

An Artist's Recollections.

The "Recollections" of John Callcott Horsley, R.A., recently published by John Murray, London, are, in a sense, a disappointment. They are pleasantly written, and include some amusing stories; but they do not give any vivid picture of the life of a great painter, or shed any light upon the secrets of art and of artists. Horsley was the son of a famous musician; his mother came of a family of famous painters; so that two strains of art met in him. Art thus came to Horsley early, and by right of Nature; but his "Recollections" shed no light on the process by which the painter is trained. When he was still a boy he executed paintings which find a place in the Sheepshanks Collection in the South Kensington Museum. Another, still the work of a comparative boy—the *Pride of the Village*—is in the Tate Gallery. Horsley won such fame by his work that he was invited to paint the portrait of the Princess Beatrice, and was brought in touch with the Royal family, and he has some pleasant stories to tell of the Queen and her household. Perhaps the most influential member of the Royal household at that time was Miss Skerrett, who held the appointment of Head Dreaser, and the care of her jewellery, to Her Majesty. She was really the Queen's confidential secretary and adviser. Horsley's description of her is amusing:—"To begin with, there was less of her than I ever saw in any woman; under five feet in height, and as thin as a shred of paper, she had a face of the brightest intelligence, but of almost comical plainness of feature. Her mind was of the purest and strongest, sustained by devout Christian faith, and illumined by brightest intelligence. She was a remarkable linguist, and a widely-read and cultivated woman. How successful Miss Skerrett was is best proved by the words of Sir Edwin Landseer: 'She is the dearest and most wonderful little woman I ever knew. If anything goes wrong in Buckingham Palace, Balmoral, or Windsor, whether a crowned head or a scullery maid is concerned, Miss Skerrett is always sent for to put it right.'"

Landseer was a favourite in the Royal circle, and his gift as a raconteur was a source of great delight to the Queen, who would keep him telling stories so late that the prosaic Prince Consort got wearied. The Queen, on one occasion, had asked him to give "one more tale": "The Prince leaned back with an air of resignation, and Landseer dashed into a story of a friend who had trained a collie to find money in a marvellous way. One day, on the moors, he had a wager that he would send the dog away with a keeper, then hide a five-pound note, call the dog to heel, and tell him to find the note. 'Did he do so?' said the Queen, with amused eagerness. 'Well, your Majesty, not the note, but he brought back the five sovereigns in change.' When, to the Prince Consort's evident relief, they adjourned to their rooms, and Landseer was undressing, there was a tap at the door, and one of the gentlemen-in-waiting came in with a message to tell Landseer, from the Prince, that the Queen had not believed the story of the five-pound note!"

The musical side of Horsley's character brought him into close friendship with many famous musicians, the greatest of these being Mendelssohn, of whom he tells some pleasant stories: "Mendelssohn's control over orchestras was perfectly marvellous, and was entirely caused by the kindly, good-tempered way in which he made his criticisms, and the absolute confidence in him as a leader with which he inspired the performers. I have seen him stop the band with one touch on his desk, then rush up the orchestra like a cat, and then you would see him patiently and quietly pointing out to the offender where, instead of playing *A flat*, he had played *A sharp*."

Horsley knew Turner, the famous painter, intimately, and the single gleam of light on the methods of great artists the book contains in relation to the world-famed colourist. Horsley was puzzled by one marvellous feature in

Turner's famous picture of the *Snowdon Range*. It was the tender warmth of the light clouds encircling the moon. Horsley puzzled himself in vain to discover how this exquisite effect was produced. As it happened, the picture began to "buckle" from its mount, and was placed in the hands of a well-known expert to be remounted. Haden, who was in charge of the picture, received a note from the expert, begging him to call without delay: "He did so, and rushed into Hogarth's shop, exclaiming, 'What is it, what is it? Have you spoilt the drawing?' 'No, no, sir; we have got it off beautifully, but, having so often heard Mr Horsley speak of the rosy tint round the moon, I thought you would be interested to know that I have discovered how it was obtained!' He produced the drawing, and turned it on its face. There was a revelation! A circle of orange vermilion had been plastered on the back with an ivory palette knife where he wanted the effect, and then worked sufficiently far through the pores of the previously-wetted paper to give the show of colour, while retaining the smooth surface without a trace of workmanship on the right side."

