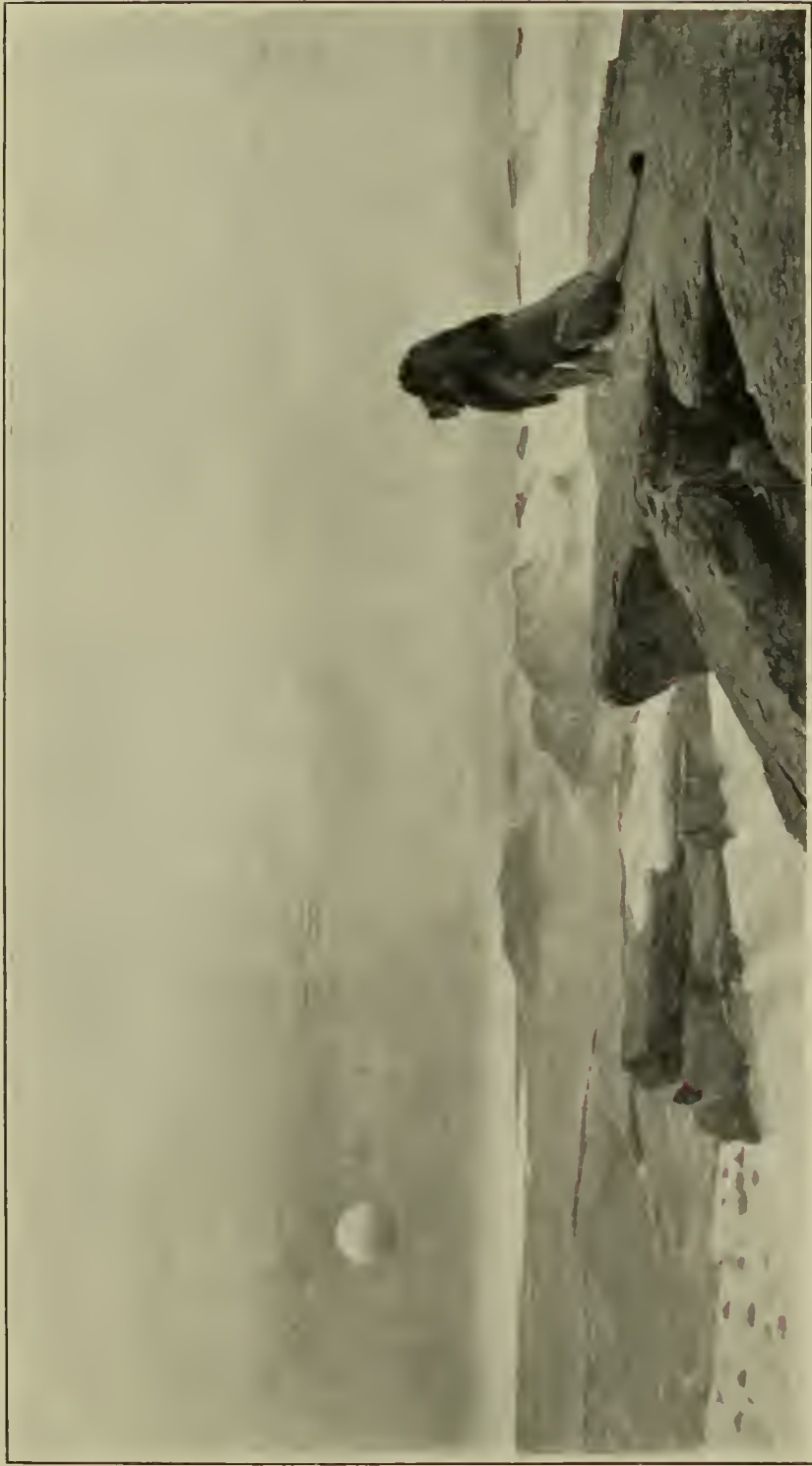
In August, he writes :

"I did not receive your letter till last evening, and attributed your non-appearance at the atelier to the bad weather. I am sorry to know that you are again suffering with your eyes, and, not seeing you to-day, fear they are no better. Bathe them with hot tea, as hot as you can bear it! and take good care of yourself. I have seen Mr. ——. He stayed some time with me, and we chatted about the Orient. It is twenty years since we met. How old he looks! But he probably said the same of me! which is not consoling. The marble has arrived! I am hurrying to finish the little copy in order to begin our hand-to-hand struggle! What if *it* should prove the strongest!"

