

### *The Growth of Recent Art*

it struck me details had already been published many times, and that even the pleasure of hearing the artist describe his own methods, must not be indulged in at the expense of his time. "You must find it hard, Sir Frederic, to fulfil your social engagements and yet do so much?" "Social engagements must always give way to

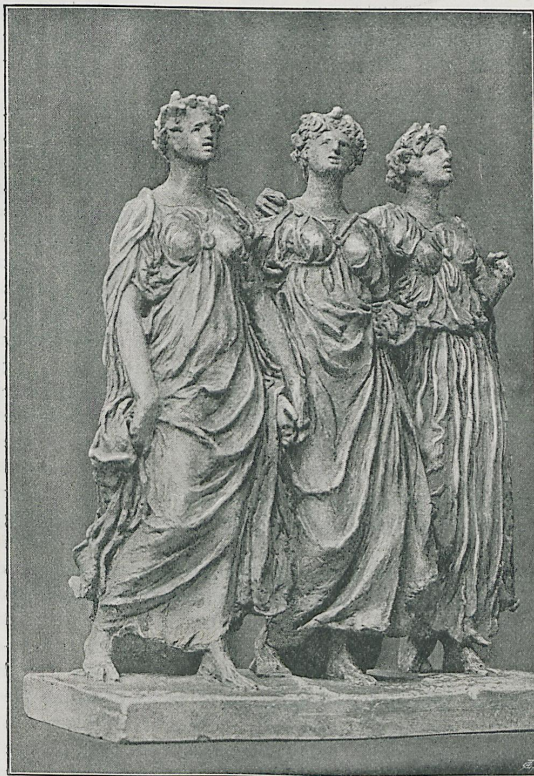
## THE GROWTH OF RECENT ART. BY R. A. M. STEVENSON.

PEOPLE of intelligence often lament that we live in a decadence; that our century shows eccentricity, morbid fancifulness, anything but vitality in the pursuit of plastic art. In England most writers held this opinion twenty years ago; and some hold it still. In the letterpress to Mr. T. Cole's wood-engravings after "Old Italian Masters," Mr. W. J. Stillman, writing in 1892, says that we are impotent to produce art nowadays, and that our only compensation is the extraordinary power of appreciating Botticelli, &c., which belongs to the superior persons of our day. Speaking of the modern spirit, for he seems obliged to concede that it exists, he is very severe on our study of nature and our new sensitiveness to visual beauty. From my own experience I am sure that this worship of pre-Raphaelite Italian art to the neglect of all present painting is still an intolerant bigotry. Many people seem unaware that they live in a most fertile as well as critical century. This is not the place to treat fully the history and growth of the movement, or to give a systematic vindication of modern principles. But a new periodical may well devote a few words to remind artists and amateurs of our position in history, and to interest the public in the work of our own day.

Historians of the past point to Raphael and say, "Behold the end; after this came mannerism, eclecticism, stale repetition, and all that is vile." Yet they wonder somewhat inconsistently that

artists of our century have declined a similar task, and have preferred a fresh study of nature to the eternal consultation of old formulas. These critics have heard that the passion of life and the passion of art are not the same thing; and they must needs use this truth as an argument against a century which, inspired by fresh feelings, has sought to convey them in fresh style of art. Convention is a necessity, being a compact between stubborn truths of fact and the scarce less stubborn laws of decorative effect. Style is the result of this compact, for it applies the principles of plastic beauty to enhance the effect of true feeling and observation.

7



A GROUP IN THE "DAPHNEPHORIA"

art," was his reply. "Work is first. I set aside regular times for that, and nothing but official engagements are allowed to interfere with it; afterwards I go out, but I keep early hours." For those who have forgotten the details referred to above, it may suffice to say that "these models are clad with real drapery wetted to increase the effect of its fineness in proportion to the small scale of the folds," and are made only for the sake of ten minutes drawing, the serious study of drapery being made from the living model or lay figure. They help, also, to facilitate the disposition of the grouping, but are done with as soon as the cartoon is ready for tracing.