others of sorrow, or again of both together; but anyway, it has been held sacred, as yours will be, every word."

"I believe you; and the sight of you with these children has made me feel that I may trust you. It is a comfort to speak after years of silence, though I have got used to loneliness now. You must know that I had no need to do dirty, unpleasant work, or to mix myself up with rag sorters, who were most of them very different from any people I had ever associated with before. I did it just to punish myself, and I wore clothes that were not fit to be seen, and neglected myself in every way, so as to look ugly in other people's eyes. You remember what I looked like in the tram-car that day."

"Yes. Go on."

"I had not seen my face in a glass for years. I knew I was a wretched, sluttish creature to look upon. The miserable clothes, the straggling hair, the unwashed face and hands, the work I was doing, the people I was mixed up with, were all parts of a whole. You may say, if you like, that I was sitting in sackcloth and ashes."

"You got no comfort or help out of that sort of thing, I'll be bound," said Uncle Mat. "Who ever did?"

"You are right. I had money, honestly got and mine entirely, which I never touched. I have nearly all of it yet. But I chose to live on the poor wages I earned, in a wretched court, alone, unknown, making no neighbours, and shutting myself out from everything except a word with the children now and then. I did it for years, when cleanliness, comfort, good food, and a decent home were within my grasp. I chose the sackcloth and ashes. It was your homely words, your present, that set me thinking after I got home, though I was angry at first, and the memory of other words, spoken by our old parson years before, that showed me my folly. I gave up sackcloth and ashes. I put on decent clothing, and changed my home to another, poor enough, but clean and comfortable—and I made up my mind to try to do something for other people, instead of brooding over what could not be mended. Is not that better than sackcloth and ashes?"

"Better, but not the best thing yet by a long way."

The child on Uncle Mat's knee awoke at the moment, and there were indications that his own presence amongst the children on the playground might be desirable.

"I must go now," he said. "Some of my young friends can take care of themselves; others must be collected and guided homeward. I shall be due elsewhere in half an hour. We have not had our talk out, but if Saturday afternoon is fine, I shall bring another batch of my friends and introduce them to the park. Think, in the meanwhile, if I can help you in any way, and don't be afraid of telling me."

He did not ask Susan where she lived, for under a homely exterior he hid true delicacy of feeling.

Susan thanked him and said, "I must go home, for I have been buying a sewing-machine, and it is to be sent in soon."

Uncle Mat nodded and turned away to the children, thinking to himself, "She has told me a little, but there is more behind, no doubt. I'll bide my time, and when she wants help I'll give it if I can. She must have money, or she'd hire, not buy. And she knows very little about machining to think of starting at this time of the year."

(*To be continued.*)

## CHARCOAL DRAWING.

THIS is a French art, probably familiar to those English girls who have been educated in France, but not generally known or practised in England. Indeed, to see it to perfection you must go to Paris, either to the Salon, or to an exhibition of the works of Allongé, Lalanne, Karl Robert, and Appian, who are the best masters of "Le Fusaing," as the French call it. Their drawings are on a much larger scale than is usually attempted by amateurs; but to see them is to be convinced at once of the all but magical power lying dormant in a stick of charcoal. Few probably of those who have never employed charcoal except to sketch in their first designs on canvas or paper, are aware of the artistic work, the varied and beautiful effects, the manifold tints, which can be produced with charcoal by those who know how to use it. After painting, it is at once the most effective and the most artistic kind of drawing, for neither chalk, crayon, nor pencil can give such exquisite gradations of greys, such varieties of blacks, such brilliant lights as can be produced with a piece of charcoal on a sheet of white drawing-paper. It has the power—and in this consists its chief virtue—of giving the exact value of the different tones on which the harmony of a picture depends, and without which a drawing is valueless from an artist's point of view, in a way that nothing else, except, of course, colour, can give it. It is well to bear this in mind, for in one of his books on the subject, M. Allongé has devoted an entire chapter to tones, or *valeurs*, as he expresses it; and it is impossible either to appreciate or practise the art unless we bear in mind that one of its great uses is, to express the respective value of the various tones of the picture. And the quickness with which it can be applied renders it easy to seize a passing effect of light and shade before it has vanished. Needless to say, whoever attempts charcoal-drawing from nature—and in this, as in everything else, "a bad original is better than a good copy"—must possess a true artist's eye, and be able to seize at once the brightest light in his picture, and bring all the rest of the drawing into harmony with it, making the high light the centre of attraction, to which all else must be subordinate. For clouds and misty atmospheric effects charcoal is incomparable, for it is so plastic that the smoothest, softest tones of every variety and gradation can be laid on with it, and made to melt into each other, as clouds and mist, and mountains and sky, melt away in nature.

