Title: On the Old Road Vol. 1 (of 2)

Author: John Ruskin

Release date: June 2, 2008 [eBook #25678]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Juliet Sutherland and the Online Distributed
Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net

RUSKIN'S MONUMENT
From a Photograph

THE COMPLETE WORKS

OF

JOHN RUSKIN

ON THE OLD ROAD

A COLLECTION OF
MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS AND ARTICLES
ON ART AND LITERATURE.

Volumes I-II

Vol. II.

NATIONAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK—CHICAGO

Published 1834-1885.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

INTRODUCTORY: MY FIRST EDITOR.

ART.

I. HISTORY AND CRITICISM.

II. PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

III. ARCHITECTURE.

[Pg 3]

MY FIRST EDITOR.[1]

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL REMINISCENCE.

(*University Magazine, April 1878.*)

1st February, 1878.

1. In seven days more I shall be fifty-nine;—which (practically) is all the same as sixty; but, being asked by the wife of my dear old friend, W. H. Harrison, to say a few words of our old relations together, I find myself, in spite of all these years, a boy again,—partly in the mere thought of, and renewed sympathy with, the cheerful heart of my old literary master, and partly in instinctive terror lest, wherever he is in celestial circles, he should catch me writing bad grammar, or putting wrong stops, and should set the table turning, or the like. For he was inexorable in such matters, and many a sentence in "Modern Painters," which I had thought quite beautifully turned out after a forenoon's work on it, had to be turned outside-in, after all, and cut into the smallest

pieces and sewn up again, because he had found out there wasn't a nominative in it, or a genitive, or a conjunction, or something else indispensable to a sentence's decent existence and position in life. Not a book of mine, for good thirty years, but went, every word of it, under his careful eyes twice over—often also the last revises left to his tender mercy altogether on condition he wouldn't bother me any more. [Pg 4]

2. "For good thirty years": that is to say, from my first verse-writing in "Friendship's Offering" at fifteen, to my last orthodox and conservative compositions at forty-five.[2] But when I began to utter radical sentiments, and say things derogatory to the clergy, my old friend got quite restive—absolutely refused sometimes to pass even my most grammatical and punctuated paragraphs, if their contents savored of heresy or revolution; and at last I was obliged to print all my philanthropy and political economy on the sly.

3. The heaven of the literary world through which Mr. Harrison moved in a widely cometary fashion, circling now round one luminary and now submitting to the attraction of another, not without a serenely erubescent luster of his own, differed *toto cœlo* from the celestial state of authorship by whose courses we have now the felicity of being dazzled and directed. Then, the publications of the months being very nearly concluded in the modest browns of *Blackwood* and *Fraser*, and the majesty of the quarterlies being above the range of the properly so-called "public" mind, the simple family circle looked forward with chief complacency to their New Year's gift of the Annual—a delicately printed, lustrously bound, and elaborately illustrated small octavo volume, representing, after its manner, the poetical and artistic inspiration of the age. It is not a little wonderful to me, looking back to those pleasant years and their bestowings, to measure the difficultly imaginable distance between the periodical literature of that day and ours. In a few words, it may be summed by saying that the ancient Annual was written by meekly-minded persons, who felt that they knew nothing about anything, and did not want to know more. Faith in the usually accepted principles of propriety, and confidence in the Funds, the Queen, the English Church, the British Army and the perennial continuance of England, of her Annuals, and of the creation in general, were necessary then for the eligibility, and important elements in the [Pg 5] success, of the winter-blowing author. Whereas I suppose that the popularity of our present candidates for praise, at the successive changes of the moon, may be considered as almost proportionate to their confidence in the abstract principles of dissolution, the immediate necessity of change, and the inconvenience, no less than the iniquity, of attributing any authority to the Church, the Queen, the Almighty, or anything else but the British Press. Such constitutional differences in the tone of the literary contents imply still greater contrasts in the lives of the editors of these several periodicals. It was enough for the editor of the "Friendship's Offering" if he could gather for his Christmas bouquet a little pastoral story, suppose, by Miss Mitford, a dramatic sketch by the Rev. George Croly, a few sonnets or impromptu stanzas to music by the gentlest lovers and maidens of his acquaintance, and a legend of the Apennines or romance of the Pyrenees by some adventurous traveler who had penetrated into the recesses of their mountains, and would modify the traditions of the country to introduce a plate by Clarkson Stanfield or J. D. Harding. Whereas nowadays the editor of a leading monthly is responsible to his readers for exhaustive views of the politics of Europe during the last fortnight; and would think himself distanced in the race with his lunarian rivals, if his numbers did not contain three distinct and entirely new theories of the system of the universe, and at least one hitherto unobserved piece of evidence of the nonentity of God.

