

upturned, silent faces. When the procession reached Fulton and Wall streets, it seemed nearly impossible to believe that life could be kept back from where these streets join Broadway; yet such was the love for Mr. Cooper that all remained silent to the end, and it was only when the carriages which had followed the hearse turned again, after leaving it, into Broadway that the crowd surged back and life resumed its usual course, ebbing and flowing as before.

The recollection of a great court funeral is still vivid in my mind, when the young

Queen Mercedes of Spain was buried. At this funeral the Spanish nobility laughed and flirted behind their fans, in the very church, while the Requiem Mass was being performed and the funeral sermons were being preached. The sight was a sad lesson on the vanity of worldly greatness, when one compared it with the spectacle of the silent procession of persons who moved for many hours up the aisles of the church to look once again on the dead face of Mr. Cooper, their loved and revered friend.

Susan N. Carter.



GEORGE FULLER.

On the walls of the New York Academy of Design, in 1878, there hung a picture called "Turkey Pasture in Kentucky," which attracted much attention. Simple in theme, sober in tone, telling no "story," and making no daring technical appeal to notice, it was yet remarked by the popular eye and was found, I think, by artists and all sensitive observers much the most interesting picture of the year. Who, it began very soon to be asked, is this Mr. Fuller, whose name is so unfamiliar, whose work is so original and so charming,—who is, apparently, making his *début*, yet whose essays are so complete and ripe and masterly? If he is, as he seems to be, a "new man," he shows the trade-mark neither of Paris nor of Munich; and if he is a product of home culture he shows even less affinity with the traditions of our own elder school. Where does he come from that he has learned to paint in so peculiar yet so fine a way?

Glancing at the catalogue we found that Mr. Fuller was not in any sense a "new man," but an artist of long standing—actually an Associate of the Academy itself, elected so long ago as 1857. Where and why, then, had he secluded himself so entirely and so persistently as to come now a stranger before the younger generation of to-

day? The answer to these questions may be given in a brief sketch of Mr. Fuller's life—a sketch most interesting because so unlike the usual histories of artistic development, whether in our own country or another.

Mr. Fuller was born of Puritan stock at Deerfield, Massachusetts, in the year 1822. An instinct for art had already shown itself in several members of his family, and from childhood his own tastes led him toward a painter's brush and palette. He went to Illinois at the age of fourteen with a party of railroad engineers, and remained two years, during which time he was much in the company of the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown. Between the ages of sixteen and twenty Mr. Fuller was again at Deerfield, following a school course, but making constant essays in painting, chiefly in the way of portraiture. In 1842 he wrote for counsel to Mr. Brown, then established in a studio at Albany, and gladly accepted the sculptor's invitation to go thither and study under his tuition. At Albany he remained nearly a year, when Mr. Brown went to Europe and Mr. Fuller to Boston where, painting portraits as before, he devoted himself also to the study of whatever works of art the city then afforded—especially the pictures of Stuart, Allston, and Alexander. A few years later he removed to New York,

and, at an age when most painters have finished their student courses, went diligently to work in the life-classes of the Academy. His first public success seems to have been gained in 1857, when he was already thirty-five years old. He then exhibited a portrait of his first friend in art, Mr. Brown, and on the strength of its good qualities was elected an Associate of the National Academy.

It is curious to read the list of those who were at this time Mr. Fuller's friends and fellow-workers, and to remember how he now stands side by side in his art with the youngest and most innovating of our painters. H. K. Brown, the two Cheneys, Henry Peters Gray, Quincy Ward, Sandford Gifford, Daniel Huntington,—these were among his most constant associates; while to-day we find him joining hands with the young "Society of American Artists," and feel that the "A. N. A." which follows his name is much less characteristic than the place held by that name on the Society's member-list and juries.

After a year in New York Mr. Fuller spent three winters at the South, making studies of negro life some of which have been utilized in his later work. Then, after a year in Philadelphia, he went for the first time to Europe, not to study in any academy but to learn from nature and from the treasures of earlier days in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Florence, Rome, and Sicily. In 1860, he returned to America, but not to the public practice of his art. Dissatisfied with his previous efforts and filled with visions and ideals proper to his own nature, he seems to have felt that if he was ever to work his way to ripe performance it would be through his own strength, and not through help from school or patron or fellow-craftsman. He shut himself up in his Deerfield home, took seriously to farming, and the world of exhibitions, of artists, and of critics knew him no more. He was invisible for many years—almost forgotten save by a few old friends who remembered the promise of his earlier work. The proof that he had not ceased to cultivate art while compelling nature to his needs, was not shown till 1876, when some friends who had penetrated the Deerfield studio persuaded him to exhibit in Boston fourteen pictures of different kinds, which at once gained him local fame and patronage. Two years later he appeared again on the walls of the New York Academy, after so long an absence that he came (I repeat), as a stranger and an aspirant—his place to be won afresh, his success dependent on the suffrages of a new generation of artists and of art lovers. He returned, not a beginner but a veteran in art, yet as a *débutant* once more. And to how different an artistic

