flowers earlier in the season, and by latter June has resumed her work-a-day dress of shining green. This swamp laurel grows only one or two feet high, while "calico bush," or mountain laurel, will sometimes attain a height of twenty feet.

The flowers of the varieties differ only in size and color, and are all constructed on the same plan. Ten little humps are ranged in a circle around the outside of each pretty bud. When the flower opens and spreads out as it does into the form of a saucer, we see that on the inside of the corolla the ten humps (as an Irishman might say) are ten hollows or dimples. Ten stamens with long slender stalks surround a yet longer pistil. But these stamens, instead of standing erect as in most flowers, are bent downward and outward, and each has its head fixed into one of the hollows of the corolla.

The inside of the flower looks something like an open umbrella turned upside down. Ten stamens spread out like the ribs, while the pistil stands up in the midst like the handle. Around the base of this pistil the honey is stored, and the bee in extracting it circles about over the corolla, thrusting her proboscis in from every side. Hovering there she is almost certain to jostle successively each stamen so as to dislodge it from the little pocket into which its head is fixed. As if resenting the disturbance, the stamen flies up like a spring board, suddenly and elastically, and throws at the bee a little shower of pollen. "Then flying to another blossom, the insect brings its pollen-dusted body against the top of the pistil, and revolving around it, as if on a pivot, while it sucks the nectar in the bottom of the flower-cup, liberates the bowed stamens and receives fresh charges of pollen from that flower while fertilizing it with the pollen of the preceding one. When a cluster of laurel flowers is covered with fine gauze so that insects are excluded, no stamen gets free of itself, and no seed sets." *

Open woods and field borders in latter May and early June are lavishly adorned with the common wild geranium. Only botanical analysis shows its relationship to our garden variety. The conspicuous flowers are more than an inch broad, widely opened, and of a rosy purple color. Three or more grow together in a loose branching cluster. The green leaves are broad and beautifully cut, and the seed-vessel is long and pointed like a beak, whence the English name for the plant, "crane's-bill," and the German name, "stork's-beak." This plant can be useful as well as ornamental; for from its roots, rich in tannin, gargles and other medicines are extracted.

In most geraniums, the stamens ripen first and have their pollen prepared before the pistil is ready to turn it to account. But their charity does not begin at home, and the welfare of the pistil is not the object in view. The golden dust is to be shed on the fuzzy jacket of some bee, which will soon chance by and be lured by the purple, as dear to her heart as to Julius Cæsar's. Then the pistil will mature and spread forth five eager little arms of welcome to winged callers. We have several varieties of wild geranium; some smaller sorts, in flowers and foliage bear a strong family likeness to the garden rose-geranium.

In rich woods we find the little yellow and white dicentra, called, from the odd shape of the blossom, "Dutchman's breeches." The green leaves of this plant are so finely cut as to look like little ferns. Another variety of dicentra has heart-shaped flowers, white tinged with rose, and breathing a fragrance like that of hyacinths. They dangle all in a row along the under side of a curved stalk five or six inches long, and in general get-up bear a resemblance to those of their more showy relative, our garden "bleeding heart." In Dutchman's breeches and in bleeding heart the stamens are gathered about the pistil in a close-fitting ring, and all are shut up together between the spoon-shaped tips of two odd-looking petals. One would say that such blossoms were purposely arranged to exclude insects and do without them. Yet they produce nectar and are visited by bees. Indeed, if the blossoms are covered with gauze so as to keep away insects, little or no seed is formed.

