FROM "NOS ENFANTS."

MAURICE BOUTET DE MONVEL.

TO know thyself is held on the best of authority to be the summit of human attainment, but, difficult as is this self-knowledge in any walk in life, it is perhaps never more difficult than in the case of the artist.

Professing an art with ill-defined boundaries, eager, and questioning every murmur of the wind as though it were the voice of the god, now progressing boldly, cheered by the approval of the multitude, or again groping blindly amidst general denunciation, the still small voice of artistic conscience his only supporter, this protean creation of super-sensitive atoms that we name artist lives with the sphinx who smiles encouragement but is dumb. Happy indeed are the exceptions to this rule; fortunate he who from the first sees spread before him the way in which he may walk. He, it is true, will still find the path beset with pitfalls; the thorns of technical endeavor will still tear at his garment: but these are little ills; the temple, sun-illumined, is clear to his eyes, and, though far distant, every step seems to bring him nearer.

And, like the roads that lead to Rome, the ways are many; no two men need follow the same, and the by-path followed by Chardin leads one thither no less — nay more — surely than the Appian Way trod by David. The secret of this primrose path is kept, however, so securely that none may tell his fellow, "Follow me, and all will be well"; nor by following the elect can one hope to be of the chosen. Each must work out his own salvation, and against the temporary wave, whatever it may be, must be on his guard, lest it carry him beyond his depth and drown him in the futile and the commonplace. Every great artist has left resolutely behind him the apparently defined path to success. Giotto deserted the splendors of Byzantine mosaic, and, taking up duller pigments, found freedom of expression; Michelangelo, leaving the individualism of his contemporaries, invented a typical art all his own; and Millet, virile nature ill at ease in the classic precincts of the Hemicycle, betook himself to the fields, and molded his man of clay.

These are great names to conjure with, and the distance that separates them from that of Maurice Boutet de Monvel is undoubtedly vast; but as all roads lead to Rome, the by-path chosen by M. de Monvel is of his own discovery, and may lead him far. The infinitely great has many points of contact even with the infinitely small, and in the middle ground between them resemblances multiply and blend, so that it is the purpose of this paper to explain in a degree the place of its titular subject in the great family of art.

Maurice Boutet de Monvel was born at Orléans, France, in 1850, and if the proverb of *noblesse oblige* can be artistically adapted, it is difficult to see how he could have readily escaped following some one of the many branches of an artistic career. Heredity, which is held respon-

"JACQUELINE AND MIRAUT." FROM "NOS ENFANTS."

"THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THE DONKEY." FROM "LA FONTAINE'S

sible for so many things, had prepared since 1745 for the present exponent of the artistic temperament in the Monvel family, for it was in that year that his great-great-grandfather saw the light. Jacques Marie Boutet de Monvel was the son of an actor, and, following the profession of his father, made his début at the Théâtre Français in 1770. He was the great tragedian of his time, and, preceding Talma, brought tragedy from the bonds of stilted conventionalism into the realm of reality. French writers on the stage assign to him a most important place in theatrical history, and his literary talent was so esteemed by his contemporaries that he remains the only instance of an actor elected as a member of the Institute. The tragedian's daughter, known to us by her stage name of Mademoiselle Mars, is more celebrated. This astonishing woman, making her first appearance at the Théâtre Français in 1803, continued a career of successive triumphs until her farewell representation in 1841, when, at the age of sixty-two, she played the part of *Célimène* in "Le Misanthrope" of Molière. Throughout this long period, and in a fickle capital, she kept her place as the first actress in the first theater in the world, and the long line of dramatic authors from the time of the first Empire down to Dumas and Hugo were all indebted to her creation of their principal rôles. Other artistic stars of lesser magnitude who figure in this artistic genealogy were the brothers, Baptiste of the Comédie Française, and Feriol of the Opéra Comique. The line was to be broken, however, for two generations. The grandfather of the subject of this sketch, chose to abandon the mimic wars of the stage for an actual war, which enlisted him, as it did so many of his generous countrymen, and brought him to the whilom British colonies in North America. Arriving in this country during the War of Independence, and acquiring the rank of captain of engineers in its army, he remained until peace was restored, and then, returning to France, settled to a life of philosophic research at Orléans. Here his son, the father of Maurice, was born, and here the artistic line was resumed by this son's marriage with the daughter of Adolphe Nourrit, who was not only the creator of the chief tenor parts in "Guillaume Tell," "Robert le Diable," "Les Huguenots," and other operas of Rossini and Meyerbeer, but the intimate friend and counselor of the composers. During a too short career — he died in 1839 at the age of thirty-seven — Nourrit succeeded in impressing his personality on his environment to a remarkable degree. It is related of him that Meyerbeer accepted and interpolated into his score of "Robert le Diable" airs of Nourrit's composition, and his versatile talent found vent in other directions, drawing "with great taste," says his biographer, and writing a series of criticisms on the Salon in the "Journal de Paris."

