

OUR AMATEUR ART EXHIBITION.



HY should we—that is, our small town—not have our own Amateur Exhibition, as well as larger towns? It was presumptuous to undertake such a thing, which to succeed well ought to be carried out on a large scale, our readers will exclaim. Nevertheless it was planned, a local committee was formed, and the exhibition was carried out not many months after the scheme was first started. The members of the committee consisted of local artists,

and a meeting was called to decide the preliminaries of the undertaking. Circulars were issued, and sent round to the different residents in the neighbourhood, each member of the committee undertaking a certain district in which to circulate them. Rules of the simplest description were drawn up, the chief of which were that the exhibition was to consist of paintings in oil and water-colours, on glass, china, and terra-cotta, &c.; etchings, carving, and modelling, &c.; and decorative needlework was also to be admitted, *if original*. By this means it was hoped to exclude antimacassars and such-like, and to confine the entries to good decorative work. A small commission was agreed on, to be charged on all work sold; but exhibitors were not obliged to put a price upon the things entered for exhibition.

Before the day of opening, large placards were posted up everywhere about the town and neighbourhood, announcing the date of the opening, the name of the public room at which the exhibition was to be held, and the charge for admission. For nearly a week before the opening day, members of the committee were busily employed in unpacking, hanging the pictures, drawing up the catalogue, and arranging the room generally. What between the confusion, the noise of the hammering, and the excitement displayed as each new work arrived, the scene was a lively and busy one.

During a lull in the proceedings, the committee escaped for luncheon, and then went back to their work. The oil-colours were hung on one side of the room, and the water-colours on the opposite side. All the works sent had to be numbered, and the labels taken off and put by for the return journey. The business of drawing up the catalogue was somewhat a fatiguing one; however it was all accomplished at last and sent to the printers.

A large screen was erected in the middle of the room, with a shelf on each side of it, on which were placed the china, wood-carving, and smaller things.

And now we will take a walk round the room, and see what our amateur artists have accomplished.

Amongst the water-colours, there were some very good interiors, landscapes, and studies of fruit and flowers.

The oil-colours were on the whole inferior to the water-colours, but there were some very good pictures; a particularly good one was some cart-horses at work in a field; they almost seemed to move with the harrow, and the whole scene was life-like. There were one or two pretty flower-pieces, a view of Venice, and some lively-looking puppies, which were all well drawn and painted. The pictures, taken on the whole, were better than might have been expected, and testified to the skill of the artists.