4. In one respect, however, the humilities of that departed time were loftier than the prides of to-day—that even the most retiring of its authors expected to be admired, not for what he had discovered, but for what he was. It did not matter in our dynasties of determined noblesse how many things an industrious blockhead knew, or how curious things a lucky booby had discovered. We claimed, and gave no honor but for real rank of human sense and wit; and although this manner of estimate led to many various collateral mischiefs—to much toleration of misconduct in [Pg 6] persons who were amusing, and of uselessness in those of proved ability, there was yet the essential and constant good in it, that no one hoped to snap up for himself a reputation which his friend was on the point of achieving, and that even the meanest envy of merit was not embittered by a gambler's grudge at his neighbor's fortune.

5. Into this incorruptible court of literature I was early brought, whether by good or evil hap, I know not; certainly by no very deliberate wisdom in my friends or myself. A certain capacity for rhythmic cadence (visible enough in all my later writings) and the cheerfulness of a much protected, but not foolishly indulged childhood, made me early a rhymester; and a shelf of the little cabinet by which I am now writing is loaded with poetical effusions which were the delight of my father and mother, and I have not yet the heart to burn. A worthy Scottish friend of my father's, Thomas Pringle, preceded Mr. Harrison in the editorship of "Friendship's Offering," and doubtfully, but with benignant sympathy, admitted the dazzling hope that one day rhymes of mine might be seen in real print, on those amiable and shining pages.

6. My introduction by Mr. Pringle to the poet Rogers, on the ground of my admiration of the recently published "Italy," proved, as far as I remember, slightly disappointing to the poet, because it appeared on Mr. Pringle's unadvised cross-examination of me in the presence that I knew more of the vignettes than the verses; and also slightly discouraging to me because, this contretemps necessitating an immediate change of subject, I thenceforward understood none of the conversation, and when we came away was rebuked by Mr. Pringle for not attending to it. Had his grave authority been maintained over me, my literary bloom would probably have been early nipped; but he passed away into the African deserts; and the Favonian breezes of Mr.

Harrison's praise revived my drooping ambition.

7. I know not whether most in that ambition, or to please my father, I now began seriously to [Pg 7]
cultivate my skill in expression. I had always an instinct of possessing considerable word-power; and the series of essays written about this time for the *Architectural Magazine*, under the signature of Kata Phusin, contain sentences nearly as well put together as any I have done since. But without Mr. Harrison's ready praise, and severe punctuation, I should have either tired of my labor, or lost it; as it was, though I shall always think those early years might have been better spent, they had their reward. As soon as I had anything really to say, I was able sufficiently to say it; and under Mr. Harrison's cheerful auspices, and balmy consolations of my father under adverse criticism, the first volume of "Modern Painters" established itself in public opinion, and determined the tenor of my future life.

8. Thus began a friendship, and in no unreal sense, even a family relationship, between Mr. Harrison, my father and mother, and me, in which there was no alloy whatsoever of distrust or displeasure on either side, but which remained faithful and loving, more and more conducive to every sort of happiness among us, to the day of my father's death.

But the joyfulest days of it for *us*, and chiefly for me, cheered with concurrent sympathy from other friends—of whom only one now is left—were in the triumphal Olympiad of years which followed the publication of the second volume of "Modern Painters," when Turner himself had given to me his thanks, to my father and mother his true friendship, and came always for *their* honor, to keep my birthday with them; the constant dinner party of the day remaining in its perfect chaplet from 1844 to 1850,—Turner, Mr. Thomas Richmond, Mr. George Richmond, Samuel Prout, and Mr. Harrison.

