

most gorgeous coloring is springing into life. Far away the river is merrily coming down the valley, flashing like a silver thread, and by its side are trooping serried armies of brilliant trees. Gold and crimson maples spring into life one after another out of the shadows, till the foothills are reached, when the more somber forest trees take their places.

But the impression on the mind, as the eye sweeps away to the north for twenty miles, is as if all the armies of the earth were out in the splendor of holiday parade. Only it is so very peaceful — so peaceful that hours pass unnoticed by the unconscious observer. The sun wheels on its course, the mountain reverses

its shadow, a path of streaming light dips into the river below,— is gone,— twinkling stars come out, and the dream is over.

The relation of such impressions to engraving on wood may not appear at first, but one engraver, at least, thinks he cannot engrave well without such experiences. And if other engravers become of like mind and love the Connecticut Valley, it is no assumption for them to find expression through the channel of their own profession. Each one will find material to build according to his liking, and the public in choosing from the results will, in the main, deal with it upon the same principle.

Elbridge Kingsley.

PAINTER-ENGRAVING.

WITH ENGRAVINGS BY THE AUTHOR.



ALL the arts are but the means for expressing thought, and that art is most valuable which interposes fewest obstacles between the thought and its ultimate expression, and receives most readily and retains longest the impress of individuality.

In the more fundamental arts, sculpture, music, and painting of fixed pictures, these attributes do not change greatly; but in the multiplying arts, where the final result is influenced by intermediate operations, their possibilities may be vastly augmented and their value greatly increased by refinements in those operations, so that an art which under certain conditions could not be made available for the ready fixing of refined thought may, when those conditions are improved, become very valuable for such use.

Among the graphic arts none has so long held its position or has had so wide an influence as relief engraving, remaining the same in principle since the first line was cut, nearly two thousand years ago. The development of its possibilities has been coincident with improvements in printing, but the direction of its use has been largely influenced by its adaptability to definite representation in small size, and the consequent convenience in the distribution of its results. During this century it has gained steadily in public estimation and extended use, until, at the present day, it is called upon in supplement to descriptive writing not only to represent the landscapes, archi-

ture, costumes, and customs of every country, but to give a comprehensive idea of the world's work in science, applied arts, and industries, invention, manufacture, transportation, and communication: this it does so successfully that there seems little in the natural or economic life of the universe that cannot be clearly pictured on the page which may be held in the hand of the fireside reader. Its value as a means of distributing information is well known and appreciated, but its artistic possibilities have not been so carefully studied and are not so well understood.

An art which has done so much and has done it so well may reasonably be looked to to do much more; because what it has accomplished in representing numberless forms, textures, and qualities in the widely varying subjects of descriptive illustration indicates its susceptibility to mental control; and if this susceptibility is sufficiently delicate, and it does not oppose too serious obstacles in manipulation, it is valuable as a means of artistic expression.

The reason that it has not been heretofore made use of for this purpose, except in isolated instances, may be found in the fact that the influencing adjuncts of paper-making and printing had not been sufficiently perfected and brought into harmony to make such work possible; and for the want of these favorable conditions neither the public nor the workers in the art have recognized its possibilities.