Horsley gives one interesting detail as to Turner's methods: "Among the wonderful water-colours painted by Turner and exhibited at the Royal Academy, was one of a man-of-war, in what is called, technically, 'rapid perspective.' It was done at one sitting, in response to a petition from a child staying at Farnley, who asked for a picture of a man-of-war. The child stood by him, and he proceeded to put in all the detail with explanatory comments: 'This is the body of the ship. Now come the masts; here go the guns! What evidently most impressed the child was the extraordinary rapidity, and the way in which, as he said, he 'made the paper bubble.' It was Turner's habit to keep the paper always in a fluent condition of moisture. It is most noticeable that in whatever stage his drawing might be left, it was always beautiful. This is very plainly seen by looking at his unfinished sketches; these are in all stages, and every one of them is interesting. An amateur lady artist tried to get some criticisms out of him on a drawing. 'Put it in the water jug, my dear,' was his sole answer."

"You sellum Wood?" the Chinaman asked, The chemist his desk forsook, And favoured his interlocutor, With a calmly quizzical look. "You no savvy? Me muchee cold. Mo bossee tellum me, You catchum WOODS' GLEAT PEP'MIN CU" Makum all hi! You see?"

The Auckland Customs for the month just closed show that the net duties collected amounted to £51,515 0/10, a decrease of £1094 on the corresponding period for the previous year. The beer duty amounted to £2150, an increase of £502. The exports were as follows:—Gold, 17,245oz., valued at £60,873, compared with 20,070oz., valued at £74,147; silver export, 87,256oz., valued at £2009, as against 89,891oz., valued at £2886; butter, 6021cwt., valued at £27,968, as against 5241cwt., valued at £24,862; cheese, 146cwt., as against 27cwt., valued at £74; frozen beef, 3393cwt., valued at £4751, as against 2909cwt., valued at £339; frozen mutton, nil, as against 2752 carcasses, 1277cwt., valued at £1502; frozen lamb, 6909cwt., 22,040 carcasses, valued at £13,420, as against 18,720 carcasses, 5649cwt., valued at £10,071; frozen pork, 24cwt., valued at £68; potatoes, 97 tons, valued at £337; oats, 274 bushels, valued at £34; wheat, 63 bushels, valued at £11.

Napier returns for March totalled £6314 13/10, including £23 16/11 collected under the preferential tariff, as against £5500 14/11 for the corresponding quarter of last year.

Dunedin duties for March totalled £441,148 11/3, and the beer duty £27,488 15/7. This amount, so far as the Customs duties are concerned, is fully £6000 ahead of any previous year. For the quarter the figures are: Customs £132,913 5/3, and the beer duty £7708 17/10.

The Customs' returns and beer duty in Wellington for the financial year total respectively £658,084 and £10,806. For the previous year the amounts were £661,704 and £9950.

Personal Paragraphs.

Mrs J. P. Campbell (Wellington) has been on a trip to Auckland.

Mr. E. W. Alison, junr., has booked a passage to America by the *Sierra*.

The Rev. Ivo. Bertram (Hawera) has been spending a holiday in Wellington.

Mr. Mrs. and Miss Hall have left New Plymouth for a trip to the Old Country.

The Rev. Father Bloomfield has been transferred from Tauranga to Thames.

Mrs. Easterfield (Wellington) has returned from a trip to Nelson.

Mr. Walter Meek (Wellington) has gone to England for a holiday trip.

Colonel and Mrs. Garnett are returning to England by the *Ruapeha*.

Mrs. Mackellar (Wellington) is back after a trip to Auckland.

Mrs. Lethbridge (Wanganui) has returned from her trip to Wellington.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Brabazon, of Norsewood, are staying in Napier.

Mrs. Waldie, New Plymouth, left for a trip to the Old Country by the *Paparoa*.

Mrs. Nicholas, of Wanganui, has gone to Christchurch for a visit.

Miss Kohn has returned to Christchurch from a visit to Auckland.

Mrs. John Mills (Christchurch) and Miss Mills are on a visit to Auckland.

Mrs. W. Birch (Marton, Rangitikei) is making a short stay in Wellington.

Captain and Mrs. Macdonald (Auckland) have been visiting Wellington.