9. Mr. Harrison, as my literary godfather, who had held me at the Font of the Muses, and was answerable to the company for my moral principles and my syntax, always made "the speech"; my father used most often to answer for me in few words, but with wet eyes: (there was a general [Pg 8]
understanding that any good or sorrow that might come to me in literary life were infinitely more his) and the two Mr. Richmonds held themselves responsible to him for my at least moderately decent orthodoxy in art, taking in that matter a tenderly inquisitorial function, and warning my father solemnly of two dangerous heresies in the bud, and of things really passing the possibilities of the indulgence of the Church, said against Claude or Michael Angelo. The death of Turner and other things, far more sad than death, clouded those early days, but the memory of them returned again after I had well won my second victory with the "Stones of Venice"; and the two Mr. Richmonds, and Mr. Harrison, and my father, were again happy on my birthday, and so to the end.

10. In a far deeper sense than he himself knew, Mr. Harrison was all this time influencing my thoughts and opinions, by the entire consistency, contentment, and practical sense of his modest life. My father and he were both flawless types of the true London citizen of olden days: incorruptible, proud with sacred and simple pride, happy in their function and position; putting daily their total energy into the detail of their business duties, and finding daily a refined and perfect pleasure in the hearth-side poetry of domestic life. Both of them, in their hearts, as romantic as girls; both of them inflexible as soldier recruits in any matter of probity and honor, in business or out of it; both of them utterly hating radical newspapers, and devoted to the House of Lords; my father only, it seemed to me, slightly failing in his loyalty to the Worshipful the Mayor and Corporation of London. This disrespect for civic dignity was connected in my father with some little gnawing of discomfort—deep down in his heart—in his own position as a merchant, and with timidly indulged hope that his son might one day move in higher spheres; whereas Mr. Harrison was entirely placid and resigned to the will of Providence which had appointed him his desk in the Crown Life Office, never in his most romantic visions projected a marriage for any of his daughters with a British baronet or a German count, and pinned his little vanities prettily and [Pg 9]
openly on his breast, like a nosegay, when he went out to dinner. Most especially he shone at the Literary Fund, where he was Registrar and had proper official relations, therefore, always with the Chairman, Lord Mahon, or Lord Houghton, or the Bishop of Winchester, or some other magnificent person of that sort, with whom it was Mr. Harrison's supremest felicity to exchange a not unfrequent little joke—like a pinch of snuff—and to indicate for them the shoals to be avoided and the channels to be followed with flowing sail in the speech of the year; after which, if perchance there were any malignant in the company who took objection, suppose, to the claims of the author last relieved, to the charity of the Society, or to any claim founded on the production of a tale for *Blackwood's Magazine*, and of two sonnets for "Friendship's Offering"; or if perchance there were any festering sharp thorn in Mr. Harrison's side in the shape of some distinguished radical, Sir Charles Dilke, or Mr. Dickens, or anybody who had ever said anything against taxation, or the Post Office, or the Court of Chancery, or the Bench of Bishops,—then would Mr. Harrison, if he had full faith in his Chairman, cunningly arrange with him some delicate little extinctive operation to be performed on that malignant or that radical in the course of the evening, and would relate to us exultingly the next day all the incidents of the power of arms, and vindictively (for him) dwell on the barbed points and double edge of the beautiful episcopalian repartee with which it was terminated.

11. Very seriously, in all such public duties, Mr. Harrison was a person of rarest quality and worth; absolutely disinterested in his zeal, unwearied in exertion, always ready, never tiresome, never absurd; bringing practical sense, kindly discretion, and a most wholesome element of good-humored, but incorruptible honesty, into everything his hand found to do. Everybody respected, and the best men sincerely regarded him, and I think those who knew most of the world were

always the first to acknowledge his fine faculty of doing exactly the right thing to exactly the right point—and so pleasantly. In private life, he was to me an object of quite special admiration, in the quantity of pleasure he could take in little things; and he very materially modified many of my gravest conclusions, as to the advantages or mischiefs of modern suburban life. To myself scarcely any dwelling-place and duty in this world would have appeared (until, perhaps, I had tried them) less eligible for a man of sensitive and fanciful mind than the New Road, Camberwell Green, and the monotonous office work in Bridge Street. And to a certain extent, I am still of the same mind as to these matters, and do altogether, and without doubt or hesitation, repudiate the existence of New Road and Camberwell Green in general, no less than the condemnation of intelligent persons to a routine of clerk's work broken only by a three weeks' holiday in the decline of the year. On less lively, fanciful, and amiable persons than my old friend, the New Road and the daily desk do verily exercise a degrading and much to be regretted influence. But Mr. Harrison brought the freshness of pastoral simplicity into the most faded corners of the Green, lightened with his cheerful heart the most leaden hours of the office, and gathered during his three weeks' holiday in the neighborhood, suppose, of Guildford, Gravesend, Broadstairs, or Rustington, more vital recreation and speculative philosophy than another man would have got on the grand tour.