From such ancestry Maurice Boutet de Monvel was born. The future career of a child in France, in the midst of a family which had already counted such illustrious names in the domain of art, could almost be predicted. In curious contrast to the Anglo-Saxon order of ideas, which looks askance at the artist with a mixture of commiseration and distrust, is the Gallic idea, which not only counts this voca-

FABLES." BY PERMISSION OF MESSRS. E. PLON, NOURRIT & CIE.

tion as preëminently respectable, but, perhaps even more than the pursuit of arms, glorious. Therefore, young Monvel found no opposition when at an early age his artistic instincts became manifest. Repeating an experience common in the history of painters, it was, above all, his mother's counsel and encouragement which profited him the most, and through his childhood and school-boy days it was her exhortation and her stories of her father's triumphs which fired the youth's ambition, until in the year 1870 (after a year in the private studio of an artist of talent, De Rudder by name) he entered the Atelier Cabanel, in the École des Beaux-Arts. It was on the eve of war, and after the defeat at Sedan our young artist doffed his blouse, dropped his brushes, donned a uniform, and with a chassepot on his shoulder joined the army of the Loire. The boy of twenty, in the few short months of war, became a man, although of the scenes which he witnessed, of the emotions which war brought to him, there is visible in his work only an occasional tragic note, such as we may see in the "Apotheosis." (See page 260.) The war over, Monvel resumed his studies, but this time — an early sign of revolt — in the more independent Atelier Julian. In 1874 came his first exhibition at the Salon. At this time Monvel's equipment, and apparently his aim, were those of hundreds of other young painters, who, benefiting by the wonderfully systematized methods of instruction prevalent in France, find themselves, at the outset of their professional career, with an ideal purely academic, and a docile intention to carry out this ideal in the official manner.

French art education has, for the moment, its most bitter opponents in its own birthplace. To our more distant view it would seem to be as good as any general system of education can be. It does not produce artists, say its enemies. True enough, but, given the necessary temperament, does it not put into the artist's hands the weapons which he must wield in battle? *Poeta nascitur non fit* is true though trite, but an unlettered Keats is tongue-tied from birth. The army of painters sallying forth from drill practice counts for the time few but privates in its ranks, but little by little the natural leader is promoted, and at last commands.

The ability to draw with correctness, to paint with due regard to "values," to compose a picture in an intelligent, though somewhat conventional, manner — all this the schools place at the disposition of the many. It may not make draftsmen with style; the values may not be sublimated to their last expression; the compositions may smack overmuch of traditions; and it never, we may say, makes a colorist: but abolish all this (and every year in Paris there is an effort on the part of certain men and certain journals to do so), and you get what the sad spectacle of English art gives us — irrelevant, desultory effort, evidences enough of talent, but one and all wallowing in the slough of insufficient technical knowledge.

It can be maintained that it is not possible to judge of the effects of the abolition of the parental academic direction of art study in France, for, despite the theories of those who are now willing to overthrow the system, they — the leaders of the revolt — have profited by it,

or if they have not, as in a few isolated instances, the academic influence has been so strong that they have absorbed its principles against their will. The standard of Paris today demands of the painter technical acquirements that, left to himself, no man could arrive at, and if the "dried fruit of official culture" is rife upon the market through this system, the blossoms and ripe fruits are also there, the result of its careful culture.

One of the many at the time of his début at the Salon, Monvel was nevertheless one of the few who think for themselves. The absence of color *per se*, as a defect in French training, has been noted. Feeling the lack of it, Monvel in 1875 went back to school, this time to the revolutionary Atelier Carolus Duran, while still working in his own studio and contributing to the Salon. Monvel's work at this time had a strong grasp of character, but in striving for strength of effect there was too great a tendency to over-blackness of shadow, against which Duran labored in vain, and from which Monvel was only to be emancipated years later through the forced use of light tones and simple, unaccented silhouettes in the color-reproductions in his books. In 1876, marriage and the attendant responsibilities of a household relegated Salon triumphs and ambitions to a second place. To meet these new demands there followed a weary search from illustrated journal to book-publisher and back again for illustrative work. For a long time it was without result, and, rebuffed on every hand, Monvel was losing heart when Delagrave, a publisher, offered him the illustration of a child's history of France. The work was poorly paid, but it was an entering wedge, and, so reasoning, Monvel did his best, and as a result was offered other work, notably on the French edition of "St. Nicholas." With illustration as a breadwinner, work of more serious intention was undertaken for the Salon. It was still academic in treatment, but with a vein of originality in subject which, though slightly trivial, served to show that back of the tradition there was a glimmering of individuality. In the Salon of 1878 a third-class medal, and in 1880 one of the second class, making its recipient *hors concours*, came to recompense these efforts. The medaled picture of 1880 represented a young sorceress receiving instruction in the occult arts from an old witch. The subject served as a pretext for painting the nude figure of the young sorceress, which was in parts beautifully painted; but the bituminous shadows still prevailed, and the picture enters into the category somewhat contemptuously judged by M. de Monvel as having no other value than as a lesson in what to avoid.

