

approaching conference will not be allowed to pass without obtaining some essential modification of those trade restrictions which prevent the development of commerce and industry in Morocco. The limitation of the number of natives who enjoy foreign protection and the surrender of some of their privileges, of which the present effect is so disastrous, both to the Sultan himself and to the bulk of his subjects, would constitute a concession on the part of the Powers; one of such magnitude, and so earnestly desired by Mulai El Hassan, that nothing but the grossest ignorance or indifference on the part of the diplomatists assembled at Madrid will stand in the way of a substantial modification of the present attitude of the Moorish Government. If the Sultan has not been able to protect himself or his subjects from frequent injustice and extortion, if he has again and again been obliged to satisfy exorbitant claims and to compensate officials for alleged losses, surely the same powers which were used to enforce these humiliations cannot fail to obtain a substantial reduction in the excessive duties which oppress both imports and exports.

Foreign subjects should also be entitled to carry on any industrial enterprise tending to develop the resources of the country. The present treaties do indeed confer the right to exercise any calling to which foreigners might devote themselves in their own country, but the Moorish authorities frequently contest the application of the clauses in question. The right to acquire land, also accorded by the treaty of 1880, should be insisted upon, while some concessions allowing the development of roads and harbours by public companies, where the native Government refuses to undertake the work, should be demanded. Freedom of the press should be guaranteed; but it is desirable that due provision should be made in order to prevent so valuable an institution from degenerating into a mere vehicle of personal abuse, as this means of levying black-mail appears to present irresistible attractions to the adventurers of Tangier and Mogador. When the manufacture of dubious claims shall have been restricted by the establishment of tribunals before which these documents shall be subjected to a critical examination, entailing severe punishment in cases where fraud has been attempted, an immense advantage will have been secured; for the opposition offered by the natives of various creeds who enjoy the monopolies conferred by consular protection constitutes an even more serious obstacle to the introduction of capital and enterprise from abroad than is presented by the fiscal policy of the native Government.

In conclusion, I would say that one of the chief evils connected with the bureaucratic system at Tangier arises from the employment of unpaid or nominally paid native interpreters. It is only natural that these men should compensate themselves for the insufficiency of their salaries as opportunity offers, and that they should interpose a barrier between the consul and any native applicant when the former is ignorant of the language, a barrier which can only be removed by bribery. Even when the case is heard it lies in the power of the interpreter to give the evidence submitted the colour that may best suit his own personal interests. Thus it is that certain consulates have gained a reputation for venality, which in some cases the consul himself may not have deserved. The establishment of a collective consular tribunal, served by a limited number, say two or three, carefully selected, well-educated, and well-paid interpreters, men of good social position, would go far to check the petty chicanery which has been the disgraceful characteristic of the consular system in Morocco.

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CAN WE HOLD OUR OWN?

THE incident between Lord Salisbury and Lord Wolseley in the House of Lords has drawn the attention of the country to a crisis in our affairs. With full knowledge of what has passed behind the scenes, I am able to assert confidently that as yet the public have not had the truth placed before them. The personal question sinks altogether into insignificance for those who know the gravity of the issues which concern the nation.

It is dangerous for the country that any Government should at the same time attempt to gag their military advisers and disregard their private and official remonstrances. It is essential that it should be understood that Lord Wolseley's "confession of faith" as to our national danger is only the public expression of what has been again and again pressed upon the Ministry in official communications.

This has been disputed. Lord Salisbury said in the House of Lords: "The noble lord gave us his 'confession of faith.' I cannot charge my memory with having seen it before, but I can only say that it is a very grave statement indeed, and that it shall receive the closest possible attention and examination that we can give to it, with the assistance of the illustrious Duke, the noble lord himself, and the Secretary of State for War." The inference naturally drawn by the *Times* from these words was this, "It does not appear, however, that he (Lord Wolseley) has made similar representations in his official capacity to the Secretary of State in such a manner that they must perforce have come before the Prime Minister and the Cabinet."