12. On the other hand, I, who had nothing to do all day but what I liked, and could wander at will among all the best beauties of the globe—nor that without sufficient power to see and to feel them, was habitually a discontented person, and frequently a weary one; and the reproachful thought which always rose in my mind when in that unconquerable listlessness of surfeit from excitement I found myself unable to win even a momentary pleasure from the fairest scene, was always: "If but Mr. Harrison were here instead of me!"

13. Many and many a time I planned very seriously the beguiling of him over the water. But there was always something to be done in a hurry—something to be worked out—something to be seen, as I thought, only in my own quiet way. I believe if I had but had the sense to take my old friend with me, he would have shown me ever so much more than I found out by myself. But it was not to be; and year after year I went to grumble and mope at Venice, or Lago Maggiore; and Mr. Harrison to enjoy himself from morning to night at Broadstairs or Box Hill. Let me not speak with disdain of either. No blue languor of tideless wave is worth the spray and sparkle of a South-Eastern English beach, and no one will ever rightly enjoy the pines of the Wengern Alp who despises the boxes of Box Hill.

Nay, I remember me of a little rapture of George Richmond himself on those fair slopes of sunny sward, ending in a vision of Tobit and his dog—no less—led up there by the helpful angel. (I have always wondered, by the way, whether that blessed dog minded what the angel said to him.)

14. But Mr. Harrison was independent of these mere ethereal visions, and surrounded himself only with a halo of sublunary beatitude. Welcome always he, as on his side frankly coming to be well, with the farmer, the squire, the rector, the—I had like to have said, dissenting minister, but I think Mr. Harrison usually evaded villages for summer domicile which were in any wise open to suspicion of Dissent in the air,—but with hunting rector, and the High Church curate, and the rector's daughters, and the curate's mother—and the landlord of the Red Lion, and the hostler of the Red Lion stables, and the tapster of the Pig and Whistle, and all the pigs in the backyard, and all the whistlers in the street—whether for want of thought or for gayety of it, and all the geese on the common, ducks in the horse-pond, and daws in the steeple, Mr. Harrison was known and beloved by every bird and body of them before half his holiday was over, and the rest of it was mere exuberance of festivity about him, and applauding coronation of his head and heart. Above all, he delighted in the ways of animals and children. He wrote a birthday ode—or at least a tumble-out-of-the-nest-day ode—to our pet rook, Grip, which encouraged that bird in taking such liberties with the cook, and in addressing so many impertinences to the other servants, that he became the mere plague, or as the French would express it, the "Black-beast," of the kitchen at Denmark Hill for the rest of his life. There was almost always a diary kept, usually, I think, in rhyme, of those summer hours of indolence; and when at last it was recognized, in due and reverent way, at the Crown Life Office, that indeed the time had drawn near when its constant and faithful servant should be allowed to rest, it was perhaps not the least of my friend's praiseworthy and gentle gifts to be truly capable of rest; withdrawing himself into the memories of his useful and benevolent life, and making it truly a holiday in its honored evening. The idea then occurred to him (and it was now my turn to press with hearty sympathy the sometimes intermitted task) of writing these Reminiscences: valuable—valuable to whom, and for what, I begin to wonder.

15. For indeed these memories are of people who are passed away like the snow in harvest; and now, with the sharp-sickle reapers of full shocks of the fattening wheat of metaphysics, and fair novelists Ruth-like in the fields of barley, or more mischievously coming through the rye,—what will the public, so vigorously sustained by these, care to hear of the lovely writers of old days, quaint creatures that they were?—Merry Miss Mitford, actually living in the country, actually walking in it, loving it, and finding history enough in the life of the butcher's boy, and romance enough in the story of the miller's daughter, to occupy all her mind with, innocent of troubles concerning the Turkish question; steady-going old Barham, confessing nobody but the Jackdaw of Rheims, and fearless alike of Ritualism, Darwinism, or disestablishment; iridescent clearness of Thomas Hood—the wildest, deepest infinity of marvelously jestful men; manly and rational Sydney, inevitable, infallible, inoffensively wise of wit;[3]—they are gone their way, and ours is far diverse; and they and all the less-known, yet pleasantly and brightly endowed spirits of that time,

are suddenly as unintelligible to us as the Etruscans—not a feeling they had that we can share in; and these pictures of them will be to us valuable only as the sculpture under the niches far in the shade there of the old parish church, dimly vital images of inconceivable creatures whom we shall never see the like of more. [Pg 14]

[Pg 15]

ART.