Mrs. and Miss Myra Kerr, who have been visiting Mrs. Whitcombe, of Christchurch, have returned to New Plymouth.

Colonel Lauterback, of Germany, came from the Islands in the *Manapouri* last week.

Mr. E. J. Chrisp, of Gisborne, is spending Easter in Auckland, and is staying at the Central Hotel.

Misses Humphries, after touring New Zealand for some length of time, have returned to New Plymouth.

Mr. W. Cullen, New Plymouth, is one of the inspectors appointed for machinery.

Mrs. Raynor Skeet and son have left Cambridge for England, where they intend residing.

Miss Cave, of Papakura, is on a visit to Mrs. James Hally, of "Vahna," Cambridge.

Professor MacLaurin, of Victoria College, has returned to Wellington from a visit to America and Europe.

Mr. and Mrs. Warren Blythe, with their two little boys, spent their Easter holidays in Cambridge.

Mrs. White and Mr. E. White, of Ashley, Clinton, spent the Easter holidays in Napier.

Mr. A. G. S. Carlyon, of Gwavas, Hawke's Bay, intends taking a trip to Auckland in his motor car.

Mr. W. R. and Mrs. Haselden, of Christchurch, have gone on a short visit to Wellington.

Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Saxby have returned to their home in Napier after an absence of nine months in England.

Mr. and Mrs. Levett and their children, from Feilding, spent the Easter holidays in Wanganui.

Mr. Buckland, of Thames, has bought the rights of the Masonic Hotel, Opatiki, from Mr. E. C. Forbes.

Mr. and Mrs. Saxby, who spent a few days in Wellington on their return from England, have gone home to Napier.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Kebbell (Wairapa) are shortly going to England for a trip.

Mrs. and Miss Wilder have returned to Christchurch from their visit to Australia.

Lord Elibank, who recently visited Auckland, returns to England by the *Ruapehu* from Wellington.

Miss Barrand (Wellington), who has been on a visit to friends in Christchurch, has returned home.

Mr. and Mrs. Perkins, old residents of Blenheim, have left on a holiday trip to England.

Miss M. Alison, North Shore, Auckland, is visiting Mrs. M. Fraser, New Plymouth.

Mr. and Mrs. Heaton Rhodes (Christchurch) have taken Lady Stout's house in Wellington for the season.

Miss A. Campbell (Melbourne), is the guest of Mrs. D. T. Stuart, The Terrace, Wellington.

The Misses Graham (Melbourne), are touring New Zealand, and recently did the Wanganui River trip.

Mrs. Campbell, New Plymouth, spent her Easter holidays with her parents at the North Shore, Auckland.

Mrs. Broham, who has been visiting Christchurch, is now staying with her sister, Mrs. Evans, of New Plymouth.

Miss Nellie Watt, of Wellington, spent Easter with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Watt, in Wanganui.

Dr. Stuart Reid, who has been on a visit to Oamaru, returned to Auckland last week.

Mr. and Mrs. F. McGuire and Mr. F. McGuire, Jr. (Hawera) are on a visit to Auckland.

Miss Ethel Greensill, Picton, has gone to Dunedin with her cousin Miss Morgan.

Captain and Mrs. Baillie are back in Wellington, after a sojourn in Blenheim.

Mr. and Mrs. Balcombe Brown (Wellington) are leaving home for a few weeks on a holiday trip.

Mr. A. D. Riley (Wellington) is leaving next month on a flying trip to Canada, United States and England.

Dr. Rockstrowe (Palmerston N.) goes to Germany towards the end of this month.

Mr. L. B. Mabin has been appointed junior subaltern of the Civil Service Rifles (Wellington).


Mr. D. Campbell, who is leaving Waihi shortly, was tendered a farewell social last week by members of the local Masonic Lodge.

Mr. and Mrs. H. F. Christie, and Miss Ethel Christie, have returned to Wanganui, after spending a week at the Royal Oak Hotel, Wellington.

Miss L. Stewart has returned to her home in Stratford, after her pleasant trip to New Plymouth, where she was the guest of Mrs. T. Weston.

Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Mackay, of Wanganui, accompanied by Mrs. Duncan, are staying at the Central Hotel for a few days.

Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Johnson, of Melbourne, arrived in Auckland last week, and are staying at the Central for a few weeks.



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Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass., U. S. A.