

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.

VOL. XVIII.

JUNE, 1879.

No. 2.

THE FINE ARTS AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

A RETROSPECT.



"YOUNG MAENYAS." (DRAWN BY ELIHU VEDDER AFTER HIS PAINTING IN THE EXPOSITION).

BEFORE its memory becomes dim, and before public interest in it, as the latest and the greatest of international displays disappears, let us attempt to record some part of the remarkable history of the Paris Exposition of last summer. Our study will be rather concerning the grounds and the exterior of the buildings than of the exhibition of art and industry itself; except as some works of art in the galleries seem to call for special notice. To do justice to any one department of that great exhibition would call for a longer article than this can be.

And first of the plan we present,—by the
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aid of which and some wood-cuts we hope to give such a description of the grounds and the more prominent buildings as will be readily understood, and an impression that will not immediately fade away of the very important architectural features of the world's fair of 1878. This plan (see page 164) has been prepared under the immediate supervision of the writer, by means of half a dozen official and non-official, more or less accurate surveys and maps and of a tolerably complete familiarity with all parts of the grounds. The great point has been to decide what to leave out. The

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greater harmony and to bring about a more gentle transition between its lesser subdivisions. These are faults common to modern buildings, and come of the lack of trained workmen (trained, that is, in artistic ways), of the great cost of labor, of haste and indifference, and of the contract system of building; in so far as the Trocadéro Palace was kept free from any of these evils, their absence was made up by the peculiarly severe pressure of haste, for the building was not started until late in the autumn of 1876, and was finished complete in eighteen months, including two winters; and this, although there were peculiar difficulties in the way, as the ground was found to be perfectly honey-combed with ancient quarries, and the new foundations had to be begun deep down in the seemingly solid hill.

These old quarries are found in all the suburbs of Paris. When the great church of the Sacred Heart was devised, nine years ago, to stand upon the heights of Montmartre, and to serve, in a way, as the church's manifesto in rivalry of the new opera-house and the world, the hill was found to be in even greater need of complete rebuilding than the hill-side of Chaillot. But in the Trocadéro Park there is, at all events, one very interesting result of the cavernous condition of this part of the world—the aquarium, shown on the plan by an irregular bounding line. This feature is cleverly arranged in a number of the old quarry-holes. The visitor steps about among a series of little ponds, so arranged, each a little higher than its neighbor, that the water slowly runs from one to another. These ponds are open to the sun, like any piece of natural water; but by going down some rough stone steps and into the bowels of the hill, the visitor finds himself among the fish and on their own level, separated from the water only by plate-glass on either side, behind, before, and even overhead.

All this park of the Trocadéro is sloping ground, all leading up from the bridge to the great palace. In the middle, and springing from the rotunda of the music-hall itself, as seen in our illustration on page 163, is the cascade, which, after the manner of such ornamental waters, descends the hill by little steps, after it has taken its first great plunge of thirty feet or more. It is admitted that the slope of the cascade is not quite steep enough; that, when looked at from below, it does not fall rapidly enough for the best effect; that it is too much lost in

the foreshortening. But the basin in which it ends its course is very successful, with its three fountains, the center one playing always in a slender upright jet, the two side ones in "bouquets" of spray. At the four corners of the basin are four statues of singular subject, which have excited as much remark and criticism as any sculptured work about the Exposition. They face out from the water in four different directions, four enormous quadrupeds of gilded bronze: a horse and an ox, an elephant and a rhinoceros. A very remarkable success has been achieved in these. Mr. Cain's ox is especially admirable. As for Mr. Jacquemart's rhinoceros, the wonder is so great that he should succeed in doing anything at all with the creature, as a subject for sculpture, that perhaps one's critical humor is lulled asleep; but indeed the modeling is capital, at once artistic and faithful to the minute peculiarities of the beast, and the treatment, in a decorative fashion, is truly surprising.

The buildings nearest this basin, one on each side, are two of the more elegant and expensive of the numerous restaurants within the grounds. From that on the right a charming view is to be had, almost like the view from the colonnade of the palace, though of course less extensive. This was the place to dine during that memorable summer! At six the buildings were closed; but the grounds were lighted more or less brilliantly, and they were open till eight o'clock for in-comers, and indefinitely for lingerers; at least, the restaurants began to shut up and the attractions grew strong elsewhere, before ever any notice of dismissal was served upon the loitering visitor. At six one could dine pleasantly,—for there was no crowd, except at the hour of *déjeuner*,—and then take a comfortable chair under the colonnade which crowns the hill, and watch the sunset light upon the distant domes and towers, the gleaming river, and the Exposition building across the river, with its four bubble-like domes at the four corners, and the long perspective of roofs between.

In this respect the buildings of 1878 were vastly superior to the oval mass of 1876; for the great size of the whole group was perfectly evident; the domes nearest the "École Militaire" looked to be, as they were, half a mile farther off than the nearer ones; and the transparent lightness given to these square domes by their way of construction (which may be partly understood by examining the cut on page 166), greatly aided