

THE VIRTUES OF AMATEUR PAINTING

own way, which is the only way that true works of art can be taken seriously.

The most conspicuous virtue of these quaintly engaging pictures of Mrs. Cowdery is the certainty you find in them of the lack of struggle. Their author is, without doubt, at peace with the world, for the world is without significance in the deeper sense to all really serious artists, those who have vital information to convey. Mrs. Cowdery's career as a painter is of short and impressive duration, barely four years she confides, and she has been an engaging feature of the Society of Independent Artists for at least three of these years, I believe. It is her picture which she names "1869" which has called most attention to her charming talents, and which created so convincing an impression among the artists for its originality and its insistence upon the rendering of beautified personal experience.

Mrs. Cowdery must have loved her earliest girlish hours with excessive delight, and perhaps it is the garish contrast of the youth of the young women of this time, energetic and, from the mid-Victorian standpoint certainly, so unwomanly, that prompts this gentle and refined woman to people her gracious solitudes of spirit with those still more gracious ladylike beings which she employs. For her pictures, that is her most typical ones, contain always these groupings of figures in crinoline-like gowns with perhaps more of the touch of eighteen-eighty than of seventy in them, so given to flounces and