That inference is an entirely mistaken one. In official memorandum after memorandum, as well as by private and personal protest in every shape and form in which a man, conscious of his responsibilities and fully acquainted with the facts, could force upon the attention of a Cabinet Minister the gravity of the present situation of our affairs, Lord Wolseley has endeavoured to act, through Mr. Stanhope, upon the Cabinet. We must leave Mr. Stanhope and Lord Salisbury to decide between them which of them is responsible for the fact that the Cabinet now for the first time learns of a con-

A navy which has to protect a commerce of which that of France is a mere decimal. An army having to protect an empire more extensive and more vulnerable, if the seas are not securely ours, than any other empire in the world. Yet in mere numbers that army reckoning only as a small fraction of the armies which have a far more easy task to fulfil. An army not organized at all on the same principle of readiness for instant action as the armies of the Continent, but trusting to the conditions which existed during our great war, and which have entirely disappeared from the Continent. A heterogeneous and inferior artillery armament. An infantry kept in a defective condition by reduced cadres in absolute violation of the principle on which its system was established. A home army of volunteers, not allowed to be efficient despite all their zeal—without artillery, without organization, without equipment. Home and foreign fortresses and coaling-stations unfinished and unarmed, and, in addition, inadequately garrisoned.

Mr. Stanhope told us in the debate on the Army Estimates that he had as his advisers the men in whom the country had confidence—Lord Wolseley, Sir Redvers Buller, General Brackenbury. Yes, advisers whose advice one rejects and whose warnings one puts away in a drawer; names useful to be dangled before the House of Commons; men whom one gags that one may use them as authorities for statements against which they have protested. How Mr. Stanhope has dealt with these warnings we may see from Lord Salisbury's indignation and from Mr. Broderick's talk. "They had Lord Wolseley's testimony," says that gentleman, "that he had entire confidence in the way Mr. Stanhope was grappling with the great questions involved." Really! No one, unless it was Mr. Broderick, was deceived by what went on in the House of Lords. Yet even there Lord Wolseley said nothing like this. Lord Wolseley feels so strongly the necessity for upholding the Union that he was determined not to play into the hands of those who would endanger it. The Union is a sacred cause, but there is one that is more sacred still, and that is the defence of this kingdom, of its existence, of the food of the people, and of the national wealth by which they live.

Our dangers are great and real, and they must be faced manfully and at once. We have time to put everything right, but not to fritter away in ministerial quibbles and sham ministerial responsibility.

We *can* hold our own—if we will; and serious as the danger is, we ought surely to be able to say with Wordsworth in the face of dangers certainly not less serious:—

"We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear:
Wise, upright, valiant; not a venal band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand."

MR. WHISTLER'S LECTURE ON ART.

To speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, may justly be required of the average witness; it cannot be expected, it should not be exacted, of any critical writer or lecturer on any form of art. Even when the writer is an acknowledged and indisputable master in his own line of work, it is not to be supposed or imagined that there cannot possibly be anything to add to his conclusions, or that his utterances are to be of necessity accepted without qualification or reserve. The great question is whether he is right or wrong in his main contention; whether the message he delivers is worthy or unworthy of consideration and acceptance in its most significant and distinctive point. And it appears to one at least of those unfortunate "outsiders" for whose judgment or whose "meddling" Mr. Whistler has so imperial and Olympian a contempt, that the most notable thing in the famous lecture on art which he has now transmitted to the printers is the assertion in terms of most felicitous accuracy, the explanation on grounds which no imaginable reader could mistake, of a dominant and central truth which is not more certain, more necessary, more important, with reference to any one of the arts than to any other; and which is more vital, more certain, more indispensable as a condition of creative work than any other axiom or postulate whatever. This truth is the principle of independence; the simple and sufficient gospel which affirms that the first duty of a workman in any particular line is to do good work in that and no other than that line, and that if he does this it is a matter of quite secondary consideration whether his work may or may not be commendable on any foreign or external or accidental ground. It should be unnecessary to add that this principle cannot either fairly or plausibly be so strained and wrested as to cover, for example, the literary offences of French pornographers and coprologists. M. Zola and his merry men are artists only in the sense—if such a sense there be—in which the term is applicable to a dealer in coloured photographs of unmentionable subjects. Sweeping aside into the gutter such dirty little vermin as know no more of æsthetics than of ethics, of taste or intelligence than of decency or shame, we proceed to examine the question as seriously stated by an artist and a theorist of serious pretensions and indisputable accomplishments. And we find what we might have made sure of finding in the present case; brilliant and pungent wit, wisdom salted with paradox and reason spiced with eccentricity; truths and semi-truths, admirable propositions and questionable inferences. Much that Mr. Whistler has to say

about the primary requisites and the radical conditions of art is not merely sound and solid good sense as well as vivid and pointed rhetoric, it is a message very specially needed by the present generation of students in art or letters. Those only who have laid it to heart may be permitted to point out that it is not all the truth; that it is by no manner of means an exhaustive and complete statement of the capacities and the duties, the objects and the properties of creative or imaginative art.