I.

HISTORY AND CRITICISM.

LORD LINDSAY'S "CHRISTIAN ART."

(*Quarterly Review, June 1847.*)

EASTLAKE'S "HISTORY OF OIL PAINTING."

(*Quarterly Review, March 1848.*)

SAMUEL PROUT.

(*Art Journal, March 1849.*)

SIR JOSHUA AND HOLBEIN.

(*Cornhill Magazine, March 1860.*)

[Pg 16]

[Pg 17]

"THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN ART."[4]

BY LORD LINDSAY.

16. There is, perhaps, no phenomenon connected with the history of the first half of the nineteenth century, which will become a subject of more curious investigation in after ages, than the coincident development of the Critical faculty, and extinction of the Arts of Design. Our mechanical energies, vast though they be, are not singular nor characteristic; such, and so great, have before been manifested—and it may perhaps be recorded of us with wonder rather than respect, that we pierced mountains and excavated valleys, only to emulate the activity of the gnat and the swiftness of the swallow. Our discoveries in science, however accelerated or comprehensive, are but the necessary development of the more wonderful reachings into vacancy of past centuries; and they who struck the piles of the bridge of Chaos will arrest the eyes of Futurity rather than we builders of its towers and gates—theirs the authority of Light, ours but the ordering of courses to the Sun and Moon. [Pg 18]

17. But the Negative character of the age is distinctive. There has not before appeared a race like that of civilized Europe at this day, thoughtfully unproductive of all art—ambitious—industrious—investigative—reflective, and incapable. Disdained by the savage, or scattered by the soldier, dishonored by the voluptuary, or forbidden by the fanatic, the arts have not, till now, been extinguished by analysis and paralyzed by protection. Our lecturers, learned in history, exhibit the descents of excellence from school to school, and clear from doubt the pedigrees of powers which they cannot re-establish, and of virtues no more to be revived: the scholar is early acquainted with every department of the Impossible, and expresses in proper terms his sense of the deficiencies of Titian and the errors of Michael Angelo: the metaphysician weaves from field to field his analogies of gossamer, which shake and glitter fairly in the sun, but must be torn asunder by the first plow that passes: geometry measures out, by line and rule, the light which is to illustrate heroism, and the shadow which should veil distress; and anatomy counts muscles, and systematizes motion, in the wrestling of Genius with its angel. Nor is ingenuity wanting—nor patience; apprehension was never more ready, nor execution more exact—yet nothing is of us, or in us, accomplished;—the treasures of our wealth and will are spent in vain—our cares are as clouds without water—our creations fruitless and perishable; the succeeding Age will trample "sopra lor vanita che par persona," and point wonderingly back to the strange colorless tessera in the mosaic of human mind.

18. No previous example can be shown, in the career of nations not altogether nomad or barbarous, of so total an absence of invention,—of any material representation of the mind's inward yearning and desire, seen, as soon as shaped, to be, though imperfect, in its essence good, and worthy to be rested in with contentment, and consisting self-approval—the Sabbath of contemplation which confesses and confirms the majesty of a style. All but ourselves have had [Pg 19]

this in measure; the Imagination has stirred herself in proportion to the requirements, capacity, and energy of each race: reckless or pensive, soaring or frivolous, still she has had life and influence; sometimes aiming at Heaven with brick for stone and slime for mortar—anon bound down to painting of porcelain, and carving of ivory, but always with an inward consciousness of power which might indeed be palsied or imprisoned, but not in operation vain. Altars have been rent, many—ashes poured out,—hands withered—but we alone have worshiped, and received no answer—the pieces left in order upon the wood, and our names writ in the water that runs roundabout the trench.