With the Salon successes and their official reward there appeared a little book, "Vieilles Chansons et Rondes" ("Old Songs and Dances"), soon followed by another, "Chansons de France" ("Songs of France"), in which, breaking through the shell of scholastic trammels, the talent of Monvel takes its first flight. These little books, oblong quarto in form, are of fifty or sixty pages, and on each page, surrounding the words and music of the song, is a decoratively treated drawing. Some of them are reproduced in these pages, and though in the original we have the delicate tones of color excellently well printed, which are of necessity lacking here, enough remains to show their merit. In the charming books which the fortunate children of this generation have in such number, I know none superior to these or to their successors, "La Civilité Honnête et Puérile," republished in this country as "Good and Bad Children," and the "Fables of La Fontaine." I do not think that any critical description of them can be made better than a quotation from a letter of M. de Monvel in which, speaking of drawing with a pen, he says:

> Having at my disposition a means so limited [as the pen], I have learned that there is one all-important element which we must seek in everything which we would reproduce, and which, for want of a more definite word, we may call the soul, the spirit of the object represented. A rude stick planted in the ground has a particular character and interest of its own, and if we make of it a drawing which is commonplace, it is because we have failed to grasp its spirit. No other stick would have the character which belongs to this particular one, and this, which is true of the rude stick, applies the more as we ascend the scale of creation. This is the lesson taught me by the necessity of expressing much with the thin, encircling line of the pen, and all is there. In comparison with this sense of individual character in anything which we try to represent, all else is unimportant.

This is a brave profession of faith, which an examination of the artist's work renders convincing. Through all these little figures we find everywhere a truth of gesture, a reality of type, that are surprising; the children resemble one another only as one child is like another. They are French children, but there the resemblance ceases. And their heads, their hands, their little feet, express so much! An oval contour, two dots for eyes, a couple of delicately indicated accents for mouth and nose, and we have Mademoiselle Fifine, who turns her cheek and submits to the chaste embrace of Monsieur Paul, in pinafore. Then, in quite another vein, we have the three robbers making off with the newly shorn wool, and below, when brought to task by the owner, who, good woman, begs its return on bended knees, how fine the assumption of innocence on the part of the

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL.

"CHANSON DE LA MARIÉE." FROM "CHANSONS DE FRANCE."

thieves! Again, in the fable of La Fontaine of the man who sells the bearskin before catching Bruin, how the story tells itself without the author's aid! All these are in delicate outline, filled in with flat tones of color sometimes subdued and delicate, and at others gorgeous in wealth of strong primary tones, and with the precision and daring of a Japanese. And throughout the work, though the little figures may not be more than two inches in height, the manner in which they are drawn, the indication of the turn of a wrist, the way that they stand on their feet, denote the masterly draftsman quick to seize and strong to express with accuracy and ease the movement and character of his figures. A later book, "Nos Enfants," with text, by that charming writer, Anatole France, shows the same qualities on a larger page, and is replete with tenderness, half amused, and yet thoroughly in sympathy with child life. Here we have the grave little doctor visiting the indisposed doll, while the little mother, gravely resting her chin on the headboard of the bed, awaits the result of the diagnosis. Very charming, also from this book, are the glimpses of country life—the good old peasant grandmother, the children gathering fagots, or the little becapped girl who submits with a mingling of terror and joy to the amicable caress of a great Newfoundland dog. Of more import to Monvel than Salon honors was the reception accorded these works. Their popular success was great, and grave critics, turning aside from the consideration of large official painting, treated these delicately traced pages with becoming seriousness.

It is curious to turn from these works to Monvel's offered contribution to the Salon of 1885—the "Apotheosis," reproduced herewith. One cannot help feeling that his theatrical ancestry must have strongly influenced our painter, an influence wholly for the good when it impels him to throw himself for the nonce into the soul of a child that he wishes to represent, but in the case of a picture like this, an influence more questionable. Moreover, a picture, even more than a story, designed to teach a lesson, to advocate a theory, is an anomaly. In this we have the demagogue, enthroned on a barricade, being crowned by Robert Macaire, while the comrade Bertrand beats the bass-drum, and the crowd acclaims him king. A satire on universal suffrage, a protest against socialism, this may be one or the other, and it matters little; the real merit of the work is a technical one—the admirable manner in which the uplifted hands of the rabble are treated. Admirable as they are,—and from some of them one could reconstruct the individual as a naturalist reconstructs a prehistoric animal from a single bone,—and though the difficulties vanquished are great, and the success of the achievement considerable, the picture as a picture is not equal to some of the slighter drawings, or, above all, to Monvel's painting of to-day.