world from the one he had known in years gone by! The great exodus of students to Parisian and Bavarian schools, of amateurs to foreign studios and galleries, had begun a few years before. Its results were just returning to us in the shape of a more cultivated and critical public, used to the best foreign work and of a throng of vigorous, eager, cosmopolitan young painters, all alike disregarding of older American traditions and filled with new ideas on every subject, from the definition of the abstract term "art" down to the most concrete professional questions of the studio. But in this new world Mr. Fuller's voice sounded not an alien but a consonant note. The artists—I mean the younger brood, and not the brother Academicians who "skied" his pictures—were the first and the most enthusiastic in his praise. Their estimate of his talent, and their feeling that it was akin, in these his later efforts, to their own ideas rather than to those of his actual contemporaries, was before long shown by his election into the Society of American Artists. In contrast with this ready recognition has been the action of the National Academy, the brevet rank of which he has held so long. Elected Associate in 1857, placed indisputably by his recent successes among the very first of American painters,—and in certain points, perhaps, beyond them all,—Mr. Fuller has not yet been named Academician. We do not feel that it is he who has been injured by such omission of his due. But to read the list of those whom the Academy has promoted over his head within the past six years, affords a factor which should not be omitted in our estimate of the value of its official titles.

In 1879 Mr. Fuller showed at the Academy the "Romany Girl" and a quite marvelous canvas called "And She Was a Witch"; in 1880 he sent the "Quadron" and a boy's portrait; and in 1881, the loveliest of all his works—the "Winifred Dysart." To the exhibitions of the young Society he has also contributed year by year, chiefly portraits or landscapes, until in 1882 he sent two large figures, conceived in the same mood as the "Winifred," called "Lorette" and "Priscilla Fauntleroy," and last spring another, not dissimilar, called "Nydia." Among other canvases shown from time to time, under different circumstances, have been the "Herb Gatherer," the "Dandelion Girl," the "Psyche," a Cupid-like "Boy and Bird," and a wooded landscape with figures, now in Mr. Cottier's possession. And in his studio he has just now a large picture of a "Girl with a Calf," more akin in sentiment, perhaps, to the "Romany Girl" than to any other of his works.

Mr. Fuller's summer studio is still at Deer-

field, but his winter work is now done in Boston. Some German philosopher once decided that an artist may do his work contentedly under one of two opposite conditions: either in rooms filled with beauty or in rooms denuded of everything; either surrounded by objects with which his tastes are in unison and his works in keeping, or isolated as completely as possible from all things whatsoever. Which of these two environments he prefers will depend upon his temperament—upon his craving for or independence of external, visual stimulants. The sort of environment with which no really artistic temperament could content itself would be one half-way between these two extremes—an environment of commonplace, unsuggestive, distracting, Philistine ugliness. Whether Mr. Fuller consciously objects to and discards the artistic litter which surrounds most modern painters, or whether he unconsciously neglects it because bare walls and his own ideals are all he needs, I cannot say. But his Boston studio fulfills with almost literal exactness the German's second postulate. If it is not "artistic," it is certainly not "Philistine" or suggestive of a tolerance for ugliness. It is a place to work in, and that is all—a large square room, with one great window overlooking Boston Common; two or three chairs and easels, a platform for the model, and what we may call, if we will, a "dado" of unfinished canvases turned against the wall. There was only one thing more when I first saw the studio, but that thing was significant. Hung on the empty wall was a single little canvas, a gorgeous, vague, entrancing bit of Monticelli's color, shining like a star from the surrounding void. Here was the one resting-point, apparently, that the artist's eye demanded—a key-note, as it were, a term of comparison, an inspiring draught to which he might turn at will.

In person, Mr. Fuller offers at first sight a strong contrast to the spirituality of his art—tall, massively built, with a large head and a patriarchal beard of white. Had we theories on such matters, we should expect very different things from such a form and physiognomy—some sort of vigorous "realism," most probably, instead of the delicate, idealizing art he gives. But the dissonance is in outward seeming only. Mr. Fuller's words and thoughts on art, his judgments of the results of others, and his estimate of his own aims and his own productions, are not only suggestive and interesting in themselves but valuable as giving an insight into the meaning and sentiment of his work.

