

in the name of his old mother, for divine help and guidance. With that prayer was laid, apparently, the foundation of Henderson's insanity. Not knowing in what way to look for an answer, nor in what form to expect it, he endeavored to surrender his whole intellectual nature to the Divine Spirit in such a manner that it might be influenced by that Spirit, and directed in the way that was best. To explain his attitude more clearly by means of a metaphor, he tried to transform himself into a human harp for the divine fingers, with a faint hope that he might be able to catch the celestial melody. How long he continued to pray in this way, how many times he repeated this petition, with an earnest striving to enter into spiritual communion with his Heavenly Father, I do not know; but at last, grief, solitude, and constant brooding upon the supernatural began to unbalance his reason. He undertook to ascertain the divine will in all sorts of fantastic ways. He would shut his eyes, for example, open the Bible at random, and move his forefinger slowly down a page until he felt impelled to stop. He would then open his eyes, read the text at which his finger pointed, and try to draw from it some conclusion as to the divine

will. From this to dreams, visions, and impaired judgment was only a series of short steps, and in less than a year he was a confirmed religious monomaniac.

As I recall the bright promise of Henderson's early manhood, and think how cruelly his hopes and ambitions were turned into a bitter mockery, my mind goes back to his first prayer after he was stricken with color-blindness, and I ask myself the question, "Where was the merciful, loving, pitying Heavenly Father when this unfortunate half-blind, broken-hearted man knelt by his bedside in that little attic room, pleaded the promises of the Bible and the faith of his old gray-haired mother, asked for comfort, for help, and for guidance, and received such an answer?"

The only reply to the question, and the only solution of the hard problem presented by the existence of undeserved suffering and the apparent fruitlessness of unanswered prayer, seems to be that expressed in the words of Bishop Atterbury: "We shall never be able to give ourselves a satisfactory account of the divine conduct without forming such a scheme of things as shall at once take in time and eternity."

*George Kennan.*

## GEORGE MICHEL,

### THE PAINTER OF MONTMARTRE.

I.



BETWEEN forty and fifty years ago a great number of anonymous paintings, floating about vaguely among the picture-dealers of Paris, began to arouse the curiosity of artists and connoisseurs. None of them were signed, but all bore the impress of the same master hand—strange and extravagant landscapes that seemed to be dashed down upon the canvas in a fury of impetuous inspiration; desolate plains, mysterious forests, windmills stretching forth their gigantic arms; vast horizons, storm-laden skies, an atmosphere full of the breath of the tempest—pictures that interpreted nature in her wild, terrific, and pathetic moods with singular insight and fidelity. Almost all of them were transcripts of Montmartre, Chaumont, St. Laurent, St. Denis, and other of the picturesque suburbs of Paris, whose historic features were so changed and obliterated during the improvements and devastations of the Third Empire. The interest that they excited was very great. It was dis-

covered that the name of the unknown painter was George Michel, that he had been a resident of Montmartre, and had died not long before in extreme old age. He was said to have kept a second-hand bric-à-brac shop, and to have lived in poverty and misery, struggling for a precarious existence. He was a sort of rural Silenus, who owed his inspiration to his copious libations. When he shut up his shop in the afternoon, he would go out among his favorite scenes, jot down his impressions, then stop at an inn, get drunk, and paint his pictures at a single sitting, in a frenzy of inspiration and intoxication. He did not sign his canvases for the very good reason that he was too ignorant to write his own name. He had passed the last few years of his life in a hospital, and had died there forgotten and unknown.

It was due to the energy and enthusiasm of an admirable critic and author, M. Alfred Sensier, Michel's future biographer, and several young artists and *litterateurs* with whom he was associated, that this shadow was lifted from the memory of a good and great man.

When M. Sensier published his "Etude sur George Michel," he was able to affirm that it did not contain a single statement which he

had not verified, either on the evidence of the painter's friends and family, or on that of public documents.