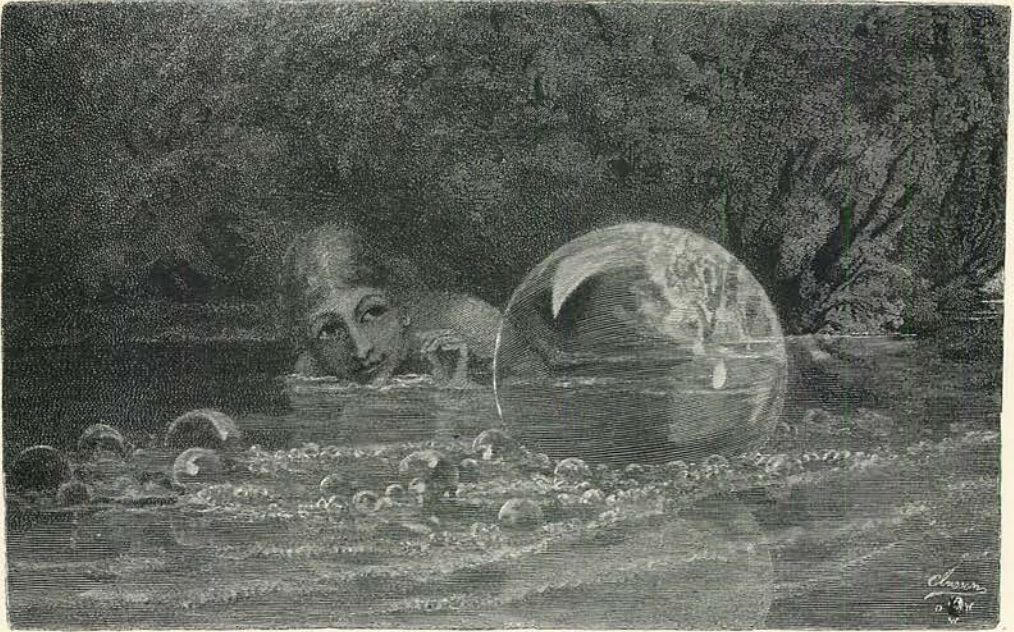
After the improvements in paper-making and printing referred to, the chief of these has been the reproductive engraving of paintings. In this work the attempt has been made —

and in many instances very successfully—not only to represent the composition, tones, and values of a picture, but to give also an unmistakable impression of the painter's individuality.

Such work is a much subtler test of the possibilities of an art than any of the tasks of descriptive illustration, and the success of relief engraving in it indicates its adaptability to still better uses, or that it would be equally and

in any case where real sympathy is lacking, the operation of trying to establish it can never be a pleasant one: the artistic temperament rebels at it; and to turn from it towards original work which occupies other faculties, and has the delight of personal discovery, is only a natural result, and is in line with the best development of the art.

But such a turning, in these days of high standards of execution in specialties, requires



THE WATER NYMPH.

perhaps more readily responsive under the more direct influence of thought in the doing of work at first hand.

The best, or ideal, results in reproductive engraving can be achieved only when the painter and the engraver are thoroughly in sympathy. As no one engraver can be thus in sympathy with many artists, differing greatly as they do in character and temperament, it follows that the best reproductive work of any one engraver must be very limited in quantity unless he can by cultivation and some degree of self-abrogation establish such a bond. Cultivation may bring just appreciation and respect for work, but such reproductive work requires the engraver to feel more than this: he must bend his own likings to those of the painter, endeavor to see from his point of view, and feel his enthusiasms; and just in proportion as he is able to do this cordially and completely, and also to adapt his own technique to his assumed character, will be his success or his lack of it. Some can do this more readily than others, but

some courage, because of the possibility of a loss in execution through lack of concentration. Concentration of effort within narrow limits surely favors the greatest accomplishment of work in quantity and in quality so far as workmanship in technique goes, but breadth of cultivation just as surely favors the best accomplishment in all things where vigorous mental comprehension and delicate apprehension in the use of means influence most the expression of thought.

As it is more difficult always to know what treatment will most adequately express thought than it is to acquire skill in workmanship, it follows that to acquire a knowledge of more than one method of work and to make use of it is not always a scattering of energies; inasmuch as what is lost in mere skill of workmanship is gained through a broadening of the mental horizon and the acquiring of a more refined insight. Nor does it follow that there is necessarily a real loss in technique in the use of one means by acquiring another, for the

manipulation of mediums incident to one method of work always furnishes suggestions for management in another, which makes technique in either the readier servant of thought, and consequently more valuable than if it had gained in finish of workmanship.

