

Then, and not till then, may he realize the paradoxical narrowness and infinite breadth of the chasm which separates the things that are made from the things which have been from the beginning ; a rift so narrow that it may be crossed at a single stride, and at the same time an abyss so broad and deep that all the works of man since the creation are but as a handful of dust thrown in to bridge it. A few minutes ago one stood at the converging point of human activity at its whitest heat, and the clanging anvil chorus of steel upon stone dinned on the senses. But here on the heights the silence of the illimitable holds sway. On the nearer hill-sides the great dumps of the mines have become gray earth-burrowings so trivial as to scarcely mar the symmetry of the slopes ; and far below in the valley the town has dwindled to a toy-city—

a blur of brick-red and burnt sienna on the fallow-dun.

But nature's immensities have grown immeasurably with the step across the dividing chasm. In the nearby west the forest-crowned cone of Pisgah stands shoulder high above the hills, and to the southward, range upon range, rise the mightier mountains to a sky-line uplifted by the eternal snows of the Sangre de Cristo. The evening breeze pouring from the shrugged shoulder of Pike's Peak stirs the leaves in the thickets of quaking-asp, and the glory of a mountain sunset is beginning to crimson the snow on the sentinel peaks beyond the abysses. One gazes spell-bound, and the heart swells and the eyes grow dim. For, after all, these things, and not any earth-burrowings of the gold-seekers, are the realities of the American Randt.

## ON SEEING VEDDER'S "PLEIADES"

By Edwin Markham

I HEAR a burst of music on the night !  
 Look at the white whirl of their bodies, see  
 The sweep of arms seraphical and free,  
 And over their heads a rush of circling light,  
 That draws them on with mystery and might :  
 But O the wild dance and the deathless song,  
 And O the lifted faces glad and strong—  
 Eternal passion burning still and white.

But she that glances downward, who is she,  
 Her face stilled with the shadow of a pain ?  
 The one who let all go for that mad chance ?  
 And does some sudden gust of memory,  
 Bringing the earth, sweep back into the brain ?  
 But O the wild white whirl of the wild dance !

# BALZAC

By George McLean Harper



HE acts of a human being are memorable in so far as they benefit mankind. Some of these are acts of conscious devotion, and they are the noblest. Others are performed for the pleasure of doing things well. In all cases, usefulness to the world is the standard by which the world judges. Works of art are no exception. Indeed, works of art are simply the most notable examples of disinterested effort to be useful. Art for the world's sake is the only art the world cherishes. The self-pleasing fancies of the dilettante are short-lived. The esoteric distinctions of cliques and schools make us say of a book or a picture that it is provincial or pedantic or affected. What unflinching marks the highest products of great artists is the quality of being permanently serviceable. Very little poetry that still passes for such was written with any other inspiration. But it is a question whether equal disinterestedness has presided over the writing of more than a small number of novels. Immediate personal profit, in the shape of reputation or money, has not often been attainable by writing poetry, and poets have generally looked rather toward fame, which is the reward for priceless and imperishable service only. On the other hand, fortunes have been made by novelists, and against the eighteen pounds paid for "Paradise Lost" and the salt-savored bread which Dante ate, we have the \$80,000 earned by Victor Hugo with "Les Misérables," and the \$120,000 earned by Benjamin Disraeli with "Endymion" and "Lothair."

Balzac is the greatest French novelist. One-third or one-half of the best French novels are his; and from him dates nearly all that is excellent in the theory and practice of his successors. Since his day the men who have done most for the art of fiction in France, the men who have developed it and kept it vital, have been his disciples. He expressly formulated, and on many a page he illustrated, an

unimpeachable doctrine of realism. Fidelity to the truth as derived by actual observation, or capable of being tested by observation—this, Balzac taught, is an indispensable quality in a novelist. He is the greatest French novelist, but wrote some of the most inartistic books in all French literature. He was the father of the realists; yet, for many of his works his sons are tempted to disown him. Moreover, he conceived and carried out, to an astonishing extent, the idea of representing in fiction the life of his time in France, so that no essential feature should be lacking; and he did all this in such wise that the picture, though complete in almost every feature—complete beyond praise and beyond parallel in literature or any other art—is a mere distortion of the truth!

There are two keys to this enigma. One is a certain imperfection in the man. The other is a certain peculiarity of the times in which he lived. In the man two incompatible natures struggled for mastery. He was one of those composite characters in whom the conflict of opposite tendencies does not produce a resultant of forces, but each operates alternately. By virtue of his better nature, he was a great genius, original, courageous, industrious, disinterested, and possessed also of those secondary charms and graces which often accompany the noblest gifts. When this nature prevailed, there was no meanness in the man, and especially no weakness; he was generous, buoyant, clear-sighted, a thorough artist, felicitous in thought and word. But when the noble part of him was in abeyance, when desire for quick recognition and great wealth was uppermost, Balzac presented but the vulgar type of a man living selfishly.

When the artist-nature, weary with the day's work, or despairing of perfection, laid down the pen to recuperate, this coarser spirit would often take it up and write abominably, to make money. The money-maker, being the less scrupulous writer, was less easily tired, and filled many pages in these stolen intervals; his