To mark now the chief characteristic of that work, I may say that it is distinctly ideal in

its essence—opposed in its aims as in its technical methods to what we know as "realistic" art. All art-products fall into one of these two classes, though the limits of the two meet, of course, and some few men may stand on the wavering boundary line between them. The distinction between the one kind of work and the other is never to be based on choice of subject. Nor does it rest primarily on technical manner, though, indeed, a painter's manner is most apt to conform to the nature of his aims and his conceptions, since it is but his means toward expressing these. The true difference, however, is as between the nature of one painter and of another. Every artist, like every philosopher, is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian. It is not the thing he chooses to paint, but the way in which he sees and feels that thing, that marks a man as an "idealist" or a "realist." Michael Angelo was an idealist while painting divine creative power or the wrath of judgment days; Millet, while depicting peasants at their toil. Dürer was a realist when painting the Madonna, Vereschagin is when drawing the dead on the field of battle. Even in portraiture proper this same difference between dispositions makes itself as clearly felt—Rembrandt on the one hand, Holbein on the other; Holbein a realist, though limning philosophers and queens; Rembrandt an idealist, though portraying the tawdry patriarchs of the *ghetto*.

In drawing this distinction I would not, of course, have it for a moment understood that I call *any* art "realistic" in the sense of its being a mere copyism of external facts. All art, of whatever kind, however denuded, apparently, of imagination or poetic sentiment,—the art of Holbein or Jordaens or Metsu, even the so nearly literal and therefore so inartistic art of Denner, as well as the art of Raphaël or Corot,—is, as Emerson has put it, "nature passed through the alembic of man." The difference between Denner and the idealist—still more between a great artist like Holbein and the idealist—is a difference of quantity only; lies in the degree to which a painter modifies, transmutes, transfigures, in rendering a theme from nature. But this difference in degree may be so immensely wide that we are quite justified in drawing the distinction made above. And to draw it clearly is one of our most important tasks when we would make an estimate of any painter's character.

Mr. Fuller's art is not only of the idealistic school, but, considering his time and place, is peculiarly marked in this respect. The near-as-may-be reproduction of nature is a thing absolutely alien to his aims. To take nature

as his basis (as every artist must), to keep true to her general facts (as every artist should) and through them to her meaning, but to make natural effects speak with a stronger, clearer, more poetic voice, coming from the artist's own feelings and ideas when in nature's presence,—this may, perhaps, roughly define Mr. Fuller's theory of art. To-day, and in this new world, such an artistic temperament is uncommon. It is so rare, indeed, that many prophets who are hopeful of our artistic future yet believe that it will be a future devoid of idealism to a most marked degree. For myself, I do not think this. But it is the worst of futilities to argue over the hidden things to come. I will only plead, therefore, that although such a temperament as Mr. Fuller's must be confessed exceptional with us to-day, yet in the mere existence of one such temperament (not that I myself think it is the only one), we have ground for hopeful prophecy.

In subject most of Mr. Fuller's pictures are extremely simple, and without exception they are all conceived in a purely pictorial spirit, depending for their interest not at all on any "literary" or other extrinsic element. Many of them are large single figures, simple in pose, denuded of all accessories, connected with no incident upon the canvas, still less with any that a name might suggest to the beholder. In the "Winifred Dysart,"* for example, which seems to me the most perfect of them all with the possible exception of the "Turkey Pasture," we see against a shadowy landscape background, with a very high horizon-line and a glimpse of cloud-streaked sunset sky above, the three-quarter-length figure of a young girl dressed in a pale grayish-lilac gown, her arms and neck uncovered, holding in one hand a small empty jug, and looking out of the canvas with a straight though veiled and dreamy gaze. Nothing could be more simple and unstudied than her pose, with both arms hanging loosely by her side. But nothing could be more naively graceful. It is full of pure poetry, this picture,—not poetry of a literary sort, as the factor is too often introduced in art, but of a truly pictorial kind. We are told nothing of the girl; there is no "motive" used, no "anecdote" suggested. It is herself that interests and fascinates us,—and less by actual beauty, though this exists to a high degree, than by psychical charm, if I may so express myself, by a spiritual emanation which shines from her face and form, and from the artist's every touch.

* This picture was engraved by Mr. Closson for the "American Art Review" in 1881, and the "Romany Girl" was reproduced by Mr. Cole in SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE for July, 1880.

He has made us see not only what he saw in a model placed before him, but what he divined, imagined, or created in her presence,—her inner as well as her outer nature. And as this was a poetical conception, and as it is expressed by consonant technique, the result is painted poetry. No more fascinating, haunting, individual, living figure has come from a contemporary hand. And it preserves its individuality in presence of the art of past days also,—has had no prototype or inspiration in the work of any other brush.

