

is almost legitimate to call him the Liszt of the harp, especially when we recollect that Liszt, who was born a few years before him, produced most of his important works after Parish-Alvars was dead. A good deal of Parish-Alvars's work consists of operatic transcriptions, some of which are no worse than Liszt's. There is also an interesting set of pieces written during a tour in the East which may be compared with the 'Années de Pèlerinage.' The most notable works are his two concertos for harp and orchestra. It is strange that our harpists do not revive these. Their style is that of Weber and Mendelssohn. Since it is reported that the most modern composers in Paris are intending to make Mendelssohn fashionable again, while Busoni is turning our attention to Weber, perhaps there may yet be a future for the forgotten works of our great English harpist.

The difficulty of appreciating such music lies in the fact that the harp nowadays has an unfamiliar sound. The pianoforte has become so normal an instrument in every home that most people listen to it in a spirit of complete indifference as to its quality

of tone. If this were not the case, we might hear fewer bad pianists and fewer bad pianofortes. The harp is so strange a sound to the ears, even of musicians, that no player would ever dare to give a whole evening of harp music. The admission is a self-condemnation, for it suggests that we go to listen merely to the sound of the instrument, which very soon palls, and not to the music itself. The sound of the instrument palls because the music which it plays is not interesting enough to hold our attention. What interested me at Miss Morgan's recital was not the music, which, if played on the pianoforte, could never have been tolerated for a moment, but certain technical effects, to which it was instructive to listen. If she would have the courage to give a whole programme of harp music, and see that it maintained the same aesthetic standard as an average pianoforte recital, even if it involved playing transcriptions of pianoforte music, she might be able to prove to us that the harp was not so tedious an instrument as is generally believed. It rests with her to make her audience interested in the music rather than in the mechanism.

SPRING IN A DEVON VILLAGE

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THE rooks are now busy in the elms of the churchyard, and drifting thwartwise the wind with sticks for their nests. Sometimes a young male bird comes with food for his mate as she pleaches the twigs with claw and beak; she flutters her wings like a fledgeling, gapes widely, and squawks

with satisfaction. Daws come to the trees, perching head to the south-west breeze, ejaculating sharply. Periodical visitants are the starlings, their songs of mimicry swelling with sudden rush and wheezing. One bird has learnt the chattering cry of a kestrel, the mating call, and deceives

the rooks into thinking that one of the brown-barred hawks is near. That rooks are thieves among themselves stealing sticks from their neighbours is well-known. To-day we watched one taking material that a young and enthusiastic sister brought with difficulty every five minutes or so from the distant beech clump. The thief was an artist, she was subtle, and cunning. A quick hop took her to the young bird's pile, she seized a stick and drifted upwards into the wind, swung round in a half circle and brought it to her own nest in the same tree with a soft 'caa-caa,' as though implying relief at reaching home again. Her mate, judging by his white face, is an ancient bird; he is wise; he does no work, fetches no food for his toiling wife; but perches near the nest, approving her method of labour, and guarding its results. He is the nearest approach to a bird 'fence' that it would be possible to find.

A lane of rufous mud leads through the beech-clump. Life here is hard, but the celandines show their spokes-rays to the sun and wind-washed heaven, braving the half-gales that come across the Atlantic, and twirl the fallen numbers of autumn's leaves among their yellow flowers. A tawny owl lives in a pollard beech in this clump; he comes regularly at dusk to the elms and hoots with mournful insistence to the barn owls that roost under the thatch. Rabbits' bones and fur, finches' feathers, and the fragile skulls of mice hang in the crevices of the tree, hundreds of them, some fresh and white, others bleached and hidden under the brown dust of decay that trickles from the old tree's dead heart. Tap his home, and he flaps out, pursued by any small birds searching for spiders or

grubs in the spinney. The trees are dwarfed, bent by the salt winds; a few larches grew here, but never more the sap will rise and burst in emerald foam on their wispy branches. Constant buffeting with the winds of the ocean has killed them. A magpie is prospecting the mazed brittleness of one of them for a nesting site; she appears nearly every morning.

