

IT is given to few artists even to have the story of their life and the praise of their works recited in a form so artistic as that which characterizes this sumptuous volume. The massive proportions of the quarto, supreme excellence of paper and typography, a pictorial element of remarkable merit, an ample editorial opportunity, and a faithful and effective occupation of it; these are the features which invest Mr. Mason's production with the largest kind of value, and entitle him to the gratitude of all lovers of the useful and the beautiful in literature. This life of Stuart will do more than preserve a just impression of his genius; it will introduce to generations who knew him not an historical character of no small interest, and will entertain them with a store of that most delightful commodity, personal reminiscence.

The volume consists, first, of a series of seven biographical chapters, which tell the story of Stuart's life, with due attention to detail, and much anecdotal matter, some of which is very amusing. Then comes a chapter of "Remarks on Art," by Stuart himself, originally printed on a single sheet of paper, and delivered in their author's oracular manner. Following this are brief dissertations on the portraits of Stuart, several of which he painted himself, and on the exhibition of his works in 1828. Next is a long and elaborate account of his famous Washington portraits, which, as is well known, were a specialty with him; and, following this, comes a similar annotated list of his miscellaneous portraits, taken in alphabetical order, which alone occupies nearly one half of the volume. Stuart painted some six hundred portraits, and this work may be said to be a guide-book to them all.

*The Life and Works of Gilbert Stuart. By George C. Mason. Illus. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$10.00.

Stuart was born in Rhode Island in 1755, not 1756, as is sometimes stated. His father was a miller. The child, however, is the true father of the man; and, at the age of thirteen, we find him at work fulfilling orders for portraits, two of which, painted at that early age, are now in the Redwood Library at Newport. He afterwards had an opportunity of studying abroad, and indeed established his reputation in London, where he enjoyed the friendship and aid of Benjamin West, and where he spent several years. After 1793, he resided in America, chiefly in Washington and Boston; and he died in the latter city in 1828. He was a man of strong and ready intellect, and of generous affections; ready witted, quick at expedients, and with a keen sense of humor. His life was full of pleasant passages, the relation of which gives a peculiar relish to this volume. Once, for example, when he was traveling in England, the following incident took place:

His fellow passengers were a number of gentlemen who were strangers to him, and who, finding him very amusing, ventured to ask him who he was and what was his calling. Mr. Stuart answered with a grave face and a serious tone that he sometimes dressed gentlemen's and ladies' hair (at that time the high-craped pomatumed hair was all in fashion). "You are a hair-dresser, then?" "What!" said he, "do you take me for a barber?" "I beg your pardon, sir; but I inferred it from what you said. If I mistook you, may I take the liberty to ask what you are, then?" "Why, I sometimes brush a gentleman's coat, or hat, and sometimes adjust a cravat." "Oh, you are a valet, then, to some nobleman?" "A valet! Indeed, sir, I am not. I am not a servant,—to be sure I make coats and waistcoats for gentlemen." "Oh, you are a tailor?" "Tailor? Do I look like a tailor? I assure you I never handled a goose other than a roasted one." By this time they were all in a roar. "What the devil are you, then?" said one. "I'll tell you," said Stuart. "Be assured all I have said is literally true. I dress hair, brush hats and coats, adjust a cravat, and make coats, waistcoats, and breeches, and likewise boots and shoes, *at your service*." "Oh, a boot and shoemaker after all?" "Guess again, gentlemen; I never handle boots or shoes but for my own feet and legs, yet all I have told you is true." "We may as well give up guessing." After checking his laughter, and pumping up a fresh flow of spirits by a large pinch of snuff, he said to them, very gravely: "Now, gentlemen, I will not play the fool with you any longer, but I will tell you, upon my honor as a gentleman, my *bona fide* profession. I get my living by making faces." He then screwed his countenance and twisted the lineaments of his visage in a manner such as Samuel Foote or Charles Mathews might have envied. When his companions, after loud peals of laughter, had composed themselves, each took credit to himself for having "all the while suspected that the gentleman belonged to the theatre, and they all knew that he must be a comedian by profession;" when, to their utter surprise, he assured them that he was never on the stage, and very rarely saw the inside of a playhouse, or any other similar place of amusement. They all now looked at each other in blank astonishment. Before parting, Stuart said to his companions: "Gentlemen, you will find that all I have said of my various employments is comprised in these words, I am a portrait painter."

Stuart's first portrait of Washington was painted in 1795. He made a number of copies of the work in answer to the orders which poured in upon him. The first full-length of Washington was executed for the Marquis of Lansdowne, and created a great

sensation in England. This magnificent picture was brought to America and exhibited at our Centennial. A copy of the Lansdowne is owned by the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. There are several other full-lengths, of all of which Mr. Mason gives abundant particulars.

The illustrations include a number by the photogravure process, which are exquisite in their softness and delicacy; two steel engravings and an etching; and they present three portraits of Washington, one of Mrs. Washington, and two of Stuart; with others of Eugene Benson, Horace Binney, Mad. Bonaparte, John Callender, Generals Gates and Knox, John Jay, and Elizabeth Willing.

It is a pity that the work was delayed beyond the holiday season; for its value and exceptional attractions would have commended it strongly to all generous buyers. As it is, we hope it may not lose its reward.