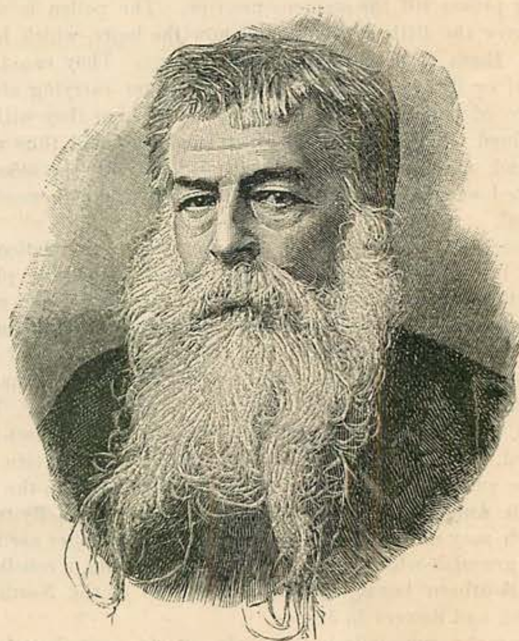
* Prof. Gray.

How wonderfully nature clears away all litter and ugliness! We know how prolific many little wild creatures are; and because there are not more of them about we must be sure that many die each year. Yet how seldom, on a country walk, one finds a dead bird or squirrel or snake or even a dead beetle. And flowers, when their days of beauty are over, vanish in the same mysterious way. The fruit blossoms shed their petals, a slow-dropping fragrant snow, but soon the patch beneath the tree is as green as any other part of the meadow. The petals of the rose, the buttercup, and a score of others are wafted away by the breeze. Literally, "the wind passeth over them and they are gone."

How few flowers, dying, leave—so to speak—a dead body. The iris withdraws into its green sheath like a bud. The water-lily after a day or two of glory goes back into the cool depths whence it arose. Even the leaves which rustle around our feet as we seek spring flowers are but few compared with the millions which fell last autumn. Where are the rest?

Nature is called a kind mother, a good economist, a careful provider; we must acknowledge that she is also a marvel of tidiness.

E. M. Hardinge.



Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier.

THE report from Paris of a lamentable misfortune which has recently befallen one of the greatest French artists of this century, and will possibly put an end to his artistic labors, is a subject of sincere regret.

Meissonier suddenly lost the use of his right thumb, and found himself, in consequence, unable to hold pencil or brush. As he is approaching his seventy-fourth year, a complete recovery of the lost power is the less confidently hoped for. One can but regret that Meissonier did not

"THE VEDETTE."

and representation remained with him, and no retrogression from the height he had attained could be detected in his work.

In spite of the great number of his works, his fancy was by no means exhausted nor failing in manner, for he set about each new work with the eager earnestness of a study, and brought to each the full freshness of his genial, passionate nature. If, indeed, the picture which the artist was engaged on at the time of this severe shock should prove to be his last, and the master should not again be able to resume the use of his hand and the exercise of his artistic skill, no further effort is needed for him to be known for all future time as one of the most noted and honored names in the art history of our century.

Jean Louis Ernest Meissonier was born at Lyons, France, in 1813. His strong inclination toward picturesque art manifested itself even in his boyhood. When grown he went to Paris, where he earned his living by drawing for wood-engraving, while he studied painting in his own way, without any teacher except the works of the masters in the public galleries. For a short time Meissonier had the instruction of Léon Cogniets; but most of his art was acquired from the copies he made in the Louvre. His favorite masters were of the old Flemish school,—the brothers Van Eyck and their immediate successors; he did not care for the large, sumptuously colored creations of Titian, Paul Veronese, Correggio, Rubens, and Murillo.

Besides the old Flanders masters, Meissonier made special studies of the later Dutch "little-masters," Maetzu, Terborgh, and Mieris, in whose works he found a scarcely less minute representation, but a more harmonious expression of color,

NAPOLEON (STUDY).

learn earlier in life, as did his celebrated German contemporary in art, Adolf Menzel, to make both hands serve him with equal readiness.

No one will, of course, feel this misfortune so keenly as the stricken one himself. For he belongs—like most successful artists—to those vigorous and active natures for whom a life without creative industry is unbearable, and impossible to contemplate calmly; and over whose artistic faculties the years seem to have no power. Up to the day when the brush fell from his paralyzed hand, his power of conception

CAVALRY-MAN (STUDY).

the charm of *chiaro-oscuro* and a delicate taste in treatment.