The little copy to which he refers is a small replica of the *Œdipe*, which he had consented to make in order to escape from urgent and persistent entreaties to sell the original. He made but one alteration, in the pose of the horse of Bonaparte, but more than once while painting on this little canvas he remarked, "It will be better than the first." This gem has found a home in England. The marble alluded to was the *Tanagra*, which had just been brought to his ground-floor atelier on the Rue de Bruxelles, from the workshop where it had been roughly fashioned from the block after the cast. It was something wondrous to see this ideally beautiful creature slowly emerge from its chrysalis under the magic touch of the master, typifying that epoch of art which produced the graceful statuettes excavated a few years ago on the site of the ancient city of Tanagra. Gérôme's *Tanagra* is a life-size female figure, seated in Egyptian fashion on a rude block, the stiffness of this ancient style relieved by the position of the arms and feet. The latter are drawn up, one posed lightly upon the other; the right arm, turned so that the palm of the hand curves to the back, rests upon the block; the left, bent at the elbow, is extended, and in the palm of the hand is poised a dainty statuette of a dancing-girl, the drapery flying around the exquisitely molded form, the head bent to look through a hoop, grasped lightly but firmly. Serene, far-seeing eyes, shadowed by waves of rippling hair, look out from the purely Grecian face of the *Tanagra*, and seem to demand of future generations their verdict as to the beauty of the lovely figurine she presents for their inspection.

Against the block leans a pick, and in the *débris* we descry other lovely heads and arms, revealing a wealth of artistic beauty which still awaits resurrection. Words fail to describe the dignity of this goddess-like figure, which, though palpitating with life, still overawes one by the majestic purity expressed in every line and contour of its superb form. With even greater ardor than attended the creation of the *Omphale*, the master worked on this, his *Benjamin*, his best-beloved—brilliant lights, multiplied by many reflectors, enabling

him to labor far into the night. It was always with reluctance that he quitted this little atelier for the large studios where many canvases, long promised, awaited completion, and only his rigid conscientiousness prevented him from turning them all to the wall and abandoning himself entirely to his *grande passion*. Among his latest paintings are *A Sentinel*, *Camels Drinking*, *Boileau and Molière*, *The Marabout*, *A Wood-nymph*, and *Far Niente*—the latter a fine old lion taking his siesta in the desert. Not content with these, he worked at the same time upon the portraits in marble of his daughters, reproducing in each not only the beautiful features, but a startling, vivid, and expressive personality. It is small wonder that the month of October found him again wearied and exhausted, and drawing heavily upon his reserve strength and will power, in order to continue all the work he had blocked out. Relying too much on the vigorous constitution that had enabled him to rally so remarkably in the summer, and undeterred by the chilliness and dampness of the ground-floor atelier, he labored on unceasingly, hoping to finish the *Tunagra* before the advent of the winter. As a natural result, he became one of the first victims of *la grippe*, long before it developed into the epidemic which ravished Paris perhaps more fatally than any other large city. Making light of this attack, as was his wont, he was soon completely prostrated, and so rapid was the progress of this mysterious disease, that the end seemed very near. But this ardent spirit refused to be quenched! He insisted on being brought out to the large atelier, where he lay upon the divan and, from time to time, with an effort which left him pallid and panting, he would seize his sculptor's burin and work for a moment upon the bust of his daughter, which was drawn up close to his couch. He murmured often, "*Je veux mourir en travaillant*" (I wish to die working), and sometimes, seeing the unconquerable grief and emotion of the friends who gathered round him, he would look at them reproachfully, saying, "*Mais, qu'est-ce que vous avez donc?*" (Why, what is the matter with you?) and then, in his inimitable style, he would relate some amusing anecdote, adding, "*Il faut rire et mourir!*" (One should smile—and die!) To a friend who was obliged to leave Paris at this most critical time on account of sudden illness in the family, he sent a word of encouragement, writing with much difficulty: "The telegram you had the goodness to send me has reassured me; if — escapes with a fortnight in bed, it will be nothing. This favorable state has, I trust, dissipated all your apprehensions and restored serenity to your troubled spirit. I await the promised letter, and have good hope that it will bring me still better news than that in your very brief dispatch. Arm yourself with patience. One must meet the accidents of life with calmness, and face its storms with tranquillity; it is the best way to render one's self master in critical situations and to vanquish all difficulties."