Let us begin at the end, as all reasonable people always do: we shall find that Mr. Whistler concedes to Greek art a place beside Japanese. Now this, on his own showing, will never do; it crosses, it contravenes, it nullifies, it pulverizes his theory or his principle of artistic limitation. If Japanese art is right in confining itself to what can be "broidered upon the fan,"—and the gist of the whole argument is in favour of this assumption,—then the sculpture which appeals indeed first of all to our perception of beauty, to the delight of the eye, to the wonder and the worship of the instinct or the sense, but which in every possible instance appeals also to far other intuitions and far other sympathies than these, is as absolutely wrong, as demonstrably inferior, as any picture or as any carving which may be so degenerate and so debased as to concern itself with a story or a subject. Assuredly Phidias thought of other things than "arrangements" in marble—as certainly as Æschylus thought of other things than "arrangements" in metre. Nor, I am sorely afraid, can the adored Velasquez be promoted to a seat "at the foot of Fusi-yama." Japanese art is not merely the incomparable achievement of certain harmonies in colour; it is the negation, the annihilation of everything else. By the code which accepts as the highest of models and of masterpieces the cups and fans and screens with which "the poor world" has been as grievously "pestered" of late years as ever it was in Shakespeare's time "with such waterflies—diminutives of nature" as excited the scorn of his moralizing cynic, Velasquez is as unquestionably condemned as is Raphael or Titian. It is true that his miraculous power of hand makes beautiful for us the deformity of dwarfs, and dignifies the degradation of princes; but that is not the question. It is true, again, that Mr. Whistler's own merest "arrangements" in colour are lovely and effective; but his portraits, to speak of these alone, are liable to the damning and intolerable imputation of possessing not merely other qualities than these, but qualities which actually appeal—I blush to remember and I shudder to record it—which actually appeal to the intelligence and the emotions, to the mind and heart of the spectator. It would be quite useless for Mr. Whistler to protest—if haply he should be so disposed—that he never meant to put study of character and revelation of intellect into his portrait of

Mr. Carlyle, or intense pathos of significance and tender depth of expression into the portrait of his own venerable mother. The scandalous fact remains, that he has done so; and in so doing has explicitly violated and implicitly abjured the creed and the canons, the counsels and the catechism of Japan.

Apart from the crowning and central merit of this lecture, which I have attempted to indicate at starting, the most notable and memorable thing in it is rather the excellence of certain detached or detachable passages or phrases than any continuity of reasoning or coherence of argument. But some of these passages or phrases are very jewels of epigram or of illustration. What, for instance, can be happier or more sensible, wittier or more effective, than this? "To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano." Not of course that this is a discovery of Mr. Whistler's; for the finest and the fullest evidence of its truth now extant in the world is flashed out on us from every great or characteristic work of Turner.

This, again, is a very just as well as a very striking sarcasm; though it does not exactly prove that there is no loveliness in distinct outline, no grandeur in luminous clearness.

"The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing, is, with the mass, alone the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail."

But it is hardly to the countrymen of Crome and David Cox that the beauty and the glory of painted wind and cloud and mist can be preached as the gospel of a new revelation. However, we can but be grateful for this indirect protest against the kind of art which gives us landscapes worthy only of a botanist or geometrician, and seascapes which represent the most lovely and luminous and living and various and subtle in colour of all imaginable seas—our own incomparable Channel—as a dead mass of densely stupid blue, so hard that if you were to hit it with a hammer the hammer would break into shivers, so monotonous and so monochromical that it would almost be a libel on the very Mediterranean itself.

Another excellent remark may be quoted from a later part of this desultory lecture:—"Art happens—no hovel is safe from it, no prince may depend upon it; the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy or coarse farce."

Unquestionably they may or they must do so; but it does not follow that all efforts to widen the sphere of appreciation, to enlarge the circle of intelligence, must needs be puny or unprofitable. Good intentions will not secure good results; but neither—strange as it may seem—will the absence of good intentions. And when Mr. Whistler informs us that "there never was an artistic period," we

must reply that the statement, so far as it is true, is the flattest of all possible truisms; for no mortal ever maintained that there ever was a period in which all men were either good artists or good judges of art. But when we pass from the positive to the comparative degree of historic or retrospective criticism, we must ask whether the lecturer means to say that there have not been times when the general standard of taste and judgment, reason and perception, was so much higher than at other times that such periods may justly and accurately be defined as artistic. If he does mean to say this, he is beyond answer and beneath confutation: in other words, he is where an artist of Mr. Whistler's genius and a writer of Mr. Whistler's talents can by no possibility find himself. If he does not mean to say this, what he means to say is exactly as well worth saying, as valuable and as important a piece of information, as the news that Queen Anne is no more, or that two and two are not generally supposed to make five.

