

excellence that are found united in this school,—if, indeed, the term “school” finds any proper application in modern art, where such classifications are fast being obliterated,—one is not slow to recognize that this superiority is due to several distinct causes. Passing by those considerations peculiar to the genius of the people, as well as the circumstances that affect the æsthetic temperament most favorably, the simple question of artistic discipline is one which the French have never underrated, if, indeed, the tendency has not been to carry this to excess by allowing technical skill to subvert higher aims in art. The admirable discipline afforded the art-student by the *École des Beaux-Arts*, and in the private *ateliers* of the most distinguished artists of France, has tended to exalt and maintain this high standard of technical merit. An attractive and prevailing excellence of *technique* is certainly commendable in an art so difficult and complex as that of painting, but it is on higher grounds than this that the critic should estimate those qualities which constitute greatness in art, that give to the picture that charm of expression which enkindles reverie and raises the work of the artist upon a common plane with that of the poet, the philosopher, and, unconsciously, with that of the moralist. France has not a few artists of this stamp whose merit we may estimate fairly by this higher standard, and whose power rests not merely in the skillful handling of the brush or the chisel, but in the intellectual grasp and scope evinced in their art, and in a true poetic instinct which renders all technical display subservient to the expression of ideas and emotions,—which, indeed, is the true function of art. J. François Millet, Couture, and Delacroix were artists of this stamp; and others, now living, might be named who have impressed their individuality no less effectively on contemporary art.

But the exhibit of France at Philadelphia was not even fairly representative of these higher achievements of French art. It affords, therefore, a less inviting subject for comment than if it were an adequate representation of the higher aims of this school. And it would be unjust to pretend that this display was, on the whole, a representative one. But in a more general, though less discriminating, sense, we may consider it typical of many ideas prevailing among French artists at the present time, and as such it is worthy of attentive study. The absence, for the most part, of works of conspicuous originality and merit leaves the *ensemble* of the exhibit to the mannerists who collectively form the school,—for the founders of schools are not to be confounded with the elements that compose their following. We have here, then, very little that has earned for