

Some Sketches by Alfred Parsons, A.R.A.

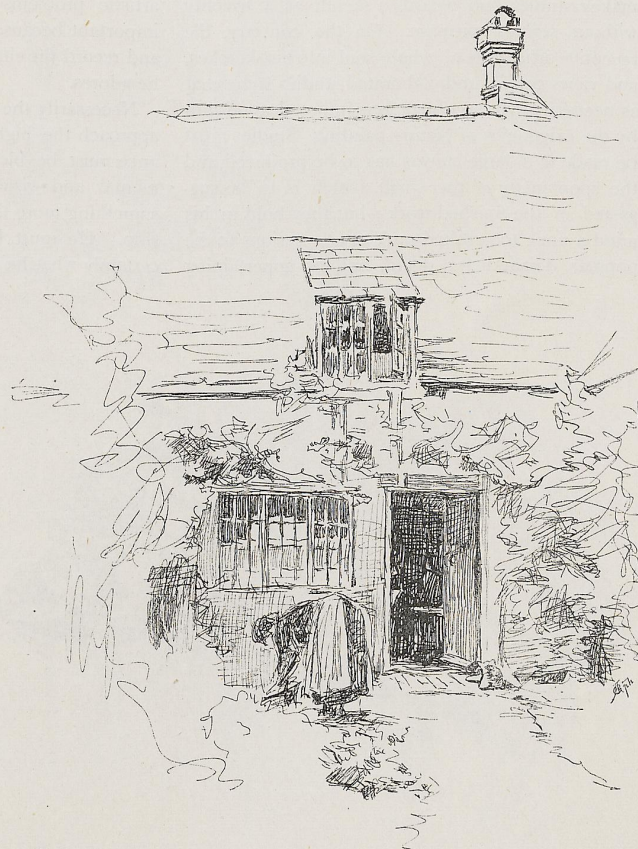
SOME SKETCHES BY ALFRED PARSONS, A.R.A. BY A. L. BALDRY.

THE faculty for making really expressive and significant sketches is not one that all artists can be said to possess as a matter of course; it is, indeed, a rarer gift than most people would imagine. Many painters, whose completed works are remarkable for fine qualities of technique and for sound and intelligent appreciation of nature, lack the capacity to summarise in their more rapid notes the salient features of a subject or the delicate subtleties of an effect. Some minds work slowly and find a degree of difficulty in deciding off-hand as to the relative importance of facts and details, and as to the claims which the various parts of the pictorial motive have upon the attention. This type of æsthetic intelligence needs to weigh and balance, to make minute comparisons, and to analyse with scrupulous exactness. It proceeds by a careful process of construction, collecting first the fundamental things, and building upon them bit by bit and step by step, until laboriously a complete result is reached. No happy ingenuity in turning to account momentary suggestions or fortunate accidents is possible under such a system of work; everything must be settled beforehand, selected and codified, before the effort at realisation is commenced; and the scheme once fixed, no departure from the path decided upon is permissible. What comes into existence in this way may be, and often is, valuable on account of its sincerity and scientific completeness; it may be impressive because of the depth of thought it reveals; it may even be great as an assertion of a

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commanding individuality; but it can never have the charm of spontaneity or the grace of unconsciousness.

But when the artist is possessed of a receptive nature, and trusts to his impressions rather than his inventive ability, the work he produces has a very different character. In its best form his art is attractive especially on account of its informality, and is pleasing particularly because it reflects the dainty waywardness of Nature, and owes to her suggestions its happy irresponsibility. His pictures may lack scientific construction, may perhaps transgress the rules of strict æsthetic propriety, but they will be fascinating as illustrations of subjects which are themselves in many cases exceptional. The artist will vary as his model varies, avoiding preconceptions and not limiting himself by definite bound-



W. Aston

PEN AND INK SKETCH

BY ALFRED PARSONS, A.R.A.

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