In the "Romany Girl" a rather more forceful chord is struck, but with hardly less of elusive charm, and nothing less of individuality or beauty. The wild-eyed, half bold, passionate, yet tender, face, the supple action expressed in the quiescent figure, the soul that speaks from the features as distinctly as does the so different soul in the "Winifred,"—these are the elements which place the canvas amid really creative works. The "Quadroon," with less of beauty and charm, has almost the same impressiveness. Sitting in the corn-field, with her arms resting on her knees, her great, sad, half-despairing eyes turned to ours, she reveals the mystery, the suffering of her race. No pictured scene of slave-life, with action, accessories, and story, could be more expressive, more pathetic. These simple single figures, as Mr. Fuller has created them, are so full of meaning, of character, of individuality, as well as of idyllic charm, that each becomes to us an actual being—remembered not as a mere pictured form, but as a true poetical identity.

The two pictures shown in 1882 seemed to me less perfect than these others, not quite so beautiful or so characteristic,—the results, apparently, of visions which had not been so compellingly clear in the painter's own mind. The "Priscilla Fauntleroy," however, was only a degree less charming than the "Winifred." It seemed captious to criticise her, even in the only possible way one could,—by comparing her with her elder sister. Mr. Fuller is his own severest critic. If his finest works have made us hypercritical he has but himself to blame.

In the "Priscilla," by the way, we have what may seem, at first sight, to be a subject of "literary" interest, emanating, to some degree at least, from an author's creative power and not altogether from the artist's. But this exception among Mr. Fuller's pictures is such in appearance rather than in fact. If Hawthorne's ideal in "The Blithedale Romance" has inspired him, it has served merely as a point of departure for the working of his own imagination. The canvas is not illustrative in the popular sense, nor does it depend

for its value to any great extent upon its adherence to its ostensible theme. We may or we may not find Hawthorne's Priscilla in this shy, startled girl, with one hand raised in a gentle, half-bewildered gesture to her face. But in either case we find a charming picture, and one suggesting a definite personality filled with delicacy and with grace. And this should be the case with every creation of the sort; whether or no it affords a complete realization of its extrinsic theme, its chief value should be intrinsic. Its pictorial quality should have been first in the artist's mind and should be first to the spectator's sense; and the artist should have clearly realized an inward ideal of his own, whether or no in strict accordance with his author's.

The primarily pictorial quality of Mr. Fuller's art is strongly shown when he comes to actual portraiture. It must be an eminently "paintable" face, I should think, that would tempt his brush, and a face that he could transmute, at least, into some kind of beauty. With ugliness, even of a characteristic and expressive sort, his idyllic impulse has no concern. Children and young girls and half-grown, blooming boys,—these are the models he most often takes; though I have seen a portrait of a very old lady, painted not long ago, which proves him sensible to the beauty of old age too, and able to give its character with force and truth as well as poetry. Given sympathetic models, Mr. Fuller's portraits have a rare psychological interest, and his sympathetic models, being of the classes I have just noted, are those with which psychological expression is most difficult to attain, since it must be divined under the smooth, unmarked flesh of youth, and rendered without strong accentuation of any kind. Yet we cannot but feel that of quite as much interest to their author have been their strictly pictorial possibilities. Indeed, I heard him say once to a would-be sitter: "Don't expect too much. I shall make it something of a portrait and a good deal of a picture." His portraits are, in a word, like his other works, of the idealizing and not the realistic school. And about them he most often throws the same vague, misty glamour he gives to his purely imaginary creations,—an atmosphere that results partly from his way of seeing nature, and partly from the technical method which that way of seeing has induced.

Of his landscapes the same words may be used. They are not so much definite picturings of definite localities as idealized studies of color, light, and foliage. One of the best is that owned by Mr. Cottier, with its wonderful effect of distance beyond the scat-

tered tree-trunks and its magical illumination. The most remarkable, however, is the lovely pastoral he calls the "Turkey Pasture in Kentucky," with which he reappeared at the Academy of Design in 1878. The landscape is wonderful in its strongly poetic yet truthful expression of light, of sun and shadow, and of color. In grace of composition, in suggested life and motion and vigor in the figures, it is, however, almost equally remarkable—one of the loveliest, and surely one of the most original and therefore most valuable, creations of recent art.

Such pictures as the "Herb Gatherer" and the "And She Was a Witch" resemble this last in giving us small figures in beautiful landscape settings. But they differ through the presence of a dramatic, even tragic, element we have not yet encountered. The "Herb Gatherer" is rather small in size, and shows us the aged, shrunken figure of a withered crone, finding her painful way through a weedy pasture, carrying the simples she has sought. An uncanny, witch-like atmosphere pervades the canvas. The face of the woman suggests past beauty, perhaps, but present converse with bitter thoughts; and the burden she bears speaks of strange, forbidden decoctions. The picture casts a spell over us—a spell such as is cast by much of Hawthorne's writing, though in the one case as in the other it is hard to explain just how the subtle influence is diffused. In the "Witch" picture the same effect is wrought with more distinctly tragic factors, and with even more intensity. The scene is a wooded landscape with tall thin tree-trunks; in the distance a woman led away to the dread tribunal; in the foreground a girl—her grand-daughter, one supposes—fleeing in terror to the door of her humble dwelling. Beautiful in its externals it is weirdly impressive and haunting in its meaning, though here, again, the sentiment is suggested merely, without the aid of very definite incident or story, a great deal being left to the spectator's own imagination.