It was asserted that he lived in a chronic state of poverty and embarrassment, and it proves that, although burdened with the care of a large family while still a mere boy, and without a farthing of inherited income, he succeeded from the very first in supporting his family, not certainly in luxury, but at least in ease and independence.

It was said that he was an habitual toper, depending upon stimulants for his inspiration, and it turns out that he was a model of sobriety and industry; his devotion to his family and his art being the two all-absorbing passions by which his whole life was dominated and controlled. As for his inspiration, he kept it at white heat of activity, and all his faculties tense and keen, by incessant hard work.

It was asserted that his associates were among the vulgar and ignorant, and it proves that they were among the best representatives of the most select and polished circles of the nobility; and it should be remarked to Michel's credit that he, a poor man, belonging to the people by birth, and an ardent republican in conviction, maintained this intercourse, brought about by his genius and vocation, without sacrificing one iota of his independence. His friends and associates were such people as the Comte de Forbin, director of the Louvre and the royal galleries, a man of profound learning and knowledge of art; Baron d'Ivry, one of the most distinguished of the eminent connoisseurs of the past, whose privilege it was to promote the development of art at that critical period by the timely protection which he afforded the masters of a new school in their struggle for recognition; the Duc de Guiche and his young wife; Mlle. de Vigée, a woman not only of rare genius, but of singular beauty and a thousand amiable qualities.

It was asserted that he was completely overlooked and ignored as an artist in his own day; and while it is true that he made no impression upon the public at large, sharing in this the fate of Corot and other masters of modern landscape-painting who followed him, he was nevertheless singularly fortunate in being thoroughly appreciated by the artists and connoisseurs of that period; the best proof of the high favor in which he was held being that, unlike Corot, who did not sell his first picture until he was sixty, Michel, one of the most rapid painters that ever lived, could not produce rapidly enough to satisfy his purchasers.

His comparative obscurity can be readily accounted for by the multiplicity of his occupations. In order to earn a subsistence, he was compelled, during the greater part of his ca-

reer, to supplement his pursuit of original art with teaching, copying, and restoring, standing at the head of all of these subordinate avocations. At the same time, his rare modesty, and the simplicity and disinterestedness of his character, prevented him from valuing truly his own gifts and capacities. He had a noble pride in his thorough knowledge of his craft, in his power to do good work, and was satisfied with this distinction. He laid no claim to being a great artist, and does not appear ever to have regarded himself in that light.

Michel's friends and patrons had, moreover, a direct personal interest in keeping him in the shade. At that time artistic coöperation was as much in vogue as literary partnerships are at present. Michel, with his fecundity of production and technical skill, was just the one to play the part of silent partner in such associations. Giving assistance to painters of more reputation and wealth, but of less ability, than himself, was one of his principal occupations; he is known to have been the *collaborateur*, in this way, of Demarne, his intimate friend, Swebach de Fontaine, Charpentier, and others.

As for Baron d'Ivry, he had the one weakness of imagining himself a great painter. Despite his rank and wealth, he adopted the profession seriously, and worked at his easel with not less industry and perseverance than if his fortune had depended upon the result, employing Michel meanwhile to help him out with his crude, amateurish efforts, which remained tame and cold despite their labored fantasy. Even he, this enthusiastic worshiper of art, the devoted friend and munificent patron not only of Michel, but of a number of his distinguished successors, notably Rousseau, Cabat, and Dupré, resorted to all sorts of devices and subterfuges (so insidious are the temptations of literary and artistic vanity) to prevent any suspicion of his dependence upon a greater artist. He went so far as to circulate a report of Michel's death at a time when they were closeted together daily, locked up in profound seclusion in his luxurious studio—the *cor cordium* of Baron d'Ivry's magnificent hotel.