THE TWO KINGS.

Contrary to even his own expectations, as he afterward acknowledged, the master again rallied, though his strength returned but slowly. This convalescence was retarded by two untoward and almost fatal incidents. The gas escaped during the night from the large stove in the inner atelier and penetrated to his sleeping-chamber through the open door of the communicating passage. Owing to the great height of the rooms, this deadly poison was probably so diffused that its evil effects were diminished and the master's life saved. While still weak from this additional assault, he endeavored, in the dim twilight of a November day, to reach down from a cabinet a bronze vase—a late acquisition. His strength failing him, the vase fell, striking his noble forehead, cutting a deep gash and dabbling his snowy hair with blood. The wound in itself proved not very serious, but the concussion was terrible. These trying and painful circumstances revealed, to those who were fortunate enough to be near him, new beauties in this noble nature, whose patient fortitude in suffering taught a lesson never to be forgotten. The physical distress and pain, though often extreme, seemed to be nothing as compared with the resulting inability to work. A little later he writes, "I still remain feeble and anæmic, but think this condition will soon come to an end; it troubles me much on account of my *work*—one can do nothing well without good health. Good health and vigor of mind go hand in hand."

Paris was now in the fatal clutches of *la grippe*, and, barely convalescent himself, Gérôme resumed his usual habit of life, adding a daily round of visits to old friends and comrades who had succumbed to the general malady. Careless of himself, he was unwearied in his care of others, and exposing himself, he reproved them roundly did they fail to submit to the most rigid precautions! In December he writes to one of them: "I hope you are better to-day. I was utterly astonished, on going to see you yesterday, to find that you had gone out in such bitterly cold weather, and at such an hour! It was the height of imprudence, and, in this time of epidemic, very dangerous. Send me a line to reassure me as to your health. I am just starting for the *chase*, and count on finding a letter on my return this evening!" When assailed in turn by the reproaches of his friends, he laughed, saying, "*Tous savez que je suis depuis longtemps 'exempt'!*" adding, with an amused appreciation of his own *double entendre*, "*Ce que me sauve, c'est que je suis plein-à-tr-iste!*" which was probably literally true, though in the bitter winter weather it seemed a heroic cure.

At this time he began the portraits, in pencil, of his dear old friends Protais and Arago, going every morning, as we have already related, to the atelier of the first, who was daily becoming more feeble. Arago, however, posed in Gérôme's studio, and one of our most vivid memories is of our last visit to the atelier.

where Gérôme, convulsed with merriment over his friend's witty sallies, vainly endeavored to compose himself in order to proceed with his work; while his model, without relaxing a line of his imperturbable countenance, increased the general hilarity by bursting out with an eloquent harangue in an indescribable jargon that he termed "*Boffalou-Billa-Englesha*," to the intense delight of his only serious auditor, a small American boy, who believed, in good faith, that

this Parisian of Parisians
was talking *pure Choctaw!*

In February, 1890, the
master writes:

"I will send you shortly a proof of the portrait of Arago, and also one of Protais. Alas, poor Protais! We lost him three weeks ago. A pneumonia grafted itself on his heart disease; he took to his bed, where he remained eight days, and *died*. His loss is deeply felt by everybody, for he was greatly beloved and, above all, esteemed for his upright spirit and character.

"It has deeply afflicted me, more deeply than I can express. . . . Apropos of letters, I have had those Arago gave you copied,

and will send them to you with the bust, the drawings, and the photographs. I am working always unremittingly, for my health, which keeps good, permits me to do so. At this moment I am putting the finishing touches on the figure of *Tanagra*, and in two or three days I shall *paint* it. I rely much on this proceeding to give life to the marble, provided that it succeeds! I have commenced also to model some lions, in order to improve the two pictures which you will remember. These sculptures will enable me to find picturesque and true effects of light which I could not well obtain *de chic*, as the painters say; I shall also sculpture a lion, life-size, to bring some pleasure into my life and amuse myself a little. It will cost me a great deal, but one can't pay too dearly for *such* pleasures! To-day they brought me the bust of Lavoix, which has been very well cast. I think I shall send the *Tanagra* to the coming Salon."