Its history, however, is amusing, and, as a bit of the *chronique scandaleuse* of the Salon, worth relating. The picture was sent to the Salon of 1885, was placed on the line, and duly admired by the jury previous to the official visit of the Assistant Director of Fine Arts, a certain M. Turquet. The official visit of the Director comes before that of the President and the Ministry, which in turn precedes the day of opening to the general public. At the appointed time came M. Turquet, who, considering it seditious, and liable to create a disturbance little

BY PERMISSION OF MESSRS. E. PLON, NOURRIT & CIE.

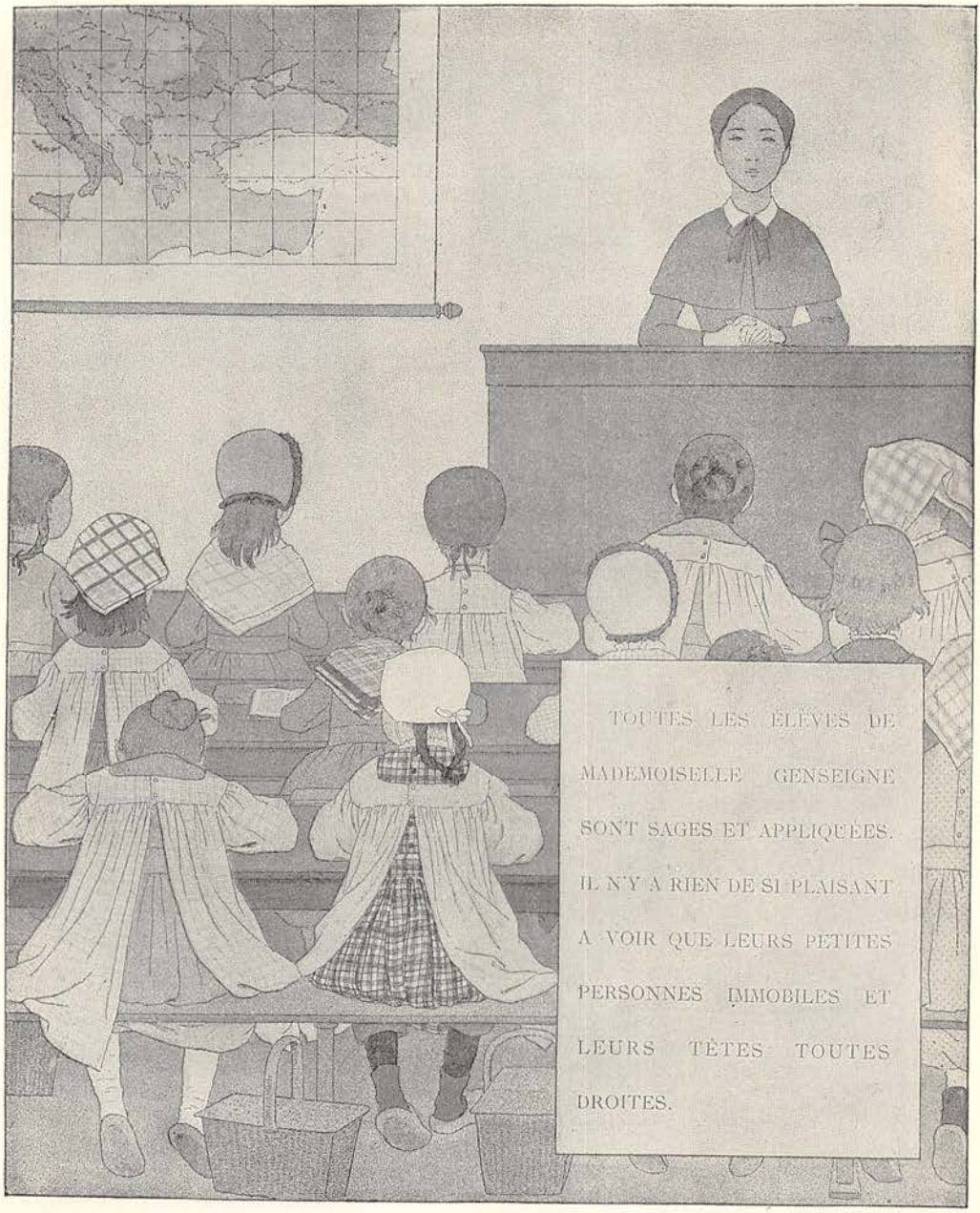
short of a revolution, ordered the picture to be detached from the wall, and sent home to the painter. The jury meekly acquiesced, for the Director of Fine Arts sits at the source of official patronage, and as he directs the current the streams of Pactolus flow. So M. de Monvel, properly punished for painting a political opinion, saw himself excluded from the Salon — a grave misfortune, for in the capital of art many are striving for recognition, and it behooves one at the outset of a reputation to maintain himself before his public. At this junction M. Georges Petit, who was organizing an exhibition in his charming and much frequented gallery of the Rue de Seze, invited our painter to show the "Apotheosis" there. It was accordingly sent, and placed on the wall, when, just before the exhibition opened, a prominent painter, a member of the Institute, but of different political faith from M. de Monvel, saw the picture, and promptly gave M. Petit the choice of sending away the "Apotheosis" or having the picture painted by himself removed. As M. Petit is but human, and the authority of the Institute is great, Monvel once more saw his picture returned, and in this way a change of ministry, and possibly civil war, may have been averted.