But if the light and glittering bark of this brilliant amateur in the art of letters is not invariably steered with equal dexterity of hand between the Scylla and Charybdis of paradox and platitude, it is impossible that in its course it should not once and again touch upon some point worth notice if not exploration. Even that miserable animal "the unattached writer" may gratefully and respectfully recognise his accurate apprehension and his felicitous application of wellnigh the most hackneyed verse in all the range of Shakespeare's—which yet is almost invariably misconstrued and misapplied. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin:" and this, as the poet goes on to explain, is that all, with one consent, prefer worthless but showy novelties to precious but familiar possessions. "This one chord that vibrates with all," says Mr. Whistler, who proceeds to cite artistic examples of the lamentable fact, "this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is—Vulgarity." But the consequence which he proceeds to indicate and to deplore is calculated to strike his readers with a sense of mild if hilarious astonishment. It is that men of sound judgment and pure taste, quick feelings and clear perceptions, most unfortunately and most inexplicably begin to make their voices "heard in the land." Porson, as all the world knows, observed of the Germans of his day that "in Greek" they were "sadly to seek." It is no discredit to Mr. Whistler if this is his case also: but then he would do well to eschew the use of a Greek term lying so far out of the common way as the word "aesthete." Not merely the only accurate meaning but the only possible meaning of that word is nothing more but nothing less than this: an intelligent, appreciative, quick-witted person; in a word, as the lexicon has it, "one who perceives." The man who is no aesthete stands confessed, by the logic of language and the necessity of the case, as a thick-witted, tasteless, senseless and impenetrable blockhead. I do not wish to insult

Mr. Whistler, but I feel bound to avow my impression that there is no man now living who less deserves the honour of enrolment in such ranks as these—of a seat in the synagogue of the anæsthetic. I cannot bring myself to descend to flattery so gross and insincere as would be the admission that a Saul of his spiritual stature is also among the prophets of Philistia; that his place is beside the blatant boobies with whom the imputation of intelligence—an imputation which they surely cannot apprehend on their own account—passes for a cutting and branding insult. It would no doubt be most unseemly, and to the shrinking modesty, the too sensitive diffidence of Mr. Whistler it would of course be quite exceptionally painful, to claim the title, to arrogate the honours, of a person so exceptionally endowed with good taste, right feeling, keen insight, sound judgment and clear perception, as specially to deserve the Platonic title of an aesthete; for no satire could be severe enough for the male or female fool who should venture to put forward so arrogant a claim; but it would be an incongruity even more portentous and prodigious, an incongruity for which Rabelais alone of all men could have supplied the fitting chain of epithets, if an artist of skill so consummate, of tact so refined, of so sensitive an instinct and so delicate an eccentricity, should use the word—if he knew the meaning of the word—as a term of ridicule or reproach. Such abuse of language is possible only to the drivelling desperation of venomous or fangless duncery: it is in higher and graver matters, of wider bearing and of deeper import, that we find it necessary to dispute the apparently serious propositions or assertions of Mr. Whistler. How far the witty tongue may be thrust into the smiling cheek when the lecturer pauses to take breath between these remarkably brief paragraphs it would be certainly indecorous and possibly superfluous to inquire. But his theorem is unquestionably calculated to provoke the loudest and the heartiest mirth that ever acclaimed the advent of Momus or Erycina. For it is this—that "Art and Joy go together," and that tragic art is not art at all.

"Arter that, let's have a glass of wine," said a famous countryman of Mr. Whistler's, on the memorable occasion when he was impelled to address his friend Mr. Brick in the immortal words, "Keep cool, Jefferson. Don't bust." The admonition may not probably be required by the majority of readers who come suddenly and unawares upon this transcendent and pyramidal pleasantry. The laughing Muse of the lecturer, "quam Jocus circumvolat," must have glanced round in expectation of the general appeal, "After that, let us take breath." And having done so, they must have remembered that they were not in a serious world; that they were in the fairyland of fans, in the paradise of pipkins, in the limbo of blue china, screens, pots, plates, jars, joss-houses, and all the fortuitous frippery of Fusi-yama.

And yet, they will presently have reflected, even this hyperbolic extravagance of jocularity does not succeed in launching a really original paradox. There have always been audacious humourists who asserted, and anaesthetic imbeciles who believed, that the spirit of art was essentially and exclusively joyous, or exclusively and essentially mournful. A type of the former class of fool has been taken after the very life by the yet undethroned sovereign of English poetesses.