This bronze bust of the Director of the Department of Medals in the Bibliothèque Nationale, is one of his best portraits, the universal verdict being, "*Mais, c'est absolument lui.*"

The coloring of the *Tanagra* had long been planned by the sculptor. The block of marble had been carefully chosen with a view to this operation, and he had made frequent experiments on fragments of the same texture. The figure seemed perfect as it was, and we sometimes regretted that the master should think of incurring so great a risk. "If it does not succeed?" we ventured to say one day. "I will make another!" was the smiling reply. The incessant labor of two years was but a *bagatelle* before this indomitable will.

Later in February, he writes, "You must certainly have received a letter from me lately, announcing the death of my dear friend Protais. This loss has been very bitter to me. I regret it immeasurably. He was a beautiful soul, an upright man, a faithful friend. At a certain time in life one sees everything collapse around one; it is perhaps the most painful accompaniment of old age. . . . We must elevate and strengthen our souls and face the tempest with calmness and courage."

Toward the end of March, 1890, the newspapers all through two continents contained the alarming dispatch from London: "The celebrated painter Gérôme lies dangerously ill in this city." The overtaxed physique had again given way, and once more this precious life was in danger. Private letters from London at last chronicled his improvement and departure with his friend, the Duc d'Anmale, for the Island of Sicily, where he had a very serious relapse. The 20th of May, he writes from Paris:

"I hasten to reassure you again as to my health, which has almost regained its usual state. The influenza which made me so ill about two months ago having relaxed its hold somewhat, I started for Sicily, where I took cold and again fell ill—fever, acute pains in the head, heavy cold, and, as I could take no kind of food, extreme feebleness. As soon as I was able to travel, I lost no time in embarking for home, where I have really taken good care of myself. But this *diable de maladie* is very persistent in its effects, and I have been shaken to the



very foundation! I am still feeble, but I trust that matters will, little by little, mend themselves, as before. I work without fatiguing myself too much, and tranquilly await my complete restoration. I have finished the *Lion* in sculpture, life-size; it went to-day to be cast; that finished, it will be sent direct to the foundry. I think it is a good work; we will see when it is placed before the public. The statue of *Tanagra*, on exhibition at this moment, is a great success, greater than I dared to hope! I am well content. It has been bought by the state, to whom I have sold it for much less than it cost me, but I wished this work to remain *in my country*. Protais is buried in the cemetery of Montmartre. We had a sale of his pictures, studies, etc., which remained in his atelier; it did not bring much. One of his pictures, the best and most important, has been bought by the state. . . . Justice marches with slow pace; she often arrives late, if she arrives at all! But what is to be done? We must fight on. It is much to have the *right on one's side*."

From the columns of the *Boston Transcript*, under date Paris, July 6, 1890, and over the initials of the Hon. M. Parry Kennard, we take the following charming description of the *Tanagra*, as it appeared in the garden of the Salon:

"An exceptional, but a leading and yet undemonstrative attraction in that spacious amphitheater of sculptures in the Palais de l'Industrie was the famous *Tanagra*, in marble, by the distinguished painter and sculptor Gérôme, and which the French Government has acquired by purchase. This is a novel conceit, and entirely unconventional, representing a nude female of a purely Greek type, sitting very upright upon what simulates a fragmentary mass of ruins partially excavated, amid the *débris* of which are discerned tiles and bricks, etc., while in the crumbling mortar, here and there, are partially exposed and imperfect Tanagra figures, one of which has been secured complete, and is held in the extended left hand of the statue. This marble beauty is not much above five feet in height, and should be under glass, as really the jewel of the statuary collection, for I find it so esteemed. It was given a central position amid many larger and more ambitious works, and thus was at some disadvantage, and perhaps it was 'caviare to the general,' yet one could not but be interested in observing the attention it received in excess of any other exhibit. Gérôme seems the most industrious and untiring artist living, when we consider his many wonderful canvases, so largely distributed among the royal collections of Europe and in the United States, and his remarkable creations in marble. I lingered an hour about this charming work of art, which, in its chaste simplicity, is as a gift of the gods, and only could have been conceived and executed by a great master, the versatility of whose genius and whose scholarship and accomplishments render him the Leonardo of his time. Had that historical performance of Michael Angelo been repeated, and this figure been secretly buried for a time, and then publicly excavated as an antique, with perhaps a broken arm, it would have turned the heads of the whole art world, and been declared in its vital characteristics and subtle anatomy a rival

of the *Milo Venus*. Time hereafter will, I am persuaded, find warrant for all the praise that is now accorded this exquisite creation. Increasing the novelty with which this captivating marble has been invested, the author availed himself of the authority of antiquity and delicately tinted it, with gratifying success. M. Gérôme has just modeled a colossal sitting lion, which is now in the hands of the founder, to be cast in bronze—intended for the Salon of next year."