It is pleasant to turn from this tempest in a tea-pot to an act of pure *camaraderie* uninfluenced even by personal acquaintance. Édouard Detaille, presumably disgusted with the injustice from which Monvel was suffering, espoused his cause by proposing him as a member of the French Water-Color Society, a most exclusive body. Considering that at the time Monvel had never painted in water-color, the appropriateness of the election which followed might be considered doubtful, but coming as the voluntary proffer of sympathy on the part of one of the most prominent painters in France, it took on the form of a vindication, and, greatly comforted thereby, Monvel at once applied himself to the manipulation of this (to him) new means of expression. As he knew nothing of the medium, all was to learn, and the result has been that his water-color work is peculiarly his own, the effect arrived at being one of singular limpidness and delicacy without undue sacrifice of strength.

With this period, and undoubtedly under the influence of this medium, the blackness characteristic of his early work has completely disappeared, and in the next important work which Monvel undertook, the illustration of "Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre, we have a series of thirty-six drawings which for originality both in method and conception place him not only in the front rank of art, but give him a place by himself. Here we feel that he literally knows himself, that with a congenial subject he is completely master of the situation. The original drawings were executed in water-color, and have been superbly reproduced by the photogravure process of Boussod, Valadon & Cie., who publish the book. The reproductions are in black and white, but so thorough is the work of the artist, so delicately adjusted is the scale of light and shade, that the loss of color is hardly felt. The characters of the story, a village priest, his old woman-servant, and two children, a boy and a girl, and the simple rustic surroundings both in and out of doors, make up the subjects of the pictures. The atmosphere of the story surrounding these characters is felt through all the work; the good priest in his close-fitting robe, like a legacy from medieval times, moves quietly through it all, with his homely, saintly face; the shrewd goodness of the old servant gives a touch of strong reality; and the young

THE "APOTHEOSIS."

girl Xavière, with her sweetheart Landry, adds an idyllic note. It is difficult for me to write of these drawings in aught but a superlative way, for with this strong accentuation the means employed are the simplest. The beauty of ordinary daylight and lamplight effects in an interior simple almost to the point of barrenness is so well expressed that one almost forgets that simplicity is of all qualities the most difficult to obtain. The sureness of hand which in slighter works we have remarked in Monvel's drawings seems greater here where the scheme of light and shade is carried so much further, and the luminosity and the color qual-



"THE SCHOOL." FROM "NOS ENFANTS."

ity of some of the drawings is surprising. How exact in the sense of truth and character, in the "soul of the object represented," are the scenes where the priest and his little household are seated before the fire, the effect of lamplight where the priest searches the pages of St. Jerome, or that of the dappled sunlight as the children dance around the tree to the sound of Landry's flute! The enumeration of these various subjects at the risk of being tiresome must include at least that of the closing drawings where poor Xavière dies, all of which are treated with a sympathetic touch, especially that of the last communion, which it is difficult to conceive as the work of the painter of the "Apotheosis," so great is the range of sentiment between. In truth, the doctrine of heredity finds confirmation in work like this, and the actor-artist lineage stands our painter in good stead when it plays through a gamut of character such as his

FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"THE PRAYER DURING THE STORM."

In the old vicarage of Camplong, the little household of the priest, consisting of Prudence his old servant, his young nephew, and Landry, the son of the village schoolmaster, is assembled. There is a fearful thunderstorm, and the good priest is exposed to its violence in returning from the monthly reunion of the priests of the canton. To guide his steps, and as an intercession to the divine power, it is decided to ring the bell in the old church tower. Landry bravely volunteers to perform this service, leaving Prudence and the nephew on their knees.

"The first sound which arrived with a gust of wind which had joined forces with the storm upset me completely, and though determined to repeat the Ave Maria with Prudence until it pleased the Holy Mother to intercede for us, and above all for my poor uncle, exposed on the route to a thousand dangers, I was compelled to stop after indistinctly repeating three or four words. I could only listen to our bell, as far above the rock of Bataillo, far higher than the high crest of the Jougla, far beyond the great hills of Fonjouve, it sent its desperate appeal up into the sky of ink."