## II.

MICHEL was born in Paris in 1763, when society was already quivering with premonitory throes of the most terrible upheaval that the world has ever witnessed; and when, moreover, a revolution in the beautiful art which he himself practised was impending. Passion, enthusiasm, rebellion to existing authorities—all these he breathed in with the very air. He was a thorough plebeian, his father being a common laborer; but nevertheless, thanks to a certain M. du Chaillu, *fermier-général* of St.

Laurent, who was so much impressed by the child's vivacity and intelligence that he determined to take him under his protection, he was well educated, and, above all, thoroughly trained for his vocation. Michel was a pupil of the Académie St. Luc, a national institution renowned for its severe and systematic discipline, where the traditions of the old masters were sedulously guarded.

So well did the young George profit by the advantages afforded him, that at fifteen he appears to have been ready to begin the battle

Their friends and guardians refused, very naturally, to listen to their supplications. Michel was forbidden to see his little sweetheart, and, desperate at being separated, the young couple eloped, hiding themselves in one of the sylvan suburbs of Paris.

But little is known of his proceedings at this juncture, or for some time to come, beyond the fact that a year from the time of his marriage his first child was born, and that when he was a youth of twenty he was the happy father of a hopeful young family of five.



PORTRAIT OF GEORGE MICHEL, ETCHED BY C. COUNTRY. BY PERMISSION OF M. DURAND RUEL.

of life upon his own account, with the advantage of powerful friends and patrons ready to advance his interests. We find him at that early age giving lessons to Mlle. du Chaillu, and unfolding, full of hope and enthusiasm, plans for his own future studies and achievements. But at this critical moment the blind god interfered, to withdraw him from the path of honor and distinction which was opening before him so invitingly. The precocious youth fell desperately in love with a pretty young girl of his own age, and, like himself, of humble parentage, named Marguerite Legros.

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At this mature age he reappears in Paris, as full of courage and confidence in himself as ever, although now so heavily handicapped for the race. When his friends reproached him with his imprudence he would reply,—one of his many sententious sayings which are well worth preserving,—“Since there is a Providence for the drunkard, there must be one for the good workman.” This Providence of the good workman was Michel's star of destiny. He trusted to it fearlessly in every emergency, and his faith was rewarded.

The character of his pursuits has already

been indicated. He was a splendid restorer and copyist, especially of the great Dutch and Flemish masters, of whom he was the worthy disciple; a capital professor and assistant artist, while always dashing off with extraordinary facility original landscapes and sketches, both in oils and water-colors, which he disposed of readily, as soon as they were produced, to picture-dealers and connoisseurs, who appreciated them at their true value, and remunerated him for them fairly, and at times with great liberality, notwithstanding the slight esteem in which they were held by the critics of the Salon, and the public at large.

Gay, genial, and with an agreeable address, he was universally liked, and made friends on every hand. The Duc de Guiche and his wife became his pupils, and not a few of the same circle followed their example. Under the direction of the Comte de Forbin, he carried on and completed the magnificent works of restoration at the Louvre, which extended over a period of many years, and constituted one of the finest achievements of his life. The famous picture-dealer M. Lebrun, who married Mlle. de Vigée, was one of his principal purchasers. Even when the ghastly Terror had transformed gay and beautiful Paris into a reeking shambles, when Mme. Lebrun had taken refuge in Italy, and the brilliant courtiers who had danced attendance in her *salon* had vanished with a shriek of dismay, the picture-dealer remained at his post, and kept Michel, who was also a fixture in Paris, continually employed in making copies of his favorite masters, with which he carried on an active trade in England, Germany, and even Russia. He frequently sold original Michels also, sometimes giving him the credit for them, but more often palming them off as *chefs-d'œuvre* of the artists whose works they resembled.

Michel's relations with Baron d'Ivry continued, with intervals of separation occasioned by the absence of the nobleman from Paris, under the empire and the restoration.