Being congratulated again on the enthusiastic reception of the *Tanagra*, the master replies :

"The success of this work has surpassed all my hopes and filled me with joy. I regret that you did not see it with the light coloring I have added to it. I believe that this pleasing *patine*, which gives life to the marble, has contributed much to this favorable result. Excellent photographic reproductions have been made at the Exposition. There are four of them, that is to say, from every side; the two profiles, the face, and the back; we will choose the most interesting for the book. I believe it will be the profile where the pick stands and the figurines emerge from the earth—you shall decide. I am obliged to change for others the drawings of the camels we had chosen—they were made on yellow paper, which does not yield good proofs, and they have been returned to me as impossible to reproduce. This detail is easily remedied. I will find others better adapted. I have finished my portrait in a little picture which represents me working on the marble [*Tanagra*], with my model beside the statue in the same pose; it is said to be a success. It is not yet photographed, or I should send you a proof. Have also finished a lion, life-size, warming himself in the sun—title, *Beatitude*. It is just now at the founder's, and I trust to have the proof in a month. I have also begun a picture with a very hackneyed subject—*Pygmalion and Galatea*; I have tried to rejuvenate it. The statue is coming to life in the upper part, while the limbs are still imprisoned in the marble so that she cannot change the position of her feet; but as the upper portion of the body is already living, she leans to embrace her sculptor, who returns the caress most fervently!"

After repeated endeavors to escape furnishing the Preface to the present volume, according to a promise obtained after urgent entreaty some years previous, Gérôme finally yielded, and in a letter dated July, 1890, which gives new proof of his goodness and modesty, he says :

"I will, then, write your introduction, although I am very unskillful with the pen; but I will try to prove myself equal to your desire, though, I repeat, it is a very delicate matter for me to write the first page of a book which treats of me and my works. To digress a moment, I beg of you, let nothing be exaggerated; be moderate, and do not extol too highly my poor merits."

The following extracts are from letters written by the master during the dreary winter of 1890-1891, when he was suddenly called upon to bear the

greatest trial that had yet assailed him. We give our readers a glimpse of this profound grief, in the hope that it may inspire every heart to imitate the heroic endurance which sought surcease of sorrow only in patient, unflagging, conscientious labor, and a more active expression of sympathy for his fellow-sufferers.

Under the date of November, 1860, he writes :

"You have imposed on me a severe task in asking me to write a Preface to your book ; nothing is more difficult for me than to *write*. I do not know how, and am forced to make stupendous efforts which, moreover, are never crowned with success ! But at last it is done, and I send it herewith. I have done my best, but am sure it is very bad. Here, too, are the verses dedicated to me by my friend Popelin, that you wished to have.

" " Nous sommes, mon vieux Gérôme,
De résolus combattants
Dont la mâle ardeur ne chôme
Voilà plus de quarante ans.

" " Avec fortune diverse
Nous avons fait le devoir,
Nul au chemin de traverse
N'a pu nous apercevoir.

" " Dans le plein jour de la vie
Nous avons sans cesse été
Droit, par la route suivie,
En hiver, comme en été.

" " Vienne le sort qui nous tonche,
Vétérans, nous brûlerons
Notre dernière cartonche,
Et, debouts, succomberons.

" " Nous savons par compétence
Tout ce que vaut le travail ;
Sans lui, la courte existence
Serait un épouvantail.

" " Aussi, nous menons nos œuvres,
Et ne nous arrêtons pas
Pour échapper aux coulèvres
Qui pululent sous nos pas.

" " Toi, tu fais parler la toile
À défier tous les mots ;
Né sous une moindre étoile
Je fixe au feu des émaux.

“ ‘ Mais sur mon esquif en rade
 Quelquefois j'écris des vers,
 Reçois les, mon camarade,
 Avec les deux bras ouverts.’