Mr. Fuller is among the most conscientious—it might be better to say, the most loving—of workmen. No time, no effort, no thought, no pains seem to him too much to bestow on his creations. He works on them sometimes for years before he allows the world to see them, in the effort (always, I suppose, appearing fruitless to the true artist) to make the outward form tally with the inner vision. Indeed, it is but hesitatingly that I venture to describe any canvas still in Mr. Fuller's hands, knowing well his way of suddenly blotting out, after many years, perhaps, what to others may

seem one of his most perfect essays, and beginning it all over from the start. And a collector who buys one of Mr. Fuller's pictures has sometimes, if he could only profit by them, a whole little gallery of other pictures under the outer and ostensible creation. With regard to the aims and ideas with which he approaches his work I may, perhaps, quote a few words of his own—words which, however, it is but fair to say, were not written for the public eye. "I have long since learned," he says, "to look on the painter's stubborn means as a lion in the path, to be overcome without leaving evidence of the struggle. What sad days those were, twenty years ago or more, when every tyro noted down carefully the palettes of Rembrandt, Rubens, Reynolds, and Stuart, thinking thereby to gain some notion of their power; and, if this was not enough, turning to the 'Hand-book of Oil Painting,' by Walker, wherein were laid down thirty tints of red, blue, and yellow, for the painting of the human head. Experience teaches one, in time, to throw such rubbish aside; to realize that one must see for himself; that all rules fail to guide him in color; that the great painters were not alike in their ways of working, but that all were true to their perception of the pervading truth, to their sense of gradation, their control of their subject (common ground whereon Holbein is a colorist with Titian), and that the attainment of *gradation* is utterly above and regardless of any means used. To make one part keep its place or relation to the whole comes more through our feeling than our seeing. For myself, I am much controlled by the work before me, being greatly influenced by suggestions which come through much scraping off, glazing, scumbling, etc., in trying to extricate myself from difficulties which my way of working entails upon me—always striving for general truth. Indeed, the object to be attained must always be reached through our own methods. The great painters tell us this, and leave us to fight it out. They only insist upon gradation, the law of which governs values, tone, and harmony, so no detail must interfere with its truth. The main thing is to express broadly and simply, hiding our doing, realizing representation, not reproduction,—to get ourselves above our matter. A picture is a world in itself. The great thing is, first, to have an idea—to eliminate and to clear away the obstructions that surround it. It is more what is left out than what is put in. The manipulation admired by some, the true painter seeks to hide. The question must forever be, What is below the surface? Color is intuitive. It belongs to the imagination. It

affects the mind like the tones in music, and lives only in the minor key."

Of his own picture of the "Girl and Calf," now in hand, I heard him say: "What shall I make of it? I don't know yet. The subject is all there, of course, but what is the subject in a picture? Nothing. It is the *treatment* that makes or mars. (By *treatment* meaning, of course, the personal sentiment as well as the technical manner an artist brings to bear.) 'A Girl and a Calf'—what is that? We have all seen such figures a thousand times, and taken no interest. It is my business to bring out something the casual eye does not perceive—to accentuate, to interpret. Just how I shall do it must come to me as I work—or the picture will be nothing." These are the words of an idealist, but words which, in more or less of their entirety, will be echoed by every true artist of whatever school. The disciples of modern dash and brilliancy will, however, doubtless see no virtue in "hiding their doing," since this very "doing," independently of what is done, is too often to-day a picture's and an artist's highest claim to honor. That it is a high claim when well sustained, I do not question; yet, if there were more significance and individuality of matter behind some of the current ease and grace and strength of manner, modern art would be greatly the gainer.

Mr. Fuller's technical manner has been the subject of much discussion and disagreement—a sure proof of its originality if of nothing more. To some observers it seems not only original but very beautiful, with its subdued yet glowing color, its somewhat willful chiaroscuro, its almost diaphanous textures, its misty vagueness of effect, and its involved, half-hesitating touch. To others it has seemed a drawback, an imperfection, or even an affectation,—a mannerism that clouds the better elements of his art. For myself, however, it is impossible thus to separate Mr. Fuller's manner from his manner—to imagine one as disassociated from the other. His soft rich color, his vague backgrounds, his shadowy outlines, his broadened details, his misty touch, seem a very part and parcel of his conceptions and his aims. And this impression was only confirmed when I saw one of his earlier works, a portrait painted long ago before the European trip and the Deerfield hermit-life. It was the head of a comparatively young man with a fair complexion and a brown beard. It was fine in color, though without the perfect harmony of tone we know to-day, perfectly simple in execution, much more definite, more detailed, more "realistic," more naive,—and more commonplace,—than we might believe had ever been

possible to his hand. Only in the character suggested with much sympathetic force, in its evidence not only to the nature of the model but also to the mood of the painter, could one see any trace of the poetizing artist of to-day. The painter's meaning seemed out of harmony with his speech. We longed to see the same face copied in the language he has taught himself since it first was painted,—a language so much more delicate, more abstract, more dreamy, and therefore so much better fitted to express the mood of such an artist.