19. It is easier to conceive than to enumerate the many circumstances which are herein against us, necessarily, and exclusive of all that wisdom might avoid, or resolution vanquish. First, the weight of mere numbers, among whom ease of communication rather renders opposition of judgment fatal, than agreement probable; looking from England to Attica, or from Germany to Tuscany, we may remember to what good purpose it was said that the magnetism of iron was found not in bars, but in needles. Together with this adversity of number comes the likelihood of many among the more available intellects being held back and belated in the crowd, or else prematurely outwearied; for it now needs both curious fortune and vigorous effort to give to any, even the greatest, such early positions of eminence and audience as may feed their force with advantage; so that men spend their strength in opening circles, and crying for place, and only come to speech of us with broken voices and shortened time. Then follows the diminution of importance in peculiar places and public edifices, as they engage national affection or vanity; no single city can now take such queenly lead as that the pride of the whole body of the people shall be involved in adorning her; the buildings of London or Munich are not charged with the fullness of the national heart as were the domes of Pisa and Florence:—their credit or shame is [Pg 20] metropolitan, not acropolitan; central at the best, not dominant; and this is one of the chief modes in which the cessation of superstition, so far as it has taken place, has been of evil consequence to art, that the observance of local sanctities being abolished, meanness and mistake are anywhere allowed of, and the thoughts and wealth which were devoted and expended to good purpose in one place, are now distracted and scattered to utter unavailableness.

20. In proportion to the increasing spirituality of religion, the conception of worthiness in material offering ceases, and with it the sense of beauty in the evidence of votive labor; machine-work is substituted for handwork, as if the value of ornament consisted in the mere multiplication of agreeable forms, instead of in the evidence of human care and thought and love about the separate stones; and—machine-work once tolerated—the eye itself soon loses its sense of this very evidence, and no more perceives the difference between the blind accuracy of the engine, and the bright, strange play of the living stroke—a difference as great as between the form of a stone pillar and a springing fountain. And on this blindness follow all errors and abuses—hollowness and slightness of framework, speciousness of surface ornament, concealed structure, imitated materials, and types of form borrowed from things noble for things base; and all these abuses must be resisted with the more caution, and less success, because in many ways they are signs or consequences of improvement, and are associated both with purer forms of religious feeling and with more general diffusion of refinements and comforts; and especially because we are critically aware of all our deficiencies, too cognizant of all that is greatest to pass willingly and humbly through the stages that rise to it, and oppressed in every honest effort by the bitter sense of inferiority. In every previous development the power has been in advance of the consciousness, the resources more abundant than the knowledge—the energy irresistible, the discipline imperfect. The light that led was narrow and dim—streakings of dawn—but it fell with [Pg 21] kindly gentleness on eyes newly awakened out of sleep. But we are now aroused suddenly in the light of an intolerable day—our limbs fail under the sunstroke—we are walled in by the great buildings of elder times, and their fierce reverberation falls upon us without pause, in our feverish and oppressive consciousness of captivity; we are laid bedridden at the Beautiful Gate, and all our hope must rest in acceptance of the "such as I have," of the passers by.

21. The frequent and firm, yet modest expression of this hope, gives peculiar value to Lord Lindsay's book on Christian Art; for it is seldom that a grasp of antiquity so comprehensive, and a regard for it so affectionate, have consisted with aught but gloomy foreboding with respect to our own times. As a contribution to the History of Art, his work is unquestionably the most valuable which has yet appeared in England. His research has been unwearied; he has availed himself of the best results of German investigation—his own acuteness of discernment in cases of approximating or derivative style is considerable—and he has set before the English reader an outline of the relations of the primitive schools of Sacred art which we think so thoroughly verified in all its more important ramifications, that, with whatever richness of detail the labor of succeeding writers may illustrate them, the leading lines of Lord Lindsay's chart will always henceforth be followed. The feeling which pervades the whole book is chastened, serious, and full of reverence for the strength ordained out of the lips of infant Art—accepting on its own terms its simplest teaching, sympathizing with all kindness in its unreasoning faith; the writer evidently looking back with most joy and thankfulness to hours passed in gazing upon the faded and faint touches of feeble hands, and listening through the stillness of uninvaded cloisters for fall of voices now almost spent; yet he is never contracted into the bigot, nor inflamed into the enthusiast; he never loses his memory of the outside world, never quits nor compromises his severe and reflective Protestantism, never gives ground of offense by despite or forgetfulness of [Pg 22] any order of merit or period of effort. And the tone of his address to our present schools is therefore neither scornful nor peremptory; his hope, consisting with full apprehension of all that we have lost, is based on a strict and stern estimate of our power, position, and resource,

compelling the assent even of the least sanguine to his expectancy of the revelation of a new world of Spiritual Beauty, of which whosoever