“ . . . Life is only a succession of sorrows and sacrifices ; one *must* resign one's self, since things are so ordered and cannot be otherwise on this *globe terraque*, where our sojourn is not in any wise desirable. May you be recompensed for your self-denial. As for me, I have for a long time led a painful existence, as you know ; but the most cruel blow has been reserved for me. My only son, built like Hercules, has fallen ill of consumption, and, I fear—in truth I am sure—the future has most mournful changes in store for me. My entire family left this evening to pass the winter with him in a milder climate, at Cannes, and I shall remain here all alone for six months. In addition, my father-in-law, already very aged, is nearing his end, and from this quarter a catastrophe is imminent ; you see that all this is not very cheerful. Further still, I myself am far from well, but I keep up good courage and plunge up to my neck in work ; this is absolutely necessary for me, for I am miserable, unhappy, desolate, in a deserted house. . . . I painted this summer several pictures, which are not quite finished—a *View of Cairo*, *Venus Rising* (the star), and the *Pygmalion and Galatea*. This latter, I think, shows good invention, and I shall shortly put the last touches on it. For the moment, I have abandoned myself entirely to sculpture, and am making a figure of *Bellona* uttering her war-cry ; this statue is life-size and will be made in various materials ; the nude parts in ivory, the draperies and armor in gilded or silvered bronze, the whole tinted in different colors. It is a considerable work and probably the last of similar importance that I shall create. I have strong hope that I shall succeed, but also have my doubts ; we shall see !”

As we remember the sketch of the *Venus* alluded to, the canvas showed a stretch of blue, star-lit heavens, veiled here and there by semi-transparent clouds which drift across a beautiful face and bust of the Queen of Stars, whose rising eclipses all lesser lights. Even in its unfinished state, this picture exhibited a luminosity of atmosphere that it would be hard to surpass.

Days and weeks of unremitting, almost frenzied labor now ensued, until the master was summoned away to sustain by his comforting presence the poor invalid who had already entered the Valley of the Shadow of Death. In the month of January comes a letter, in which he struggles to face, with unflinching courage, the bitter prospect of bereavement that lies before him—and, with his usual unselfishness, puts aside even this great grief to fulfill requests which are regarded as veritable duties by this conscientious spirit. He says :

“ It is from Cannes that I write you, always behindhand nowadays with my letters ; it is because, in this latter time, my life has been peculiarly overburdened, and then I am a prey to the most acute mental suffering. I am

here, having left Paris and suspended all work, to stay by the bedside of my son, who is *extremely ill*; alas! unhappily, I must avow it, *dying*. You can well understand, can you not, in what condition of mind I am, and how profoundly my whole being is agitated, when I behold the frightful spectacle which precedes the death of a young man of twenty-five! . . . I leave this mournful subject to reply to your questions. I have long since given orders to make the plate of the *Tanagra* from the profile which best renders the statue; if it is not yet finished, it should be very soon, for I did justice, without delay, to your most legitimate request, as soon as you expressed to me, in one of your letters, already old, the desire you had on this subject. This point then, is entirely cleared up—have no more anxiety about it. . . . Since you interest yourself as much as ever in my work, I will make a little recapitulation of that which I have just finished or which is under way.

“First, the large figure of *Bellona*; she is standing on tiptoe, with her arms thrown back; naturally in one hand she holds a sword, in the other a shield; at her feet, upon the pedestal which represents a half of the terrestrial globe—a map of the world cut in two—is coiled a serpent; his head is raised and the immense jaws are open. The figure is draped in a tunic and mantle raised by the wind, which gives a certain movement to the *ensemble*. This sculpture appears to have gained the approbation of those who have seen it; but, the model once finished, I am not yet at an end of the problems to be solved, for I wish to execute this statue in different materials, bronze gilded and tinted, oxidized silver, niellos, etc., and the nudes in ivory; all this does not fail to give me some anxiety, for it is a difficult thing to find all the workmen to successfully carry out so complex a work. I shall, however, do my very best, and have decided to make all necessary sacrifices to obtain the desired result. I have also lately finished a little figure in marble, half life-size, of a dancing-girl; it is like the one *Tanagra* holds in her hand, only this is more seriously made, and the nude portions, as well as the draperies, have been studied with care. I have painted it, and I believe I have succeeded with the coloring; I was still working on it the day of my departure, but was able to finish it. It will be exposed at the Cercle, as well as the portrait (bust) of General Cambriels, and the picture representing me at work on the *Tanagra*, with my model at one side in the same pose; I think it is of an agreeable tone of color, but one does not know exactly what to think of one's work until it has been placed before the public, which praises or condemns. When an artist has accomplished all of which he is capable, when he has tried to put both his soul and his heart into his work, he should await this verdict with tranquillity. Also (as I have mentioned) I have finished a lion in sculpture, life-size, who is going to sleep while warming himself in the sun (title, *Beatitude*). I shall reserve this for the coming Exposition in the month of May. Among my pictures are a large *View of Cairo*, the *Pygmalion and Galatea* (which I intend very shortly to put into *marble*), and some lions—three or four, in different situations—pursuing antelope in the desert, watching for prey in a landscape of arid mountains (Salon 1891) the same one as the sculpture, lighted by the rising sun, and another tormented by