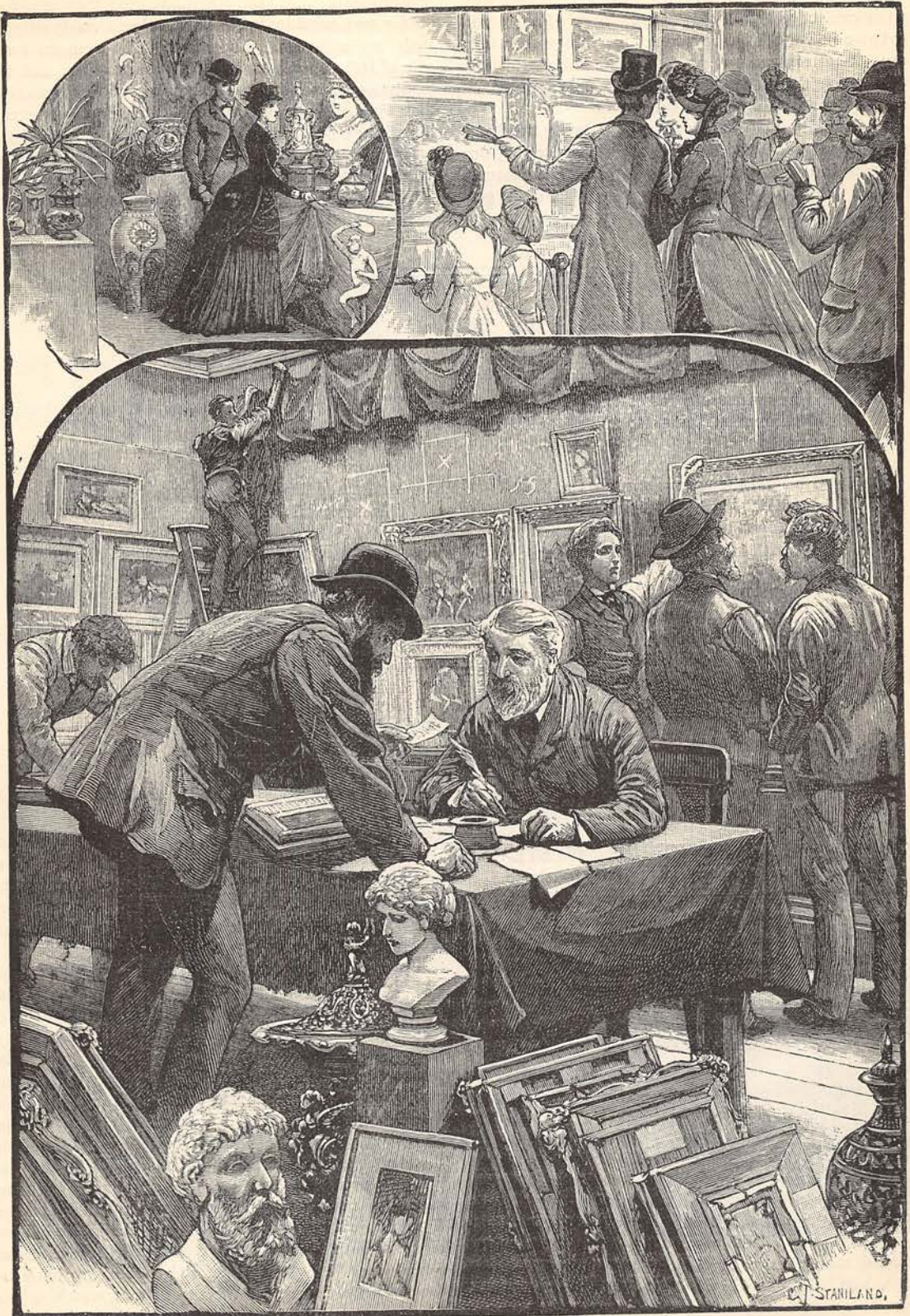
Next came the screens, three and four-fold, six and seven feet high. One, a very handsome one, well suited to stand in a large hall, was painted with flamingoes and other foreign birds; some were in the act of flying, and the others were resting on the ground. The whole scene was most life-like, and full of animation. Another very pretty screen was painted on pale blue American cloth, with delicate white fox-glove, and the beautiful white arum lily. The entire screen had nothing but white flowers on one side, whilst the other side was almost equally pretty, being painted on a gold back-ground formed of American cloth. Smaller three-fold screens were painted with sun-flowers, pampas grass, the blue iris, *Lilium auratum*, and other flowers. There were a good many crystoleums, but they looked to my mind somewhat unreal, and wanting in tone in the colouring. A great many photographs had been sent of views taken in India.

Amongst the china, some of the simplest designs were almost the most effective, such as jugs and jars painted in green, with a bright yellow chrysanthemum or white daisy painted upon them.

I must not weary my readers with a description of all the works at the exhibition, but should any one think of starting a local exhibition, our experience may be of use to them.

To make an exhibition successful, it stands to reason that the neighbourhood should be an artistic one, in order that there should be plenty of contributors. Next, it should be in a large and populous town, if possible, at some distance from London, in order that there may be plenty of people to visit the exhibition, and to buy if need be, when it is opened. Lastly, the exhibition should not be open for more than three days (unless the visitors continue to be *very* numerous, when it might be kept open an extra day or two), and the whole time the admission fee should be as low as possible.