In his twenty-third year, in the Salon of 1836, Meissonier made his debut before the Paris public with his oil-painting "The Little Messenger." A single figure, "The Reader," appeared in 1840, and the "Chess-Player" was in the Salon of 1841. These little pictures soon caused him to be accepted as one of the most popular, most admired, fêted, and most honored painters of France.

During the next twenty years Meissonier produced an enormous number of paintings in miniature, which were of single figures or groups of little figures, generally men. In perfection of detail, in masterliness of execution, in fine appreciation of situations and events as the expression of mental action and feeling, he is without a parallel. Edmond About thus vividly decribes his marvelous power of concentration: "He painted true gentlemen, as distinguished as Lauzun, and as small as *scarabei*; he stowed fifty French guards, very life-like and stirring, in a space where two cock-chafers would be too crowded."

In very nearly all of his earlier pictures, the characters are represented in restful positions, either alone, or engaged in sport or converse with agreeable companions. Thus it was believed by many, in the earlier period of Meissonier's fame, that the master, although thoroughly familiar with the human figure and with horses, was unequal to the representation of wild and stirring scenes, or those depicting excited or angry persons. This doubt stung his pride of art. He undertook, in 1845, a work in which he demonstrated the entire fallacy of the suspicion, "The Quarrel," representing an affray between two French or Spanish officers of the period of Henry IV. The scene is full of fire and physical force.

In one of our illustrations we reproduce a later period of the master's work, which is not an actual affray, but the later result of a dispute at cards, and which is depicted with equal energy and truth. Two cavaliers of the time of the Thirty Years' War are victims to their passionate temper. Overturned seats and table, scattered cards, the corpse of one of the gamblers, and his severely wounded antagonist crouched on the floor of the magnificent apartment, tell the story whose sequel is thus presented. The figure of the dead man lying in the foreground is splendid. One can almost hear the crash of his heavy fall, the striking of his head on the overturned chair, and the clang of his falling dagger on the polished floor.

Meissonier's fame had already become world-wide, and tribute of admiration and honor was paid the artist by painters of every school of art, when Napoleon III. declared war against Austria. The Emperor sent an invitation to Meissonier to join the imperial party during the campaign, so that he might be a personal witness to the anticipated triumphs of the French army and their leader, and reproduce the more faithfully the stirring scenes. Dressed in a sort of fancy uniform, Meissonier made the entry into upper Italy in the immediate company of the Emperor. One picture only was the result of these studies and observations: "Napoleon III. and his Staff at the Battle of Solferino." It was completed in 1863, and is one of the gems of the Luxembourg gallery.

Whether at the expressed wish of the Emperor, or to gratify a supposed fancy, Meissonier turned the direction of his art toward depicting scenes from the career of the first Napoleon. Meissonier the miniaturist, so long the painter of "*petits bonhommes*," admired and laughed at by his many critics, became the painter of the warlike epoch of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the painter of Napoleon the Great, his generals and his soldiers. But our artist was not the one to tread the well-worn paths of tradition; and in his historical pictures he illustrated the Napoleonic career in his own inimitable manner.

SACRIFICED TO CARDS.

The picture entitled "1814" is a magnificent creation, for which the accompanying study of the "man of destiny" was made. It shows the Emperor shortly before the catastrophe of March, on his return through France before the alliance. This scene from the later days of the First Empire, Meissonier supplemented by another picture, of uncommon size for him, which portrayed the Emperor at the sunny height of his power and success. This is the world-famed "1807," or "The Cuirassiers of Friedland."

For several years the artist worked at it. In the year 1867 the picture stood, apparently well-advanced, in his studio at Poissy. 1873 found it, yet unfinished, at the World's Fair in Vienna. In the foremost principal group certain contemplated changes were outlined with chalk, which were to be put in over the figures of horses and riders already beautifully painted. This group in the first design was the head of a regiment of cuirassiers, dashing from right to left crying "Vive l'Empereur!" while the Emperor holds a small eminence against the enemy in the middle distance.