As a colorist, Mr. Fuller's charm is to me very great. His range is called narrow, though there is an essential difference, I think, between the cool green scale he adopts in some of his landscapes—the delicate grayish harmony of the "Winifred," the deeper, browner tone of the "Romany Girl," the rosy glow of the "Nydia"—and the soft golden hue he gives to many of his portraits. It is probably his ever-present mistiness of technique, and the fact that with all his modulations he always holds to the "minor key" he loves, that has made his color seem to careless observers more unvarying than it really is. Sometimes it is perfect in its beauty, and always, once more, extremely individual. It is not in brilliancy that its excellence consists. It is in harmony, in complete tone, in the way things are made to keep in place and reveal their forms and relationships without recourse to the least violence of contrast. There is no accentuation in Mr. Fuller's canvases, never a vivid hue, a really high light or a really low dark. There is no emphasis whatever, either in a color or in its application, but always delicacy, self-restraint, suavity, mellowness, low, soft-toned, misty harmony. Yet there is no lack of strength, it seems to me, in his best examples, and certainly no want of complete gradation or of the definite expression of those broad facts he seeks to give. The "Turkey Pasture" is the most radiant of all his works, the "Winifred" perhaps the most delicately and rarely colored. But one of the most delightful of all in color was a portrait I saw in his Boston studio—the three-quarter-length figure of a young girl standing against a background of russet-hued landscape, fine in its suggestion of breeze and life. The dress was white,—but the word gives little notion of the subtle tone by which the artist had subdued its crudeness and brought it into keeping with the glowing background.

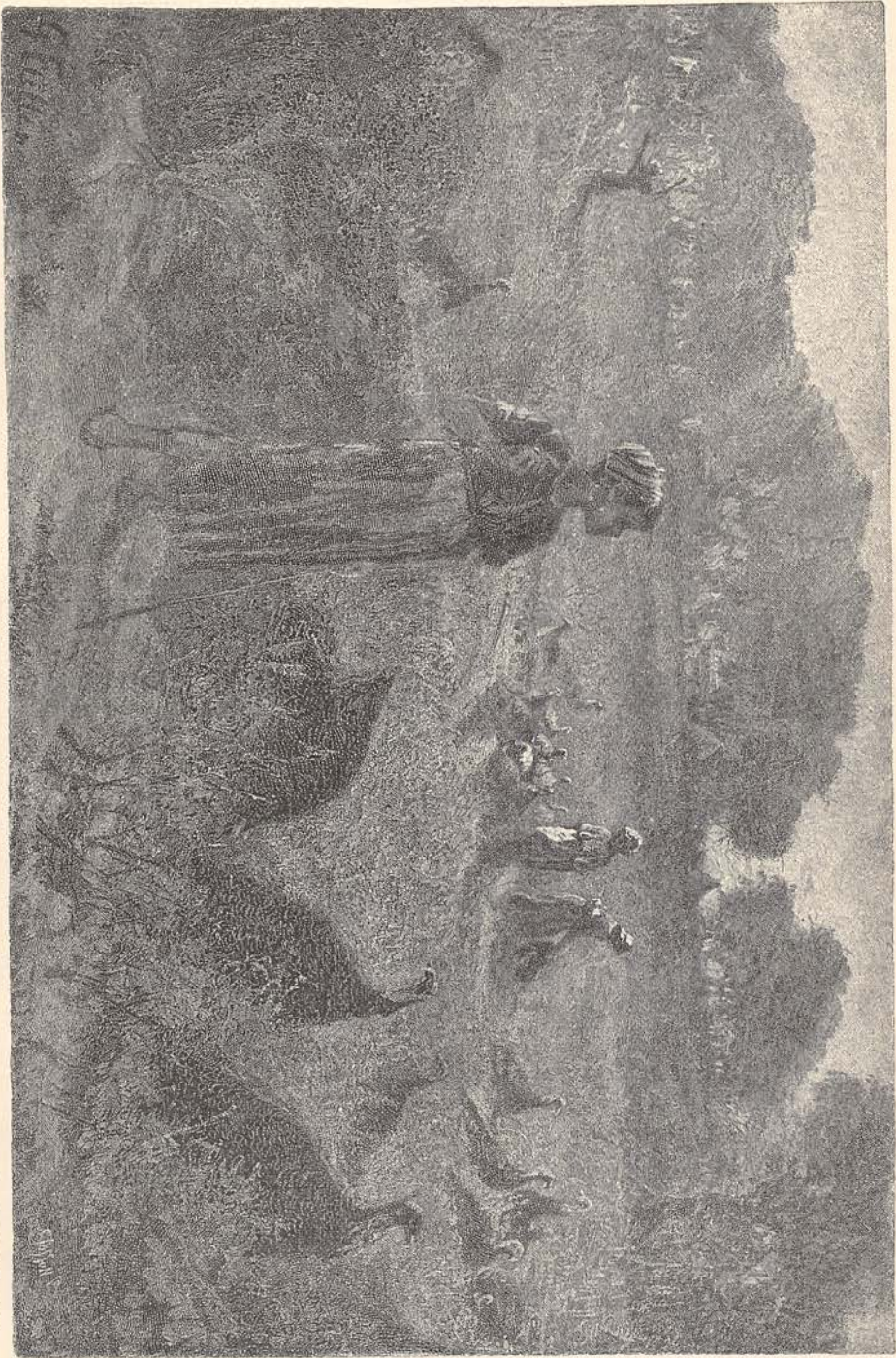
As there are no accessories in Mr. Fuller's compositions, so there are, as I have already implied, few details in his execution and little insistence upon textures. All is broadened, simplified, poetized,—taken out of the world