This truth should not be lost sight of in estimating the true value of technique in painter-engraving, because an exhibition of the engraver's skill as a workman may rightly be subordinated to his desires as an artist, whenever, by so doing, a gain may be made of directness in expressing his thought. It is by reason of a gain in directness, which is the desideratum in all the arts, that painter-engravers find ground to stand on.

Engraving, in common with all branches of the art of picture-making, interposes so many obstacles between the thought and its ultimate expression that at best the thought itself is more or less warped, changed, and made to conform to the means of expression. But in original work the influence is as direct as it can ever be. The hand is controlled by the brain which originates the thought, and makes every touch under its influence; and such touches are more vital and have more value than any others can have.

Men who wish the encouragement of example in doing original work will find it in the careers of the few who have placed their names highest on the list of engravers during the past three centuries, for they were original workers, or painter-engravers. And while the circumstances which controlled them are very different from those which control engravers of the present day, it is worth while to study the men and their work, and, if possible, understand why it is better than that of other men; for it goes without saying, or ought to, that an artist has but one point to consider—always how to make his work better; because if it can only be good enough, all other problems solve themselves.

In the study of the abler painter-engravers it is very difficult to analyze and differentiate their work justly; that is, to know what portion of credit should be given to them as artists and what as engravers. To take an example: Dürer and Rembrandt—if, for the sake of study, Rembrandt may be classed with the engravers in his graphic work—represent very widely different extremes in mental habits and technical methods. Much credit is given Dürer as an engraver which should be given him as an artist. To do his engraving would be not at all a difficult task to a modern engraver, while no engraver of the present day, and perhaps no artist, could equal his sturdy drawing.

On the other hand, Rembrandt was inimitable in his touch and management of line as an engraver. His mastery of treatment was so