Beyond the clump is a combe, or valley, where every year a pair of carrion crows nest. They fly away as soon as they see man, four hundred yards below—they are cunning, and leave nothing to chance. In the stone 'hedges' the celandines, flowers much bigger than those around London, shine like spilled meteor fragments against their jade leaves. Primroses grow with them, and the white blossom of the wild strawberry, and in places the pink campion is unfurling its colours. A flock of linnets sings in a hawthorn, a silver twittering of song coming as the wind drops; with a rustling of wings the flock leaves for the bloom of the gorse which everywhere is scenting the air. The apple trees in the orchard close below are beginning to bud, already goldfinches haunt their lichened branches, now fighting with gold-barred wings aflutter, now pausing to pipe sweet whispers of coming vernal glory, when the blossom shall spill in showers of loveliness. Afar are the burrows, and over their sogged wastes the green plovers wheel and fall, uttering wild calls to the wind, while their mates stand below, diving with broad pinions to earth as though they would die for love. High above a buzzard is sailing. To the right a great horse draws a plough against the skyline, and, like lifted and dancing feathers of whiteness, a dozen gulls follow in its wake; behind

them trip and whistle four dish-washers, or wagtails. They say in the village that three pairs of ravens are nesting on the headland this year, but we have seen none. In this district a raven has never been known to kill or 'eye-pick' a lamb, even in the memory of the oldest granfer who taps and shuffles his way to the inn every night. The raven has come near to extermination, like the peregrine falcon; but here

both of these mighty fliers do not molest the belongings of man; the one feeding on offal and dead rabbits (and occasionally live ones), and the other 'taking' stock doves, and, in summer, turtle doves—stooping at gulls and divers in the early spring just for exuberance of spirit. Certainly every tide leaves its dead among the seaweed and thrown-up wreckage, gulls with their backs torn and ripped by the swift 'blue-hawk.'

LIFE, LETTERS AND THE ARTS

AMERICAN ART IN LONDON

Although lacking in pictures by many distinguished American painters whom one would naturally expect to find represented, the exhibition of contemporary American art at the Grafton Galleries, maintained by Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, the sculptor, has attracted a good deal of attention in London. The foreword to the catalogue explains that 'it was not thought necessary to include Whistler or John Sargent; their painting is so well known to the English public,' and that 'corresponding reasons led to the omission of the distinguished American, Mary Cassatt.' E. A. Abbey, William Chase, John La Farge, Winslow Homer, Howard Pyle, Alexander Harrison, de Forest Brush, and George Innes are all omitted. This is partly accounted for by the fact that many of the paintings of these artists are owned by Americans, who are not inclined to risk sending their pictures across the Atlantic for exhibition.

French influence predominates in the pictures displayed, most of the exhibiting painters having studied

in Paris. Mr. Guy Pene du Bois, whose very name suggests French nationality, applies the ironic vision of Forain to New York scenes. Mr. Eugene Speicher and Mr. William Glackens are the artistic progeny of Renoir. Mr. Paul Burlin bases much of his art on Picasso, and Mr. Maurice Sterne has accepted the teaching of the French Post-Impressionists. Mr. Childe Hassam has long been an exhibitor in the Paris galleries.

British critics, although admitting that the general level of technique is quite as high as it would be in a British exhibition of the same type, profess to find in it, subtlety rather than strength, and a want of spontaneity and real feeling which recalls the over-ripeness of Parisian art of the last quarter of a century. There appears to be little that is characteristically American in the exhibition.

Mr. du Bois exhibits a number of paintings, among them 'Can You Act?', 'The Doll and the Monster,' and 'The Rough Diamond,' the first genuinely humorous, the two last somewhat sinister. Mr. Speicher exhibits 'The Gold Shawl,' and 'Young Girl's Portrait,' both strongly reminiscent