of even comparatively detailed imitation, and brought into the realm of somewhat ethereal but clearly realized imaginings.

The chief charge that has been brought against the artist's work is that of monotony—not only in the matter of color just referred to, but in its essence as a whole. Looking at his technical manner merely, it may seem well founded; but it is not, I think, a charge of a very serious sort. The versatility of some painters may multiply their crowns of glory, but cannot enhance the radiance of any single one. We delight in the versatility—the wide scope of thought, the radical change of mood, and the variety of treatment—of certain artists we could name. But we do not grumble at the almost changeless mood, the almost uniform expression of such a one as Corot. And so with Mr. Fuller. The man who could paint the "Winifred" and the "Turkey Pasture" is a true creative artist; and we go outside the legitimate bounds of criticism when we cavil because he cannot also give us other and quite different things. Yet, even so, I feel it is with his art in general as it is with his color,—there is less monotony than some would have us think. There is much diversity, indeed, if we look deeper than the surface of his paint. It is true that he who has seen one Fuller will never mistake another. But it is not true, as I have heard it bluntly put, that he who has seen one has seen them all. The uniformity of his handling is great, and is the more remarked on account of its strong individuality—its difference from the work of other men. But in their meaning, their conception, their inner essence as apart from their language, there is, it seems to me, a vital difference between such pictures as the "Nydia" and the "Witch," between such as the "Winifred" and the "Herb Gatherer."

An interesting characteristic of Mr. Fuller's art, perhaps the most interesting of all when considered with his ideal tendencies, is the evidently American flavor of the work it gives us. There are idealists as well as realists who might have been born in any land. Mr. Albert Ryder, for example, to take an instance close at hand, may be counted in with such; and in much of his work the greatest of our painters, Mr. John La Farge, though the latter, in some of his more recent decorative works, has given us the American type of face with much distinctness. But Mr. Fuller is never, and could never be, anything but a palpable American in his art. He is as American as the most thorough-going young realist who paints New York streets by the electric light or negro boys eating water-melons. Nay, far more American than the most of these; for, as I have said, the spirit, the quality of a

"TURKEY PASTURE IN KENTUCKY." ENGRAVED BY W. B. CLOSSON FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE FULLER. OWNED BY W. H. AMERCOMB, ESQ., BROOKLINE, MASS.



man's art do not depend upon his subject matter; and it so happens that many of our younger men approach local subjects with a sort of cold cosmopolitan vision, while Mr. Fuller feels his more subtly characteristic themes with a characteristically American soul. No one, it seems to me, but an American could have painted the "Winifred Dysart"—that etherealization of our own native type of beauty. No one else could so preserve the elusive yet distinct American look of all his portrait sitters, though veiling their features in the haze of his vaporous methods. Even his "Romany Girl" is an American gypsy,—a wild creature of our own woods and not of any other.