But it is not all softness—that would be weakness: and the strength of charcoal consists in its equal capacity for vigorous, severe, black strokes, for stern, dark shadows, for sharp, firm touches as for soft, tender tints. In this it resembles those men whose great, powerful, strong natures are at the same time equally capable of sternness and tenderness, who combine all that is admirable in man with all that is soft and lovable in woman; *raræ aves*, perhaps, but they do exist. As in a school a wise schoolmaster will deal differently with different boys, so in drawing, different objects require different treatment;—trees, buildings, clouds, mountains, rocks, water, sea, and sky cannot all be represented with similar strokes; they each require separate execution; and charcoal, by its suppleness as well as by its firmness, is capable of almost an endless variety of touches.

It is more particularly adapted to landscapes, though it is often effectively used for heads and figures. But it is of its application to landscape-drawing we are more particularly treating here, though the mode of using it is precisely the same in all cases. And, first of all, let us say there is no royal road to charcoal-drawing any more than to anything else: nothing of any value can be produced in this world without labour: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," applies alike to art and literature, and science and agriculture; it is a law of nature from which there is no appeal. And so the first thing a would-be artist in charcoal must learn, if he does not already know it, is to draw: let him once know how to draw correctly and all the rest will be comparatively easy. But, unfortunately, one of the last things most young ladies who copy Christmas cards on to china plates, and call that painting, think it necessary to learn is drawing; they appear to labour under the sweet delusion that drawing comes by nature, like our wisdom-teeth, only without the pain. It does not do anything of the kind: it must be learnt, painfully perhaps, thoroughly and conscientiously certainly. But to all who can draw we would whisper a word of comfort which they must not reveal to those who are too lazy to learn, namely, charcoal-drawing is very easy. Perhaps there is no other art in which you can with so little trouble and labour produce such effective results in so little time—for it is very quick work also. In this way it is valuable to those lovers of nature *who can draw*—for we have nothing to do just now with those who cannot; who from the pressure of household cares or other duties have but little leisure for drawing. They will find a very few hours will suffice to produce a large and finished charcoal-drawing. And in sketching from nature too its quickness gives it a very great advantage, though unless you carry your work home very carefully you must set it in the open air. But to this business of setting we will return presently—it is the last but not the least important part of it.

But before we proceed to explain the process, it may be well to enumerate the necessary articles required, all of which can be

easily obtained, though those who like the best tools possible for their work had better apply to Georges Meusnier, 27, Rue-Neuve-Saint-Augustin, Paris, for the materials recommended by M. Allongé. He has a paper prepared on purpose for charcoal-drawing, called "Papier-Allongé," at two francs a roll of ten sheets; but a good grained drawing-paper will do almost equally well; it must be thin to take the fixing, and with rather a rough surface to take the tint. Ordinary charcoal will answer the purpose, but as it is important to have the best that can be procured—for a greasy stick will spoil the drawing—we recommend sending direct to Meusnier's for his "Fusain des artistes," which is a franc and a half the box. A knife for taking out the lights and sharpening the charcoal is indispensable; and add to this a piece of bread, and you have all that is absolutely necessary, though Meusnier sells also stumps of elder-pith (*moëlle du sureau*), for softening some parts when the fingers cannot be used. But an ordinary leather stump will do; and, after all, fingers are the best stumps.

We have forgotten one thing—the fixing, which must on no account be forgotten, for without it a strong flip of your handkerchief would destroy your drawing, and a rub obliterate it entirely. The best fixing is, in the writer's opinion, undoubtedly "Fixatif Meusnier," to be had from Meusnier in bottles of various sizes from half a franc to four francs. A very good substitute can be made with a mixture of turpentine and white varnish—two-thirds turpentine and one-third white varnish. Another good fixture is shellac dissolved in spirits of wine.

The paper should be stretched on a drawing board in preference to using a stretching block, as the former is more supple, and, for beginners, easier to avoid hardness and dryness, according to M. Allongé, who is the best authority on the subject. Having first sketched your subject in, and being sure that your outline is correct, go over it in chalk, making the darkest lines firmly; indeed, the whole outline must be firmly marked, or in the after process it will be lost, and you will have part of your work to do over again. At the same time be very careful to have no chalk lines in the lightest parts of your picture; for remember, the brightest lights are to be represented by the white paper itself. The outline finished, you proceed to cover the whole surface of the paper with charcoal, applied horizontally in straight lines from left to right of the paper, laying the charcoal flat on the paper, not holding it as you would a pen or pencil. Do not be afraid of the results, but boldly black your whole paper over, lightly where the light parts of your picture are to come, more heavily where the shadows fall. Then, either with a cloth, or merely the palm of your hand—the latter is better—rub the whole tint well in. In working in circles from left to right, if your outline has been firmly put in, it will still be visible in this first tint. Now work up your sky, taking out the lightest parts with bread, and rubbing in the clouds with more charcoal if necessary, in the same way as you laid on your first tint, only of course only covering the part you want to darken. You may require to repeat this process several times, but the quicker your sky is put in the better.