To make it pay its expenses, the secretary and the committee should do as far as possible all the office work, and the unpacking and packing of the works for exhibition. But expense should not be spared in the first instance, in making the exhibition well known by means of notices in the papers, &c. A fault which it may be well to mention, is the absurd prices amateurs are apt to place upon their works, pricing them at a fictitious value, and all the time they appear to be confident that their work will sell; whereas, if the object is



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to dispose of the work, an artist should be content with a fair rate of profit, at any rate at first. People will not give now-a-days fancy prices for things that they can get better done by a professional hand, particularly when such things are not decidedly useful, or which can be done without altogether.

An exhibition, if well managed, certainly conduces to the encouragement of art, and besides increasing our appreciation of the beautiful, opens a field for honest labour. Amateurs experience great difficulty in getting their works admitted side by side with those of

professionals; and even when admitted, they are often so far surpassed by professionals that a ready sale for their works is almost hopeless. The demand for a sale of ladies' work is constantly increasing, and the exhibition, if well managed, supplies an opportunity of disposing of their work, without the annual subscription or the high commission charged by many of the local societies. At the same time it leads them to reflect what will be really suitable for exhibition, and the comparison of their work with that of other artists gives a useful stimulus to emulation.

WHEN WILL THE SONGS BE OLD?

WHEN will the songs be old that tell of spring?
Of buttercups that blow and birds that sing?
Ah! never may my losses or my gains
Make common things to me of fields and
lanes!

When I behold the new year sunbeams fall,
And light the chilly moss upon the wall,
May I be moved to think of hedges green,
And lilacs with laburnum boughs between;

Of clouds in starlight, and of changing moons;
Of shiny, breezy morns, and idle noons;

Of paths o'ergrown, where stray winds sing to
streams

The sweet songs of our youngest, dearest dreams.

Now, I remember many a pleasant rhyme,
Born of the joy that comes in budding-time,
And made for love in simple days of ease,
When mortals had more leisure for the trees.

When will the songs be old that always bring
In wildest days some music of the spring,
And make us smile to think what will be soon,
When garden roses breathe below the moon?

GUY ROSLYN.

JOHN FORD:

HIS FAULTS AND FOLLIES, AND WHAT CAME OF THEM.

By FRANK BARRETT, Author of "Honest Davie," "Hidden Gold," &c. &c.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.



MISS WESTLAKE was cousin to the second Lady Armstrong. She had neither parents nor fortune. Sir Andrew adopted her soon after his marriage, and it was she who—then a child—had thanked me for saving the life of Harry Armstrong. Soon after that event, as I have said, Lady Armstrong died, and Sir Andrew went

abroad, taking his own son and his adopted daughter with him. Eight years had passed since then; I was now a man, and she a woman. We were about the same age, that is to say, between twenty and

twenty-one, though people took me to be older than that by three or four years, by reason of my stature and the hair about my face. I saw her soon after Sir Andrew came back to re-inhabit Armstrong House, which was in the month of August, and the way of our meeting was this:—

There had been a long succession of exceedingly hot and dry days, and the gorse in Wancy Hollow, at the bottom of the common, had taken fire. I saw smoke and a few tongues of yellow flame in the morning; towards the evening a brisk dry wind sprang up from the north, and swept the fire rapidly towards the little copse that lies between the common and Johnson's Farm. If the fire passed that, then Johnson's ricks would go. All the village ran off to lend a hand in cutting the gorse, and covering the stacks with tarpaulins. I, caring no more for Farmer Johnson than he cared for me, went off in the opposite direction to Crown Point, whence one could get a view of the hollow along its entire length, and be out of the smoke at the same time. I was standing there, with my back to the single beech between the cross-roads, watching the fire as it swept along—now close to the ground under the breeze, now curling sluggishly upward as the wind