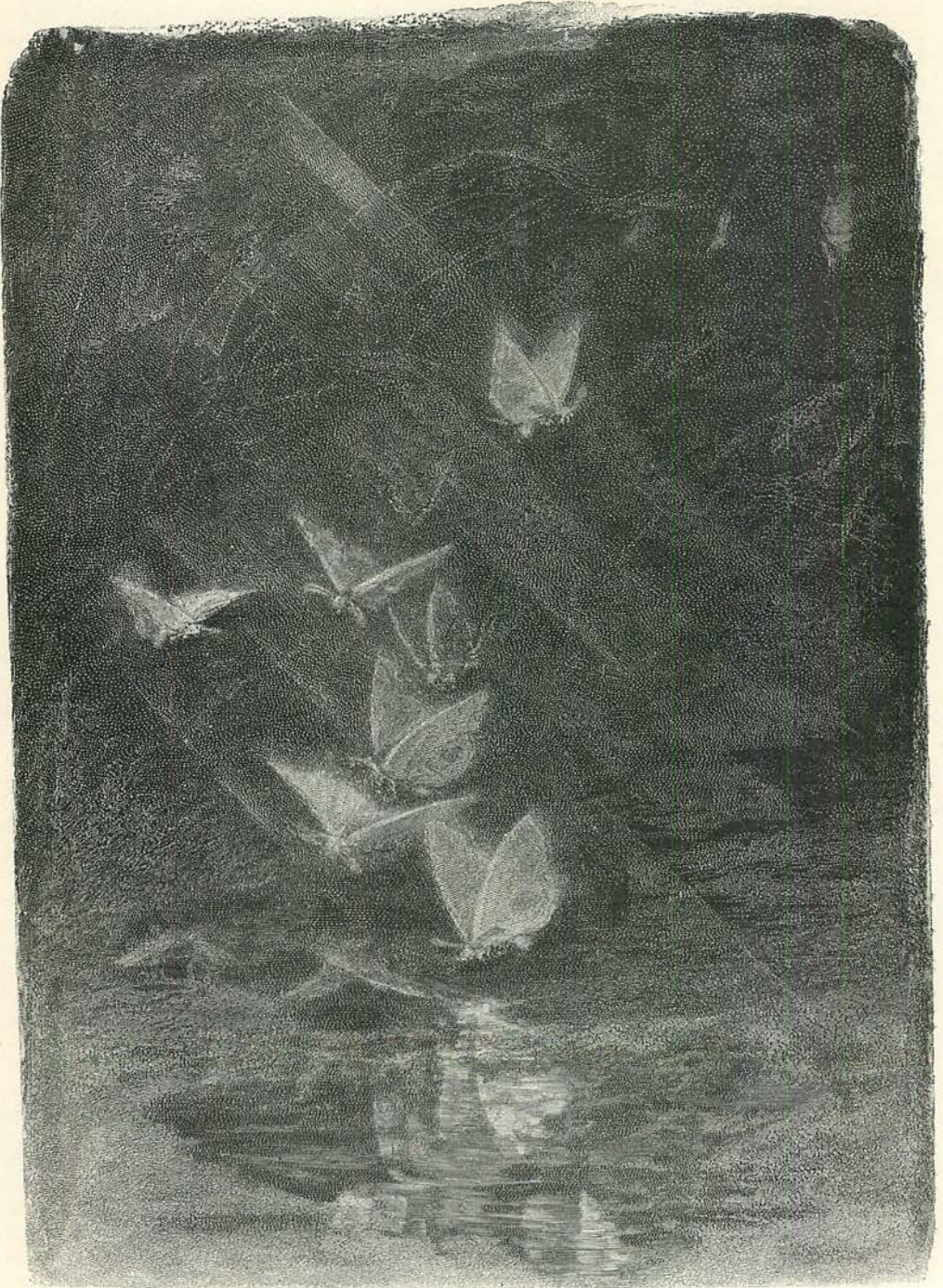
great, that in considering his work it is impossible to separate the skill of the touch itself from the thought which inspired the picture, or to imagine what his work would be if divorced from the extreme mental control and skill of hand which enabled him to express his ideas so charmingly. No photographic, mechanical, or other reproductive work whatsoever could have reproduced his paintings and given them the same value, or anything like it, which his own graphic work has; and if Rembrandt is to be shown in graphic work at all, nothing could induce one to give up what Rembrandt did in it himself.

In their use of the graphic arts probably Rembrandt and Dürer were alike influenced by a desire to distribute their work more widely than they could do by painting; but their choice of methods of work was fixed by their mental characteristics and by the different possibilities in etching and relief engraving at that time.

Dürer understood the vigorous qualities of the wood or relief engraving, but had not compassed its possibilities of refinement; nor could they have been compassed until improvements in printing had made it possible to show slight differences of tone and texture. Rembrandt delighted in atmosphere and in strong light and shade, or full chiaroscuro, and could secure those qualities with the needle and plate, but the limitations of printing made it impossible to secure these in relief engraving in his day—if, indeed, it had been thought of. The method of printing from the etched plate remains much the same as in Rembrandt's time, but in the printing from the relief plate and in the consequent development and refinement in its engraving, there has been a vast change since his time or the time of Dürer. It is now quite possible to print relief engravings done in full chiaroscuro, to represent almost any conceivable texture, and with any degree of refinement reasonable for a picture in black and white.

If the possibilities of the art at the present day, or in the very near future, could have been developed in Rembrandt's time, they would have delighted him, and made engraving as available for his purposes as it was for Dürer's. These developments place relief engraving among the arts which can be used as a means of artistic expression by men of very varied temperaments, and opens for it, owing to its peculiar characteristics, a wide field not occupied by any other art.

In considering relief engraving as a means of artistic expression the science of the art becomes of great importance: wherein it differs from other methods of picture-making in this can, perhaps, best be ascertained by comparison.



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NIGHT MOTHS.