You have of course fixed your high light, and if you have accidentally covered it with charcoal, take it out with the knife at once, and then soften down the lighter parts of your picture if necessary with bread. Having established your lights, the next thing is to get in your deepest shadows, so find out what are the blackest parts of your subject, and then with a pointed piece of charcoal strike them boldly in; for they will be far more effective done in this way than by reiterated strokes, though they may have to be gone over more than once perhaps. Still, if struck in sharply at first, they will withstand all subsequent rubbing in; for you will have to go over them, rubbing in your other shadows first with charcoal, and then with your hand or fingers, if the space is too limited, perhaps several times. But having got in your depths as well as your lights, then lay on any flat tones required, lightening them afterwards with bread where necessary, and deepening those parts that require deepening with charcoal.

Bread, by the way, deserves a paragraph to itself, for it is a very important factor in this art; as one charcoal-artist used to put it, "You must draw with bread as much as with charcoal." Manipulate the bread well into little pellets before using it, pointing them if you want to make any fine strokes; and when working with the bread, look upon that as your pencil, and the tint of charcoal you are working upon as your paper, so that you are now working with white on black instead of black on white.

Your lights, shades, and middle tints being now laid on, we will hope you have from time to time recalled your fading outline, if it was inclined to play truant, and perhaps run away altogether. You may now begin to draw with the charcoal in the ordinary way, except that you must keep rubbing in with your fingers as you draw; or more distant objects leave the drawing undefined—that is, after drawing a distant tree, for instance, rub it in and leave it; it will look misty, as a very distant tree would in nature, but for a nearer tree draw it and rub it in again and again, while for one in the foreground you must draw and rub, draw and rub, and then finally pick out the lights on the leaves with bread, and leave your last finishing touches of charcoal. At first you will regret rubbing—or smudging, as you will probably call it—your tree you thought looked so well; but as you go on you will see the form of the tree remains, and comes out more distinctly after each process; and meanwhile the charcoal will have worked some magical effects for you that you would never have thought of yourself, and could not have accomplished had you tried.

You must treat the whole drawing in this way, drawing and rubbing in, whether it be buildings, trees, water, rocks, or sea, though of course buildings, for instance, will require more actual lines to be left than trees or water. Indeed, you can hardly rub in too much; hard and fast lines are a vice in charcoal; you must make them, but you must soften them down afterwards, though in foregrounds and on the most accentuated parts of the picture, when it is nearly finished, you may leave some bright brilliant finishing touches in all their pristine beauty.

Do not use white chalk for your lights—it is a vicious habit; and by making your drawing to consist in violent contrasts of black and white, you will make it vulgar: the artistic value and beauty of charcoal-drawing, as we said before, consists in its various, almost infinite, gradations of tone, and its power of giving to each its proper value.

The last process is to set the drawing, which is done as follows:—Take it off the drawing-board and get two people to hold it at each of the corners for you; then with a good-sized camel's hair-brush wash the back of it well over with "Fixatif Meusnier," or one of the other fixtures mentioned, and pin it to some piece of furniture to dry. If properly set, it will now stand as well as an ordinary chalk-drawing. It can be used very effectively for panels to doors or wainscoting, and will last for years; or for folding-screens; and for sketching from nature it is most useful, as it can be done so quickly, and requires so much less paraphernalia than oil or water-colours.

But those who are not sufficiently advanced to sketch from nature need be at no loss for subjects to copy, as engravings, especially wood engravings, are easily obtained, and can be copied with ease in charcoal. Those of *Harper's Magazine* are singularly adapted to it, for they give all the misty charcoal effects which English engravers at present fail in. There is a magazine called *Le Fusain*, edited by Karl Robert, published every month in Paris at two francs a number, or twenty francs the year, which gives in each number one or two examples of drawings from the best masters in the art; and these suit all tastes. Some are panels, some sea-pieces, some landscapes, some buildings, and occasionally figures are given. But we strongly advise our readers, as soon as they have mastered the art of drawing itself, to try sketching from nature in charcoal, and we are sure, with attention to the above instructions, they will succeed beyond even their own expectations. It is a modern art, and no one has contributed so much to its development as Maxime Lalanne, with whose name it was for many years inseparable. In the beginning of his career this artist was divided between historic painting and landscape, but having decided on landscape as his *forte*, he adopted charcoal as the means of representing it, and he it is who has brought the art to that pitch of perfection which, as his drawings testify, it has now reached.

But a paper on charcoal-drawing would be incomplete indeed if we omitted to mention another of its great masters, M. Allongé, who has done his best to make it known and appreciated by his pen as well as by his pencil, and whose pupil, Karl Robert, is now the editor of *Le Fusain*; for, as we mentioned before, charcoal-drawing boasts a magazine entirely devoted to it.