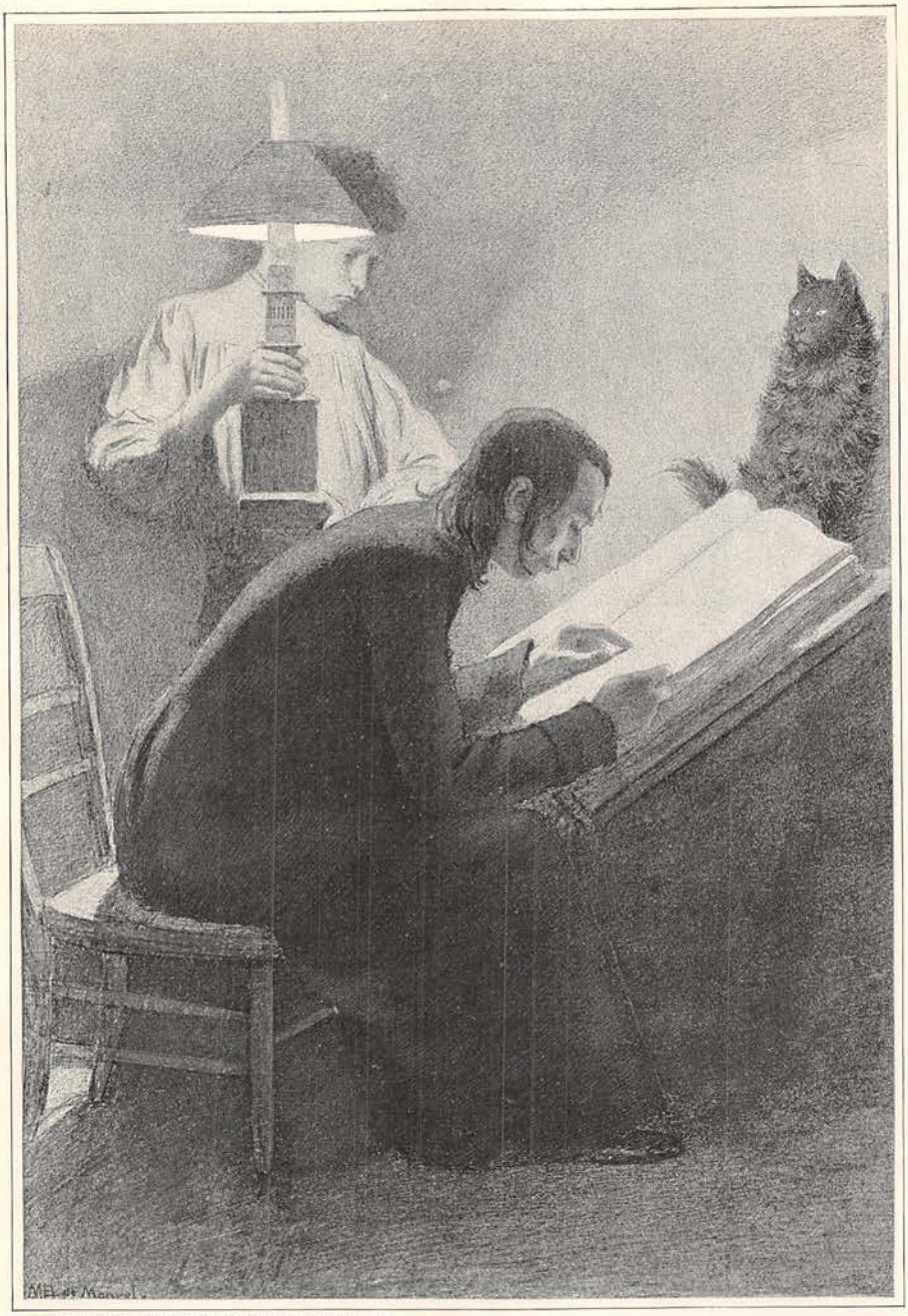
— "Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.

FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"THE ABBÉ AND XAVIÈRE."

"The other evening Xavière came to the vicarage for an engraving which I had promised her of Saint Francis Xavier, the patron saint of her dead father and her own. I sat enjoying the last light of the day, forgetting to light my lamp. Xavière entered; I turned, and the whiteness of her figure, which her dark hair made by contrast more light, seemed in the growing darkness of the room like a pale moon, *sicut luna perfecta in æther* as it is written in the eighty-eighth psalm."

—"Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.



FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"THE ABBÉ CONSULTS ST. JERÔME."

"'I have the text! the exact text!'

"'You have?'

"He did not listen. He murmured Latin words, which he translated as he went, not without difficulty. O interlined translation of Jules Delalain, publisher in the rue Mathurins-Saint-Jacques! O translation interlined and convenient, where art thou? Curiosity held me by the throat, and I waited almost with anguish. He did not hasten, stopped every second by some difficult expression. The cat, Cascaret, with a bound like my rubber-ball, installed himself on the reading-desk, his phosphorescent eyes widely opened on us. What did *he* want? Had he scented a mouse in the old worm-eaten copy of St. Jerôme?"—"Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.