Meanwhile, amid all this stress and strain of toil, pleasure, friendship, art,—the multiple activities which he carried forward with uninterrupted energy from year to year,—Michel's domestic happiness continued unalloyed; his passion for his wife bore the test of time. It was no unusual thing for him to be called from Paris by his professional duties, and he was frequently solicited by his friends and pupils to accompany them on their travels to foreign parts; but on such occasions, however agreeable his companions, however delightful the scenes that surrounded him, however lucrative his employment, he soon became restless and unhappy, impatient to complete his engagements, or to break away from them and

return to her side. He was always "homesick for his family and Montmartre"; an exile, a banished man, until again surrounded by the dear faces and familiar scenes to which he was so devotedly attached.

The painter had, however, many domestic afflictions, although his home remained to the last a true shrine of love and devotion. His children, of whom he had eventually eight, did not inherit his vigorous constitution, and, with the exception of one son, were stricken down, one after the other, in childhood and early youth. And at last, fifty years after his marriage, his wife was seized with a fatal malady. During her last illness, which was long and painful, she was attended with affectionate solicitude by Mme. de Ponlevaun, a widow living near them, with whom the Michels had long been on terms of friendly intimacy. In the following year, Michel married the excellent friend who had shared the sorrows and anxieties of his terrible bereavement. He could not have made a better choice. Mme. de Ponlevaun, who was much younger than her husband, and survived him for many years, was a woman of good position and unusual intelligence and refinement, able to appreciate the genius of the painter and to insure his happiness. She had one daughter, to whom Michel became warmly attached, and together they surrounded him to the last with all the ministering care that affection can bestow.

Michel's second marriage constitutes a turning-point in his career. The brilliant patrons and friends of his youth had been scattered or swept out of existence by the convulsions of the Revolution; by the public, with whom he had never established a vital communication, he was utterly forgotten; he had ceased to exist. The wind of inspiration that had kindled his genius had passed on and was stirring in other minds; the splendid artists of 1830 were winning renown, and he had no place in the school of which, nevertheless, he had been the earliest herald. Meanwhile, he had never been so strong and vigorous, never possessed such command of his resources; his genius was in its full maturity. His early careless indifference to the pursuit of glory was plainly instinctive, the result of temperament, of that deficiency in self-assertion and self-cognizance which was at once the source of his strength and weakness. But long before this he must have gaged his own powers, and called in question the wisdom of his course. And now for the first time he had a small income, sufficient to enable him to work for art's sake alone. The public, moreover, responding gradually to the influence of his successors, had been developing as well as himself, and would perhaps have regarded with favor the bold flights which had formerly left them unmoved; by



WINDMILLS. ORIGINAL IN POSSESSION OF W. C. VANHORNE.

ENGRAVED BY C. A. POWELL.

the painters of the new school he would at least have been thoroughly appreciated. According to M. Sensier, "if he had chosen at this period to send to the Salon one of the great landscapes of his last manner, it would have been a bomb-shell in the camp, bringing him at once a national reputation."

Meanwhile it was not through weariness or disappointment that he buried himself alive in peaceful seclusion. He did not forsake the world to repose upon his laurels, but, on the contrary, to dedicate himself anew, with a more sublime aim, to the art which he had already so faithfully served. It was not until this period that he deployed all the resources of his genius, creating those strange and magnificent landscapes which arrested the attention of a younger generation, and have rendered his name immortal.

It has been seldom indeed—if there is any similar instance upon record, I am not aware of it—that a man has done his greatest work from sixty-five to eighty, and merely for the delight that it afforded him, without any of the incitements either of ambition or of necessity, uncheered by the applause of his contemporaries, and without expectation of being recognized by posterity.

Of his closing years, serene and prolific, Mme. Michel has left the world a detailed account. He went, shortly after his marriage, to live in a small house in Chaillu street, which he had purchased some time before, and where he remained until his death. Nothing could be more simple and unpretentious than his mode of life. He rose at seven, took a light breakfast, remained in his studio until three, busy with his brushes, and devoted the rest of the day to long walks through the lovely suburban scenery which it had been the occupation of his life to delineate. On these pleasant excursions, which were his only recreation, he was accompanied by his wife and daughter, and they went great distances, visiting in turn Chaumont, Bellevue, Vincennes, the woods of Romainville, and, above all, the picturesque declivities of Montmartre.