Another picture which reveals this quality in a noteworthy way is the "Nydia," exhibited last spring. It is not so interesting in character as some of its fellows, for the face of the single figure is seen in something less than profile; but it is a most charming and gracious vision. In refinement and delicacy of feeling, in perception of the peculiar beauty of early youth, of freshness and innocence and shy grace, it is akin, as I heard one observer say who knew whereof he spoke, "to the creations of a Reynolds or a Greuze." But just as surely as Sir Joshua's young girls are English, just so distinctly is this little so-called Nydia an American, though poetized, transmuted, if you will, into almost ethereal guise. The evidence thereof is intangible, elusive, inexplicable in words, as is always the evidence to such imponderable facts,—lying, possibly, in the mere poise of the head and outline of the nose and cheek. But it is unmistakable none the less; so I need hardly say that the chosen name is a misnomer,—that no one could divine Bulwer's blind girl of Thessaly in this dainty, rosy little maiden, not even with the help of certain shadowy, volcanic suggestions in the background. Nor need I add that the would-be Nydia, like the would-be Priscilla, shows that Mr. Fuller's art is always really independent of literary inspiration. To my mind it is a mistake for an artist of his temperament ever to attempt illustration even of the vaguest and most general sort. It must hamper his brush a little, although such a brush cannot even seriously *try* to bend itself to outward requirements. And though no title can help or trouble those who care for a canvas for its own pictorial sake, yet there are many persons who think the suggestions of a name are the main things to be looked for in a picture, and who resent their non-realization as they resent the breaking of a contract.

Of course, with such subjects as he chooses and such methods as he adopts, the national

accent of Mr. Fuller's art is never of a sharp, still less of an aggressive sort. He is not the man to answer Walt Whitman's appeal to our artists to

"Formulate the modern;
To limn with absolute faith the mighty, living present;
To exalt the present and the real;
To teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade."

It is nothing so definite as this with Mr. Fuller. His is more the sort of brush that says:

"An odor I'd bring as of forests of pine in Maine."

It is a flavor, not a message from the national life, that we perceive in his creations. But it is a flavor both acute and all-pervading; so, at least, it seems to me—for criticism of this kind cannot be dogmatic, but must be a mere putting on record of personal impressions.

But if I may trust such impressions still a little further, I will add that to me Mr. Fuller's art is not only American, but distinctly local. It has an aroma—I will not say of Boston, but perhaps of Concord; it is a painter's version of the vague, transcendental New England poesy that is fast dying out of this generation, but the essence of which is preserved to us in the writings of the last. Hawthorne's name has occurred more than once already to my pen, and it is, I think, one which well suggests the quality of Mr. Fuller's art. Such a canvas as the "Witch" recalls Hawthorne's mood to even dull perceptions—not more by its choice of subject than by its subtly artistic, dreamy, thrice-peculiar methods of expression. But more convincing still is the fact that when the "Winifred Dysart" was first exhibited, and people were speculating about its name, almost every one said: "I am sure it must be some character of Hawthorne's, though I cannot fix its place"; while the truth is, that the name was invented by Mr. Fuller merely as a title by which the canvas might be distinguished in the public memory.*

The creating, for his own needs, of a novel, personal, as well as beautiful way of working with his colors, is what makes a man a master, an originator among technicians, as distinct from an accomplished (even consummately accomplished) scholar. And imagination—the power of individual vision, of characteristic, fresh conception—is what makes him an *artist* as distinct from even a masterly

* It is interesting to note in this connection that Mr. Fuller has just now sketched a picture suggested by the witch trials in Massachusetts. It is somewhat novel in composition for him, containing many figures; but, both from a pictorial and an expressional point of view, promises to be one of the best of his creations.



"PSYCHE." (ENGRAVED BY W. B. CLOSSON FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE FULLER. OWNED BY MISS E. M. TOWER.)



"THE ROMANY GIRL." ENGRAVED BY T. COLE FROM THE PAINTING BY GEORGE FULLER.
[REPRINTED FROM THE JULY, 1880, NUMBER OF THIS MAGAZINE.]

technician. Not one alone, but both these important factors are to be found in Mr. Fuller's work. His imagination is not of a powerful kind. His poetry is seductive, not compelling; idyllic, not passionate; marks him a dreamer, not a seer. But it is true poetry, and proper to himself alone. His technique, on the other hand, is not brilliant, not audacious, not the marvelous legerdemain with which our eye is dazzled by many lesser artists—who may often be more wonderful *painters* than those with rarer mental gifts. But it is most artistic, most expressive; when at its best, extremely beautiful; and always and from the outset all his own—learned from no forerunner, and communicable to no successor. Original and lovely ideas told in an original and charming speech—a summing up which puts Mr. Fuller on a high plane,

like to the best of his guild in kind, though not necessarily in degree. His long retirement from the public sight was a dangerous experiment. With a lower nature, a less individual endowment, it would probably have resulted in weaknesses of many kinds—in rigid mannerisms, in self-conceit, in want of balance (mental and technical), in loss of critical insight into his own work and that of others. But to Mr. Fuller it meant fifteen years of patient, humble, conscientious, enthusiastic, self-reliant yet self-criticising effort, in wise disregard of popular advisings. It meant the persistence of his own ideal and the development of his expressional means in a consonant and personal way. And it has resulted in pure, lovely, and above all—to repeat the main facts once more—in original and ideal work.

M. G. Van Rensselaer.