FROM "XAVIERE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"XAVIÈRE AND LANDRY."

"Xavière turned toward Landry a look of such deep affection that in passing it fairly made me tremble — a look which I had never seen in her pale, cool eyes: then going to him deliberately, she threw around his neck her two arms, as flexible as the little branches of the white willow; and, before me, to my face, kissed him and kissed him again. . . .

"'He is not a boy like the shepherd! Is he a boy like him!'

"'Certainly,' I affirmed stoutly.

"'It is Landry, my Landry,' she cried, straightening herself, her arms uplifted, tall as though borne on wings, transfigured, radiant, angelic as I had never seen her, as no one in the parish of Camplong had ever seen her."

— "Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.

FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"THE BLESSING."

"'My children,' said the old man of the Passettes, lifting his head to the sky, — 'my children, you are in the flower of your years, and with the vigor of youth which God accords us for a time you can overcome all obstacles. . . . Go together hand in hand; fear nothing, if you love from a full heart.'"— "Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.

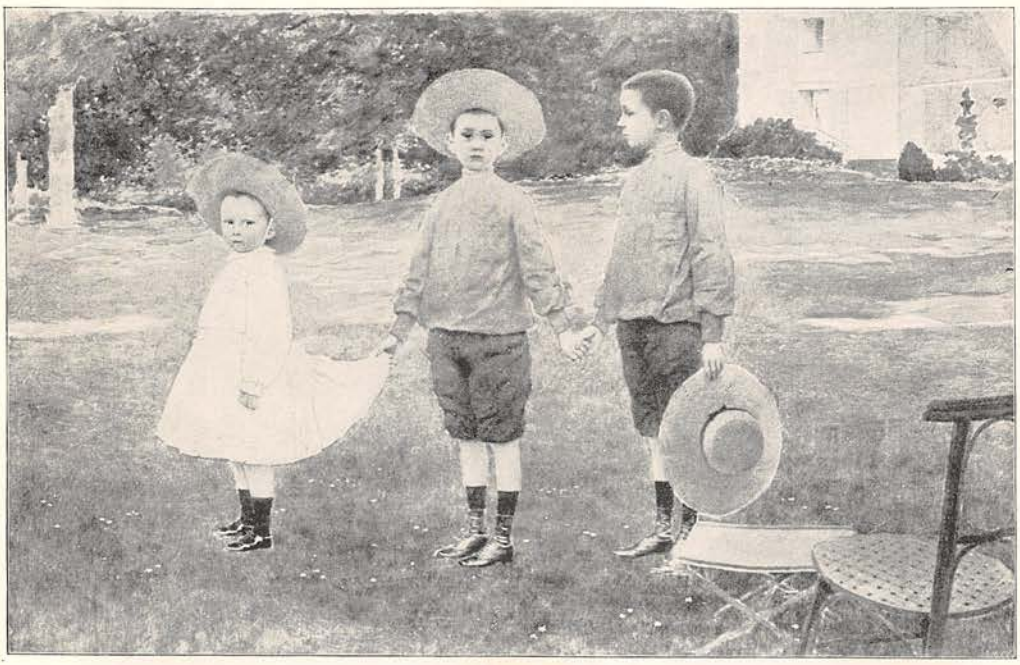
FROM "XAVIÈRE," BY PERMISSION OF BOUSSOD, VALADON & CIE.

"LANDRY AT THE BEDSIDE OF XAVIÈRE."

"Xavière, by a violent effort, raised her head the better to see her friend of the village, her friend of Fonjouve, her friend of everywhere and always. A smile, the smile of a saint, lighted her face, cleared away its shadows, and she seemed restored to her health and beauty, as the bud became suddenly the perfect blossom of the soul."

—"Xavière," by Ferdinand Fabre.

work shows. Withal, the merit which of all he would assuredly claim a desire to possess is his —naïveté. It may be somewhat the simplicity which ignores nothing,—for to what else can one pretend in this much-informed age?—but if it is, and is consequently the result of will, it is no less credit to the valiant artist who turns his back on cleverness and superficiality, and tries humbly to approach each new subject as though it were the first he treated, in closing his eyes to what has gone before, and daring to be himself.



PORTRAITS OF CHILDREN.

THIS review of the art of a man still young and still progressing must draw to a close. There can be little more than a passing mention of work which has gone on alongside of work of larger volume if not of greater importance. Monvel enjoys in France an enviable reputation as a painter of children's portraits. It is only a step from the children of his imagination, who people his books and his canvases, to the real children which art-loving parents have brought to him to be portrayed. These works are characterized, with a fine artistic sense, by a picture-like quality never carried to such an extent as to recall the "fancy portraits" of our shepherd and shepherdess grandfathers and grandmothers, but they are very real little children, often engaged in the every-day pursuits of every-day children. Of other portraits the number is great, since the early Mounet-Sully, painted in 1876, to the later Mlle. Dudlay, also of the Comédie Française, of three years ago. Last year, in Paris, M. de Monvel had on his easel a life-size Diana, which was finished for the annual exhibition of the Champ de Mars; for, like most of the progressive men, he deserted the Salon of the Champs Élysées when the new camp was formed.