---

"will dedicate his talents, as the bondsman of love, to his Redeemer's glory and the good of mankind, may become the priest and interpreter, by adopting in the first instance, and re-issuing with that outward investiture which the assiduous study of all that is beautiful, either in Grecian sculpture, or the later but less spiritual schools of painting, has enabled him to supply, such of its bright ideas as he finds imprisoned in the early and imperfect efforts of art—and secondly, by exploring further on his own account in the untrodden realms of feeling that lie before him, and calling into palpable existence visions as bright, as pure, and as immortal as those that have already, in the golden days of Raphael and Perugino, obeyed their creative mandate, Live!" (Vol. iii., p. 422).[5]

---

22. But while we thus defer to the discrimination, respect the feeling, and join in the hope of the author, we earnestly deprecate the frequent assertion, as we entirely deny the accuracy or propriety, of the metaphysical analogies, in accordance with which his work has unhappily been arranged. Though these had been as carefully, as they are crudely, considered, it had still been no light error of judgment to thrust them with dogmatism so abrupt into the forefront of a work whose purpose is assuredly as much to win to the truth as to demonstrate it. The writer has apparently forgotten that of the men to whom he must primarily look for the working out of his [Pg 23] anticipations, the most part are of limited knowledge and inveterate habit, men dexterous in practice, idle in thought; many of them compelled by ill-ordered patronage into directions of exertion at variance with their own best impulses, and regarding their art only as a means of life; all of them conscious of practical difficulties which the critic is too apt to under-estimate, and probably remembering disappointments of early effort rude enough to chill the most earnest heart. The shallow amateurship of the circle of their patrons early disgusts them with theories; they shrink back to the hard teaching of their own industry, and would rather read the book which facilitated their methods than the one that rationalized their aims. Noble exceptions there are, and more than might be deemed; but the labor spent in contest with executive difficulties renders even these better men unapt receivers of a system which looks with little respect on such achievement, and shrewd discerners of the parts of such system which have been feebly rooted, or fancifully reared. Their attention should have been attracted both by clearness and kindness of promise; their impatience prevented by close reasoning and severe proof of every statement which might seem transcendental. Altogether void of such consideration or care, Lord Lindsay never even so much as states the meaning or purpose of his appeal, but, clasping his hands desperately over his head, disappears on the instant in an abyss of curious and unsupported assertions of the philosophy of human nature: reappearing only, like a breathless diver, in the third page, to deprecate the surprise of the reader whom he has never addressed, at a conviction which he has never stated; and again vanishing ere we can well look him in the face, among the frankincensed clouds of Christian mythology: filling the greater part of his first volume with a *résumé* of its symbols and traditions, yet never vouchsafing the slightest hint of the objects for which they are assembled, or the amount of credence with which he would have them regarded; and so proceeds to the historical portion of the book, leaving the whole theory which is its key to [Pg 24] be painfully gathered from scattered passages, and in great part from the mere form of enumeration adopted in the preliminary chart of the schools; and giving as yet account only of that period to which the mere artist looks with least interest—while the work, even when completed, will be nothing more than a single pinnacle of the historical edifice whose ground-plan is laid in the preceding essay, "Progression by Antagonism":—a plan, by the author's confession, "too extensive for his own, or any single hand to execute," yet without the understanding of whose main relations it is impossible to receive the intended teaching of the completed portion.

23. It is generally easier to plan what is beyond the reach of others than to execute what is within our own; and it had been well if the range of this introductory essay had been something less extensive, and its reasoning more careful. Its search after truth is honest and impetuous, and its results would have appeared as interesting as they are indeed valuable, had they but been arranged with ordinary perspicuity, and represented in simple terms. But the writer's evil genius pursues him; the demand for exertion of thought is remorseless, and continuous throughout, and the statements of theoretical principle as short, scattered, and obscure, as they are bold. We question whether many readers may not be utterly appalled by the aspect of an "Analysis of Human Nature"—the first task proposed to them by our intellectual Eurystheus—to be accomplished in the space of six semi-pages, followed in the seventh by the "Development of the Individual Man," and applied in the eighth to a "General Classification of Individuals": and we infinitely marvel that our author should have thought it unnecessary to support or explain a division of the mental attributes on which the treatment of his entire subject afterwards depends, and whose terms are repeated in every following page to the very dazzling of eye and deadening of ear (a division, we regret to say, as illogical as it is purposeless), otherwise than by a laconic reference to the assumptions of Phrenology. [Pg 25]

"The Individual Man, or Man considered by himself as an unit in creation, is compounded of three

distinct primary elements.