The "1807" was bought by the late A. T. Stewart, of New York, for $60,000. At the sale of the Stewart collection, last spring, it was bought by Judge Hilton for $66,000, and presented by him to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, where it is one of the most prized treasures of a rich collection. Among other works of Meissonier in this country are "The Vedette," which sold for $1,000 at the sale of the Harper collection, and "A Standard Bearer," bought by H. Schaus, at the Spencer collection sale, this spring. "Charity," "At The Barracks," and a portrait of Meissonier, by himself, were also in the Stewart collection. In the Vanderbilt collection there are several examples of Meissonier's genius, notably "The Arrival at the Chateau."

Of his school, there are only three French artists: his son, J. C. Meissonier, Gros, and E. Detaille. In one of the latter's pictures, "The Passing Regiment," in the Corcoran Gallery at Washington, a likeness of Meissonier may be recognized in one of the on-lookers at the right. Meissonier has countless imitators among artists of all nationalities, and many of them are more or less successful in copying certain lesser mannerisms of the great "little-master;" but while genius, taste and spirit may be emulated, they are qualities which defy imitation.

HAREM LIFE IN TURKEY.

THE air of mystery which has always surrounded Turkish domestic life, and the stories of marvelous Oriental beauty and magnificence have created and maintained an interest and curiosity that have never been satisfied because the Turkish people never have and never will allow foreigners admittance into their inner circle, whether it be a man or woman who tries to penetrate its sacred seclusion. The Turkish women are not at all stupid; many of them are really intelligent. Book-learning is not permitted, as it is thought that it would make them dissatisfied with real life; yet, even though deprived of all educational advantages, they are still charming in their native simplicity and gentleness, their graceful manners, and lavish hospitality.

Turkish women are far from being the abject slaves to their husbands' caprices that most people suppose, and the code of laws that protects their rights, though adapted only to them, is still almost fatherly. The law provides that a husband's company shall be given to each wife in turn, but only after business hours: a husband very rarely sees his wife during the day. Temporary marriages, by mutual consent, are often made; and the marriages are all civil contracts, which leave all wives power over their own estate. A Turkish woman can sue or be sued without requiring any legal representative, and she may at any time summon her husband to court when he fails in any of his obligations. The husband is not liable for any of his wife's debts, except for the necessities of the household, like bread, meat, etc., but he must maintain her and give her her dowry or portion in case of divorce. A man may divorce his wife at any time, by holding his hands above her head and saying, "I divorce thee," and can send her home to her parents. They rarely do this, however, as in case they ever "make up," a bitter and humiliating punishment is inflicted upon both before they are allowed to live together again. Wives are not obliged to bring a *dot* or dowry when married; some gifts and a few household goods and clothes are all that are considered necessary.

Sultans are under no legal obligations toward their wives, holding them as gifts from the nation, and the Sultan is amenable to no law. No Sultana is ever divorced; if one offends, she is either banished or quietly suppressed, though the sack and bow-string are supposed to be things of the past. Every woman who is honored by the notice of the Sultan, whether simple slave or odalisque, becomes a legal wife if she becomes a mother, and is then entitled to a separate suite of rooms in the palace, with her own train of attendants and carriage; and her caprices are just as extravagant as those of the legal wives,—that is, the wives raised for the Sultan and given him at every Ramazan. In the Imperial or any other harem, the first wife is called *bascadine hanum*, or first lady, and she is held in high respect by the later comers; a respect often enforced by tooth and nail.

The routine of harem life is the same everywhere except with the poorest Turks, where, of course, there is not so much state. The *haremlik*, or women's department, which also signifies sacred, is so completely and entirely shut off from that part of the house devoted to the men, that there is