The future of M. de Monvel will be interesting to watch, but the present of his artistic career is no less interesting. He stands by himself, and in the midst of the painters of his time and country, given up for the most part to the exemplification of a pictorial dexterity almost without parallel in the history of art, he is one of the very few who has found the emotional quality. Gifted with a capacity which has been carefully trained, so that technically he is armed with knowledge equal to that which the same severe training has given his *confrères*, he uses it instead of allowing it to use him. In the truest sense he is an impressionist, in as much as his view of nature is an outcome of his own temperament; for in the painting of the future, impressionism must mean more than a wilful subordination of aught else than the visual faculty applied to external objects, and he who sees with the eyes of the soul, and, without faltering technically, translates this inner vision, will be the true impressionist. There are men —their names come to me as I write—who are gifted with the rare qualities which make the complete artist, and who, from a sense of the

DRAWN BY WILL H. LOW.

MAURICE BOUTET DE MONVEL.

overwhelming difficulty of adequate technical achievement, from uncertainty of purpose, or from a mean desire to be "in the swim" of a realistic age (or moment, as ages are counted), content themselves with showing how a work of art should be made instead of making it. Therefore, we may be grateful to M. de Monvel that, having through devious ways found what he has to say, and having acquired the means of saying it, he is not ashamed of his honest emotion, and from the gay note to the grave, from the miller and his sons to where the life of Xavière fairly fades from our sight — for what he has to say, and for his manner of saying it — he is a welcome arrival on the field of modern art.

Will H. Low.

ON A MISSION FOR KOSSUTH.

ONLY men past the meridian of life will recollect the passage of that brilliant political luminary, Louis Kossuth, flaming from the East, through our political sky, and the unparalleled enthusiasm he created for Hungary and the cause he had so gallantly and gloriously, but haplessly, supported. He came with a legend already created, such as most heroes have to wait generations for; he appealed to America with an Oriental eloquence clothed in our own language, but spoken with a pathos few English speakers have ever attained, and which was vastly heightened by his evident unfamiliarity with the tongue. This made it seem as if he must have learned the language in order to bring us his supplications for aid in attaining that liberty the possession of which, according to his pleading, made us debtors to all enslaved nations. He went through the country preaching his crusade to audiences that listened with increasing enthusiasm, until he reached the slave States, where upon him fell the chill of a public opinion to which liberty was a suspicious word; then he felt that his mission had failed, for the slave States held the keys to all official action.

I saw him immediately after his arrival,[1] and being in the plastic state of mind of early manhood, eager for adventure and ignorant of danger, I offered myself for the cause of Hungary, having nothing else to give. I waited on Pulszky, the companion in exile of Kossuth and his acting English secretary, and proposed myself for any service Kossuth might require, perilous or other. I heard all the speeches he made in public in New York, and certainly I have never heard eloquence equal to his, fettered as it was, wing-tied by the strange speech in which it found expression. He spoke with a grave and solemn deliberation, as if he were searching always for the precise word which would serve him best among the unfamiliar tools of thought, but with no uncertainty, no vagueness of conception, as to which one it should be. He had searched our history for every local fact which could sharpen the point of application, and quoted our best authors and our greatest statesmen, and with a knowledge which amazed all who heard him brought all our own historical precedents to bear on his case. Wherever he went he seemed familiar with the local traditions and heroes; he knew the disasters and the glories of every region he appealed to, and flattered the *amour-propre* of his audiences by seeming to have made the history of their town his special study, while the critical epochs of our revolutionary history were the texts of his most powerful appeals. Wherever he went the gravest and wisest of our thinkers and statesmen paid him the tribute of the most attentive, and in the main sympathetic, reception, and while the sound tradition of entire abstention from all European questions, handed down from our early history, put a veto which seemed regretful on any practical answer to his appeal, there was no one who did not wish him God-speed.

The tradition of his years in prison, spent in the study of the Bible and Shakspere, his mastery of our most classical English, and his use of sacred diction, at once impressed the religious part of our population with a certain evangelical dignity, and gave the cause he pleaded the character of a holy war. Had Austria been Mexico, we should probably have declared war by popular vote. He made Hungarian freedom a religious obligation. I remember how at one of his meetings he used the text, "On earth peace, good-will toward men," as we have it, as an appeal for our good-will, showing from the original that the true translation was, "Peace on earth to good-willing men," and how there ran round the audience that sort of electric thrill of recognition, and a looking from man to man and man to woman among those who heard, that was like the warming toward one another of the hearts of the disciples by the way. Another time he

[1] Kossuth arrived in New York December 5, 1851.