The painter uses infinitesimal particles of color, which, for convenience, are manipulated in water or oil as a vehicle. These particles, which are too minute to be distinguished individually by the eye, can with the brush be agglomerated in masses, or spread in films of any thinness. The painter has no thought for each particle of color, but only for the effect on

the eye of multitudes of them combined, or in juxtaposition. In practice it is possible to modify effects by glazing, or superimposing films of color over previous painting, to mass painting over painting, or to scrape away first paintings and repaint entirely, so that, with these possibilities of change in mind, the painter in oil works freely and without trepidation.

In the graphic arts there is no method which makes use of granulations so minute as to be indistinguishable to the eye, excepting photogravure. The similarity in size of the particles of color and the granules of ink would make it seem possible that photogravure is akin to painting, but for this reason it is not: multitudes of particles of varied and harmonious color have a charm for the eye which multitudes of granules of ink of one color have not; and where only one color is to be used some charm of treatment must be substituted for the lacking charm of color, if an equal degree of interest is maintained.

In relief engraving there are but two values to work with, absolute black and absolute white. A white touch remains always a white touch without modification, and all effects, textures, tones, and values are secured by shaping and arranging those white touches or lines and the black spaces between them. Every touch retains its shape as first made and its relation to every other touch with the utmost obstinacy, so that the engraver has but one shot; he must either by acquired knowledge or by intuition know what relation each touch made will bear to all of its fellows and what influence it will have on them, and secure his tones, values, and textures the first time, for no radical change can be made.

The engraver therefore works under much greater nervous strain than the painter, and it would at first seem that an art compelling such

precision could never respond readily to artistic impulses. Analogy will perhaps serve to show how it may. In music, where every note is an arbitrary quantity, it is possible so to combine and arrange them with regard to their relations and the influence of one note upon another as to delight the senses by endless variety and gradation of impression; just so it is possible to combine and arrange touches in white and black, understanding their relations and influences upon one another, as to represent all textures and gradations, and secure harmony and that variety in treatment which gives the charm of endless suggestion.

Owing to the long-continued use of relief engraving for the purposes of cheaper illustration, with all the concomitant unhappy influences of poor printing and of paper ill suited to the requirements of the plates, the public have fixed for it a standing lower than etching or than some of the other graphic arts. Even engravers themselves have been slow to take advantage of all possibilities of hand printing and to study the adaptability of various kinds of papers for proofs of different subjects, as is done in the printing of etchings; but already this is changing. The importation of the peculiar and very beautiful Japanese papers which can be used in hand printing, made by hand from the fiber of the mulberry tree, gives the opportunity for new and very charming effects in proofs from relief plates. The value of these is beginning to be recognized, and the art dealers already have in their portfolios proofs from a few plates, done by American and French engravers. The qualities of these proofs are being studied by connoisseurs; and when the possibilities of the art are recognized by the engravers and by the public, relief engraving will take its rightful place as one of the most comprehensive, vital, and interesting of the graphic arts.

W. B. Closson.

THE NEW SCHOOL OF ENGRAVING.

WITH AN ENGRAVING BY THE AUTHOR.



KINGSLEY'S car, the center of so much that is promising in the future of wood-engraving in this country, is in Whately Glen, near the old mill, Kingsley and I having lingered on into October to catch some of the autumn glory.

It is inclement and cold. The wind has as much to do, perhaps, with our selection of subjects as good taste has. Yet, when the sun breaks through the clouds and warms awhile the steep hillside, there is a shrillness added to

the whistle of the wind very like the "frying" of the cicada—a very small fry, proportioned to the supply of heat; and, near by, three times to-day have I heard the tree-toad croak, blue-birds in abundance, and the goldfinch with her young "Che-dink, che-dink," all day long.

It is some compensation that we have acquired a sensuous liking for wetness and the feeling of cold. Then the S——s, who own the place, mother and sons, do what they can to make our lot endurable, and at the week's end the daughter of the house rides up from