“ My critic Jobson recommends more mirth,
Because a cheerful genius suits the times,
And all true poets laugh unquenchably
Like Shakespeare and the gods. That's very hard.
The gods may laugh, and Shakespeare : Dante smiles
With such a needy heart on two pale lips,
We cry, ‘ Weep rather, Dante.’ ”

It is a cruel but an inevitable Nemesis which reduces even a man of real genius, keen-witted and sharp-sighted, to the level of the critic Jobson, to the level of the dotard and the dunce, when paradox is discoloured by personality and merriment is distorted by malevolence. No man who really knows the excellence, the variety, the serious and noble qualities of Mr. Whistler's best work, will imagine that he really believes the highest expression of his art to be realized in reproduction of the grin and glare, the smirk and leer, of Japanese womanhood as represented in its professional types of beauty ; but to all appearance he would fain persuade us that he does. Unhappily for his chance of success in the attempt to depreciate and degrade his genius to an equality with the highest type of Asiatic æstheticism, his etchings and his portraits have not yet been consigned to the flames which must of necessity consume them before he can possibly be accepted as a genuine child of Japan. In the latter of the two portraits to which I have already referred there is an expression of living character, an intensity of pathetic power, which gives to that noble work something of the impressiveness proper to a tragic or elegiac poem.

This, however, is an exception to the general rule of Mr. Whistler's way of work : an exception, it may be alleged, which proves the rule. But that apology will by no means hold water. In one of the delightful minor works of an always delightful humourist, we are introduced to a good man of the name of William—I cannot, I will not allow myself to imagine that the perversity of political malevolence could suggest an allusion which nothing should induce me to hint at—who having led a life of abnormal virtue for many, many years, is induced to commit a treacherous and rascally crime by pure curiosity to know from experience what may be the feelings of a deliberate malefactor. Now the violation of principle committed on that occasion by Mr. Gilbert's exemplary experimentalist was not graver in its departure from an established standard of

conduct than is this infringement by Mr. Whistler of the hard and fast line laid down by himself as the condition of all true art. A single infraction of the moral code, a single breach of artistic law, suffices to vitiate the position of the preacher. And this is no slight escapade, no venial or casual aberration ; it is a full and frank defiance, a deliberate and elaborate denial, hurled right in the face of Japanese jocosity, flung straight in the teeth of the theory which condemns high art, under penalty of being considered intelligent, to remain eternally on the grin.

If it be objected that to treat this theorem gravely is “ to consider too curiously ” the tropes and the phrases of a jester of genius, I have only to answer that it very probably may be so, but that the excuse for such error must be sought in the existence of the genius. A man of genius is scarcely at liberty to choose whether he shall or shall not be considered as a serious figure—one to be acknowledged and respected as an equal or a superior, not applauded and dismissed as a tumbler or a clown. And if the better part of Mr. Whistler's work as an artist is to be accepted as the work of a serious and intelligent creature, it would seem incongruous and preposterous to dismiss the more characteristic points of his theory as a lecturer with the chuckle or the shrug of mere amusement or amazement. Moreover, if considered as a joke, a mere joke, and nothing but a joke, this gospel of the grin has hardly matter or meaning enough in it to support so elaborate a structure of paradoxical rhetoric. It must be taken, therefore, as something serious in the main ; and if so taken, and read by the light reflected from Mr. Whistler's more characteristically brilliant canvases, it may not improbably recall a certain phrase of Molière's, which at once passed into a proverb—“ Vous êtes orfèvre, M. Josse.” That worthy tradesman, it will be remembered, was of opinion that nothing could be so well calculated to restore a drooping young lady to mental and physical health as the present of a handsome set of jewels. Mr. Whistler's opinion that there is nothing like leather—of a jovial and Japanese design—savours somewhat of the Oriental cordwainer.

But if we must more or less respectfully decline to accept “ The Preacher ” as a prophet, we may all agree in applause of the brilliant humour which barbs the shafts of good sense and sound reasoning aimed by the satirist at the common enemies of all good work—“ a teeming, seething, busy mass, whose virtue was industry, and whose industry was vice.” Nothing can be truer, and nothing could be more happily expressed. And, as a wiser than all the wise men of Greece was wont impressively to observe, “ the bearings of this observation lays in the application on it.” That was no part of Captain Bunsby's duty ; it was apparently no part of the lecturer's ; and it certainly is no part of mine.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.