In 1843 he had an auction of his library and articles of vertu, of which he had a valuable collection; throwing in with his other treasures a thousand original landscapes, and two thousand large and small sketches. They were sold for a mere song, the whole collection bringing less, probably, than a single landscape would now command. The venerable painter was not in the least disconcerted. He had painted his pictures for his own pleasure, he said, and was perfectly satisfied to have found purchasers willing to buy them for not less than they would have paid for as many good apples. This sale was a memorable one, and deserves to be

recorded; for it was from the studio in Chaillu street that proceeded all those mysterious landscapes which flooded the Parisian market, and shortly after his death recalled his name and memory to the world.

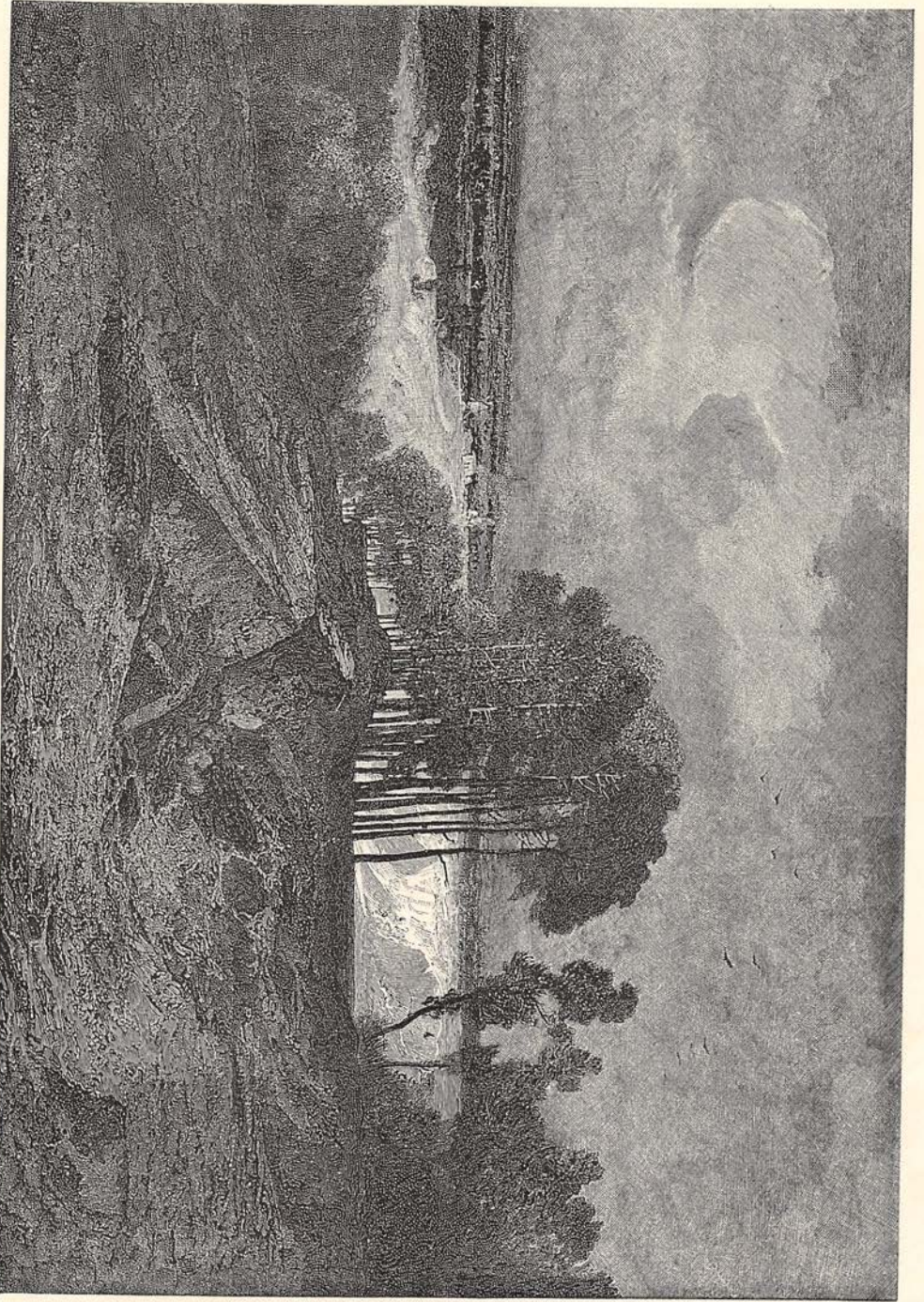
Michel's health remained unimpaired until he was eighty, when he had a slight stroke of paralysis, which, affecting his right side, compelled him to lay down his brush. He was still able to walk, and for a time enjoyed going into the garden; but his strength rapidly failed, and before long he grew too weak to rise from his bed. Even now, however, he did not yield to despondency; his wife and daughter were with him, and he found consolation in their society.

