

Studio-Talk

years back he was wrestling manfully with the treatment of the orchid. No one, I think, had really treated the orchid before then. Since then, in oils, Mr. William Gale, in a group of works too little known, has treated it with unequal, of course, yet often with remarkable skill. But when Mr. James had drawn at Sanders's nursery—during several months' sojourn at St. Alban's to that end—orchids of every kind, great was the massacre of the Innocents. We were permitted afterwards to see the successes; the failures had been done away with. This is characteristic, and that is why I record it. People who observe flowers, and do not only buy them, will not be astonished that when this happened most—this severe review and condemnation—it was orchids, orchids only, that were in question. And this for several reasons. Some are beautiful, but some are ugly, almost morbid indeed—things for the delectation of Des Esseintes, the too neurotic hero of M. Huysman's *A Rebours*: scarcely for folk whom mere strangeness may not fascinate. And then again, the extreme intricacy of the forms of some of them tells in two ways against their employment as subjects for a painter. It is not only—it is not so much—that their intricacy adds to the difficulty of correctness; it is rather that it adds to the difficulty of their comprehension by the spectator of Mr. James's, or of anybody else's, drawing. The public knows the rose and the geranium—it knows, besides, two score of flowers of English garden and hedge-row. But the intricacy of the orchid is, as yet, an unfamiliar intricacy, and it is infinitely various, and therefore though the painting of the orchid in Mr. James's pure water-colour was an experiment interesting and courageous, and within reasonable limits successful, that work was but one phase, and far from the most important one, of a career and of a talent full already of individuality, distinction, charm.

FREDERICK WEDMORE.

STUDIO-TALK.

(From our own Correspondents.)

COPENHAGEN. — In everyday life exclusiveness is a snobbish and undesirable commodity; in art and kindred matters it is, rightly interpreted, the reverse. The charm of anything upon which the eye is intended to feast, a stylish room, a collection of art-objects, or such-like, lies not only in what there is, but also in what there is not. It was an objection to the Copenhagen Exhibition of International Art, that

266

it did not possess this latter passive charm, and it would have gained much by a more stringent weeding process. The golden rule of little but good, rather than much and moderate, applies doubly to international expositions of art, where considerations of a mere local or even national nature are forced into the background. This the Stockholm people had recognised much more readily; besides, they were earlier in the field, and it is not given to every country to have, for her figure-head in art matters, a man, who is not only a born prince, but also a born artist. On paper, however, the Copenhagen Exhibition was eminently representative, although too many great names were found on pictures utterly unworthy to bear them.

The latter reproach applied less perhaps to England than to other countries. That this was so arose partly out of the good sense shown by several painters who sent good reproductions of their best works in preference to moderate originals. It is pleasant for a lover of England and her art to be able to place on record the fact that in Copenhagen, as elsewhere on the Continent, English art is every year commanding more attention and respect. Most of the English pictures had been seen in public exhibitions in England, and there is no need therefore to enlarge upon them here. It will suffice to say that amongst the works of British artists which attracted the greatest amount of attention were Alfred East's *Meadow in the Midlands*, Byam Shaw's *Whither*, H. H. La Thangue's *In a Garden*, T. Blake Wirgmann's *Elsa and the Wild Swans*, Solomon J. Solomon's *Good Health!* and a fresh and breezy seascape by Henry Moore.

The German section seemed with that of England to possess the most distinct mark of nationality. It was some years ago the fashion to hold that they could not paint in Germany, but this, assuredly, is no longer so; there is now intense depth and earnestness evidenced in German art, occasionally coupled with a certain national sentimentality; but none the less interesting and certainly none the less German for that. The roll of German exhibits was a long one, and comprised a number of well-known names.

Hans Thoma had amongst his pictures at least one done in quite his happiest manner. He is so unmistakably German, imbued with that homely warmth and simplicity which are still to be met with in Germany. Of his double portrait of himself and his wife nothing but good can be said; there is something so amiable, so convincing, so