

Reviews and Notices

love of landscape was in his blood, and the weird leafless trees of the Munster countryside in winter appealed very strongly to him. Many of his paintings have been exhibited in the Royal Hibernian Academy. His appointment at Derry was a signal success. The school had from one cause or other been languishing for years past, but immediately after Mr. Houchen took charge the numbers rose as they had done in Cork: when he came in February 1913 there were thirty-five students, and last December there were about two hundred. Like every Saxon who becomes a denizen of Ireland, he felt the keenest sympathy with Celtic art. In Harry Houchen Ireland has, indeed, lost a good and faithful servant, whose place it will be hard to fill. O. B.

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Samuel F. B. Morse: His Letters and Journals. Edited and supplemented by his son, EDWARD LIND MORSE. Illustrated with reproductions of his paintings and with notes and diagrams bearing on the invention of the telegraph. 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company; London: Constable and Co.) 31s. 6d. net.—The name of Morse is so universally associated with the invention of the electric telegraph, and even more in these "wireless" days, perhaps, with the code employed in the transmission of messages throughout the world—that the reference to his "paintings" on the title-page will no doubt cause surprise. He had, however, passed his forty-first year when the first inspiration of the invention, which was to prove so fruitful to mankind, came to him "like a flash of the subtle fluid which afterwards became his servant," and had already risen to a position of considerable distinction as a painter of figure-subjects and portraits, of which a number are reproduced as an accompaniment to the records of his life, now given to the world by his son more than a hundred and twenty years after his father first saw the light. The first volume of these "Letters and Journals" is, in fact, almost wholly concerned with his career as an artist, and it contains a great deal of interesting reading, particularly the pages recording his experiences in England during the four years 1811–15. His father, Jedediah Morse, a Congregational Minister at Charlestown, Massachusetts, had decreed for him a business career after the completion of his studies at Yale, but the son, who had already evinced a strong taste for art, succeeded in overcoming parental opposition. Reaching London in

1811, in company with his mentor, Washington Allston, a painter of note in those days, though now almost forgotten, he soon made headway, and two years later exhibited a large canvas which was singled out for praise by the critics, while shortly afterwards he was awarded a Society of Arts gold medal for a model of the same subject, a *Dying Hercules*. In his letters home, soon after his arrival, he refers to the taste for art which then prevailed in England:

"I was astonished to find such a difference in the encouragement of art between this country and America. In America it seems to lie neglected, and only thought to be an employment suited to a lower class of people; but here it is the constant subject of conversation, and the exhibitions of the several painters are fashionable resorts. No person is esteemed accomplished or well educated unless he possesses almost an enthusiastic love for paintings."

Morse's companion during his sojourn in London was Charles Robert Leslie, "a very estimable young man" from Philadelphia, who remained in England after Morse returned home and was a few years later elected to the Royal Academy, of which his son, Mr. G. D. Leslie, is now a veteran member. The two young men, both filled with a passion for art, occupied the same lodgings. Those were days of great social unrest; murders and robberies were of frequent occurrence, and the two deemed it prudent to prepare for emergencies. Hence we find Morse writing home in 1812: "Leslie and myself sleep in the same room and sleep armed with a pair of pistols and a sword and alarms at our doors and windows." Trouble was brewing, too, between Britain and America that same year under circumstances analogous to those which now, more than a century later, have been the subject of diplomatic correspondence between the two countries. The good people at Charlestown, like the rest of Massachusetts, were friendly to Britain, but young Morse was ardently patriotic throughout, and his letters home throughout this critical period were strong in their denunciation of the English. He remarks more than once on the contempt shown in England for Americans, but his pious mother gives as the reason for their being despised and hated, that "a large portion of those who visit Europe are *dissipated infidels*." It was partly to "the virulence of national prejudice" that the young painter attributed the utter failure of a visit to Bristol, where he spent some months hoping to get commissions in fulfilment of promises made to him, but another reason assigned was "the total want of anything like partiality for the fine arts in that place; the people there are but a remove from brutes." The letters written from London show that the

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