On June 7, 1843, which dawned clear and radiant,—“a perfect day of June,”—he seemed unusually well and in excellent spirits. “Do not pity me,” he said to his wife; “for though my eyes are so weak, you do not know what wonderful, what glorious, landscapes I see continually moving before me. Oh, if I could but recover the use of my arms, I would paint such pictures as have never before been imagined!”

In the evening his supper was served as usual, and he chatted cheerfully with his companions, assuring them that he felt well and happy. Then there was a pause, and his wife, looking up, surprised at his continued silence, saw that her husband had ceased to breathe. His black eyes, so full of fire, were extinct. Michel had passed to another sphere. The two women fell upon their knees by his side, too much overwhelmed with awe and emotion even to weep. Already the mysterious smile of death illumined his countenance, which had become pure and radiant as that of a saint.

### III.

A REVOLUTION in landscape-painting was both initiated and accomplished during the long life of George Michel. At the beginning of his career Claude and Poussin, who had been worshiped in Paris with so much ardor, had lost their authority, and that of David was beginning to decline. In the north the great Dutch and Flemish masters had carried art to a new perfection that was better understood in England than in Paris, where the *petits maîtres* by whom they had been succeeded—Demarne, Senave, Charpentier, Desfontaine, and others—were still influential. The imaginative painters of the modern school had not yet risen above the horizon, but everything was preparing for their advent: the air was vibrant with new precepts and principles, which were soon to be put into practice. Michel was undoubtedly the first to feel the impulse of this new movement, although he formed no alliance with the painters with whom he was so



QUARRIES OF MONTMARTRE. ORIGINAL IN POSSESSION OF H. T. CHAPMAN, JR.

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY.

intimately associated in genius and aim. Like one of those gigantic windmills which he himself has so often depicted, whirling now to the east and now to the west, swayed by every breeze from every quarter of the horizon, he was influenced by, and reproduced at different moments, all the contradictory tendencies of his time that were striving for mastery—the noble effects of the Dutch and Flemish masters, the pedantic and frivolous mannerisms of his Parisian contemporaries, and the freedom and imaginative verve of his successors.