a butterfly. This is about all that I have done lately ; but during the last four months I have been greatly disturbed by this calamity which has so suddenly assailed me, and whose last blow I now await."

These mournful apprehensions were too soon to be realized. Before the spring had come the journals of Paris chronicled the death of Gérôme's only son, and, on both sides of the Atlantic, sympathy for the master's irreparable loss was universal and profound. Almost crushed by this cruel affliction he instinctively turned to his art, seeking, as ever, comfort in his work. But the blow had struck deep, and months after his letters showed that the wound had not yet begun to heal.

"He is dead — dead ! and only twenty-five. . . . You will comprehend in what condition my spirit has been and still remains ; *work* has sustained me ; it has not consoled me, but has helped me to endure this horrible mutilation. . . . Each one has his sorrows, of diverse nature, and one is forced to acknowledge that on this wretched sphere where we live, all are unhappy, and those who *leave* it are not to be pitied ! they enter into rest and peace. . . . But you know all this, already, for I wrote you all from Cannes ; but it is difficult for me not to recur to it."

From his dear friend, the Hon. Mr. Kennard of Boston, who visited Gérôme just before the first premonitions of this short and fatal illness were felt, we have the following sympathetic pen-portrait :

"You kindly ask of me a word as to the master, Gérôme.

"I deem it my good fortune that I can claim some personal acquaintance with him. Few men whom I have met, in what may be thought perhaps an exceptional experience, so readily commanded my profound admiration, and so easily won my affectionate esteem. Unaffected, free from the proverbial eccentricities of genius, quiet and dignified in his ways, scholarly in his acquirements and in his conversation, an accomplished cosmopolitan, his agreeable personality cannot be forgotten.

"Chaplain's profile medallion, reproduced by Wyatt Eaton, and given us in the February, 1889, number of *The Century Magazine*, faithfully portrays that thoughtful face, serious without austerity, and indicative of the brain that has given us that remarkable picture of the *Death of Nèv*, in which is embalmed so much touching pathos, intensified history, sincere and unmatched.

"The atmosphere and properties of his most inviting atelier strikingly illustrate the refined student and perfect artist. His tastes and his treasures manifested there would warm enthusiasm in the dullest veins. Apparently indifferent to the world's applause, like his friend Barye, he has pursued with an unusual and conscious industry his own somewhat sequestered paths, and thus perhaps avoided a commonplace celebrity, while it has not detracted from his fame or his honors.

"The art life of Paris for the last generation could not afford to lose the influence and the exemplary individuality of Jean Léon Gérôme.

"The reverent affection of famous pupils attests this. Not always during the life of an artist can be anticipated the award of history; it is not, however, too much to predict that the creations of this gifted master must enroll his name not only among the distinguished of his own day, but with the illustrious for all time. His sculptures, notably his *Lucretia* group, his *Omphale*, his *Gladiators*, attest the consummate anatomist and his marvelous versatility, while they exhibit all the distinction and delicacy of touch that characterize his canvases.

"His statue of *Tanagra*, an irresistibly charming marble, is another and more recent illustration of this manner, veritably rivaling the antiques. It seems to be given to but few men to love and to pursue their work as does Gérôme, and this enthusiasm lends generous inspiration to his fertile brain and dexterous hand. May the day be far off when that hand shall be still, or the well whence that inspiration is so copiously drawn shall be dry!"

We can but echo this prayer from our inmost heart as we close the record of this fruitful life, leaving this veteran of sixty-seven working with unabated energy and ever-increasing skill, as the matchless groups of *Bellona* and *Pygmalion and Galatea* indisputably attest. His powers of creation seem inexhaustible, and assuredly we can say of Gérôme, as did Pliny of Timanthes:

"In all the works of this artist there is untold wealth of suggestion, and however lofty the pinnacle to which he has elevated his art, his spirit soars still higher."

FINIS.