Like many other great artists, Michel's development is marked by three distinct periods, each with its characteristic style, according to which his works can be readily grouped. The paintings of his youth, often of great interest and beauty, are chiefly to be noted for their conscientious workmanship and their successful imitation of Ruysdael and Hobbema, his earliest guides in the realm of the ideal. He seems to have had unusual difficulty in forming his second style; there is an interregnum, during which his genius is under a cloud; he chooses as his models various of his popular contemporaries, Demarne and others, far inferior to himself, and with whom he is in fact in direct antagonism, and paints pictures that are now cold and pedantic, and again obscure, labored, and incomprehensible. From these vacillations and uncertainties he is freed by Rembrandt,—the "great wizard," as he calls him,—from whom he learned to seek his inspiration in Nature alone, rejecting all models save her living and ever-changing forms. Michel worshiped this supreme master, between whom and himself, in his later works, can be traced vivid points of resemblance. He vied with him in his love of vast distances, his passion for magical effects of light, dazzling streams of radiance alternating with somber shadows, and in the spontaneity and unaffectedness of his designs, which teem with intangible and mysterious caprices and suggestions. From the moment that he conquered his freedom,—that he can truly be said to have become a master,—his canvases glow and vibrate with strange and noble harmonies,—appalling spectacles, wild tempests, rainbows of ineffable beauty spanning storm-laden skies, cloud-chariots on fire, terrific combats in the air,—and he begins to reveal his daring imagination and fantasy.

His genius was not fully unfolded and energized, however, until he ceased to imitate even Nature, to become her interpreter and poet. Then it was that he painted those preternatural firmaments, those monotonous plains, those grim châteaux and gigantic windmills, that seem to carry the beholders back into a primordial world. He was the same Michel as of old, but wholly abandoned to his inspiration,

giving full play to his ardent temperament, and to all the caprices of his fiery imagination.

In the landscapes of this period, those of his last and grand manner, the dramatic is always the dominant element. His windmills have a frightful aspect; they seem the product of another age; they whirl furiously, and appear to menace from the desolate hilltop antediluvian monsters crawling on calcareous plains. His forest paths are forbidding and sinister; they lead to the dens of malefactors, from whose gloomy portals, whose yawning chasms, one would flee with a shudder of horror and alarm. On those desolate sea-marshes it is easy to see that ghosts will chatter and ghouls wander when twilight deepens. His threatening skies, livid with a pale glare, or shrouded with terrifying battalions of uncouth clouds, are preparing to rain down plagues upon the devastated earth. Many of these scenes appear the product of a mind in delirium, but delirious with the grand, the appalling, the sublime.

There are poets of poets—witness the cult of the present day for Robert Browning—poets who are worshiped by the select few, while remaining caviar to the general; and in the same way there are painters whose works appeal only, or chiefly, to artists and connoisseurs. It is evident that Michel belongs to this class; his style, strange and extravagant, informed and overcharged with lightning flashes of passion and imagination, is one that is repellent to the average intelligence, but fascinating in the extreme to the sensitive and fastidious poet and critic. We have seen how warmly he was appreciated in his own day by famous connoisseurs like the Comte de Forbin and Baron d'Ivry; and yet at that very time the pictures which he exhibited annually in the Salon were either entirely overlooked, or mentioned with disapproval and contempt. As soon as attention was called to his paintings after his death, M. Théophile Thoré (the champion *par excellence* of neglected genius) and M. Paul Lacroix, the best critics of the day, wrote elaborate articles doing full justice to the originality and unusual quality of his art; and from that time the noble master—the "great Michel," as he is called by some of his admirers—has had an ever-increasing number of amateurs and enthusiasts, recruited from the ranks of the most eminent authors and artists, who have spared neither labor, time, nor expense in procuring examples of his art, and in endeavoring, by their criticisms and essays, to make him known to the world.

The first person to introduce his works to the picture-loving public of this country was Mr. Henry T. Chapman, Jr., the well-known connoisseur of Brooklyn, at whose house can be seen many important and beautiful examples. His landscapes are becoming a feature in many



American collections, including those of Mr. David C. Lyall of Brooklyn, Mr. W. H. M. Sistare and the late Jay Gould of New York, Mr. Potter Palmer of Chicago, and others.

dication of his subordinate rank, is his lack of artistic consciousness, the definite aim, the informing purpose that will always distinguish an artist of the loftiest type. The painter of



A FRENCH VILLAGE. ORIGINAL IN POSSESSION OF ALEXANDER BARRIE.

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY.

The cult of Michel, in a word, of long standing in Paris, has recently been initiated among our own painters and connoisseurs.

It is a difficult matter to determine the rank of an artist so singular and original, and it may throw light upon the subject to compare him to his immediate successor, Corot, with whom he was allied in method, while affording a complete contrast to him in manner—the one a painter of repose and beauty, the other of terror and sublimity. Both were impressionists, and both poets, rebuking by their truly creative masterpieces, informed with feeling and imagination, the crude and glaring literalists of the present day. As a draftsman, Michel was greatly the superior of the two, and he was probably not inferior to Corot in his delicate appreciation of values and the harmony of colors. His one point of inferiority, the in-

Montmartre is an improvisator, an admirable instrument upon which the higher genius plays, hurling upon the canvas, as with a single stroke, magnificent jets of powerful inspiration. His very progress is instinctive, the result of the gradual development of his personality; he goes forward from epoch to epoch, not from picture to picture. To a more deliberate intellectual artist each new work is an event, the record of a step which brings him nearer to his goal, of which he never loses sight. A single landscape was not of any more consequence to Michel than a single blossom trembling on its twig to a flowering almond-tree, than one violet to the meadow purple with bloom, or one throbbing star in a firmament of glory.

Meanwhile, it is well to remember that works of the imagination are the result of the artist's weakness not less than of his strength; they



A LANDSCAPE. ORIGINAL IN POSSESSION OF J. W. MASON.

ENGRAVED BY E. KINGSLEY.

are the fruit of his whole nature. It was precisely this defect in Michel, if it is to be called a defect, from which his art derives its distinctive quality,—that naked truthfulness, as it were, that acrid, sharp reality,—a certain flamboyance, as if the very spirit of nature were scintillating in those forms, those hues, which is never found in more elaborate and humanized (if I may use the term) productions. In literature it is this quality which gives such a surpassing charm to that wild creation, “Wuthering Heights,” and to many early myths and sagas of the people, for those, be it always understood, who are sensitive to that quality, and appreciative of it—a taste that is found to distinguish, as a matter of fact, not the rude and uncultivated, as might be supposed, but the subtle and fastidious critic who is himself farthest removed from the savage heart of nature of which it speaks. The polished masterpieces of not a few of the painters of to-day, themselves connoisseurs as well as artists, wealthy, courtly, accomplished, are the delight of the Philistine; the wild improvisations of Michel, the rude son of the people, are disdained by the populace, and reserve their dominating spell for the connoisseur—a striking illustration, in the occult sphere of intellect, of the truth of the adage that extremes meet.

Even in Michel's day the suburbs of Paris had lost something of their sylvan beauty; and since then they have been devastated and vulgarized by the overflowing of the manufactories and the *bourgeoisie* of Paris; but though its windmills and picturesque quarries have been swept away, Montmartre still exists, a natural pedestal whose sublimity can never be wholly destroyed. Some time after his death it became the fashion to visit Montmartre and proclaim its attractions. Théodore Rousseau, *Enfantin*, Bonington, revealed it, and the whole Parisian *banlieue* as well, in a new light, in their superb landscapes; Alphonse Karr took up his abode in a ruinous old building, which he called the “Château of Fogs,” and living there for two years, hidden from the world, produced the book that rendered him celebrated; Gérard de Nerval followed his example, and still others have shed upon it the light of their genius. But it was by Michel that it was discovered, by him its mysterious and fantastic charm was first appreciated and embodied in art; it was his Acropolis and his Parthenon. According to M. Sensier: “If it is too much to call Michel the Ruysdael of France, it must be acknowledged that he was at least the Ruysdael of Montmartre.”

*Virginia Vaughan.*