> 1. Sense, or the animal frame, with its passions or affections;
>
> 2. Mind or Intellect;—of which the distinguishing faculties—rarely, if ever, equally balanced, and by their respective predominance determinative of his whole character, conduct, and views of life—are,
>
> > i. Imagination, the discerner of Beauty,—
> >
> > ii. Reason, the discerner of Truth,—
> >
> > the former animating and informing the world of Sense or Matter, the latter finding her proper home in the world of abstract or immaterial existences —the former receiving the impress of things Objectively, or *ab externo*, the latter impressing its own ideas on them Subjectively, or *ab interno*—the former a feminine or passive, the latter a masculine or active principle; and
> >
> > iii. Spirit—the Moral or Immortal principle, ruling through the Will, and breathed into Man by the Breath of God."—"Progression by Antagonism," pp. 2, 3.

24. On what authority does the writer assume that the moral is alone the *Immortal* principle—or the only part of the human nature bestowed by the breath of God? Are imagination, then, and reason perishable? Is the Body itself? Are not all alike immortal; and when distinction is to be made among them, is not the first great division between their active and passive immortality, between the supported body and supporting spirit; that spirit itself afterwards rather conveniently to be considered as either exercising intellectual function, or receiving moral influence, and, both in power and passiveness, deriving its energy and sensibility alike from the sustaining breath of God—than actually divided into intellectual and moral parts? For if the [Pg 26] distinction between us and the brute be the test of the nature of the living soul by that breath conferred, it is assuredly to be found as much in the imagination as in the moral principle. There is but one of the moral sentiments enumerated by Lord Lindsay, the sign of which is absent in the animal creation:—the enumeration is a bald one, but let it serve the turn—"Self-esteem and love of Approbation," eminent in horse and dog; "Firmness," not wanting either to ant or elephant; "Veneration," distinct as far as the superiority of man can by brutal intellect be comprehended; "Hope," developed as far as its objects can be made visible; and "Benevolence," or Love, the highest of all, the most assured of all—together with all the modifications of opposite feeling, rage, jealousy, habitual malice, even love of mischief and comprehension of jest:—the one only moral sentiment wanting being that of responsibility to an Invisible being, or conscientiousness. But where, among brutes, shall we find the slightest trace of the Imaginative faculty, or of that discernment of beauty which our author most inaccurately confounds with it, or of the discipline of memory, grasping this or that circumstance at will, or of the still nobler foresight of, and respect towards, things future, except only instinctive and compelled?

25. The fact is, that it is not in intellect added to the bodily sense, nor in moral sentiment superadded to the intellect, that the essential difference between brute and man consists: but in the elevation of all three to that point at which each becomes capable of communion with the Deity, and worthy therefore of eternal life;—the body more universal as an instrument—more exquisite in its sense—this last character carried out in the eye and ear to the perception of Beauty, in form, sound, and color—and herein distinctively raised above the brutal sense; intellect, as we have said, peculiarly separating and vast; the moral sentiments like in essence, but boundlessly expanded, as attached to an infinite object, and laboring in an infinite field: each part mortal in its shortcoming, immortal in the accomplishment of its perfection and purpose; the [Pg 27] opposition which we at first broadly expressed as between body and spirit, being more strictly between the natural and spiritual condition of the entire creature—body natural, sown in death, body spiritual, raised in incorruption: Intellect natural, leading to skepticism; intellect spiritual, expanding into faith: Passion natural, suffered from things spiritual; passion spiritual, centered on things unseen: and the strife or antagonism which is throughout the subject of Lord Lindsay's proof, is not, as he has stated it, between the moral, intellectual, and sensual elements, but between the upward and downward tendencies of all three—between the spirit of Man which goeth upward, and the spirit of the Beast which goeth downward.

26. We should not have been thus strict in our examination of these preliminary statements, if the question had been one of terms merely, or if the inaccuracy of thought had been confined to the Essay on Antagonism. If upon receiving a writer's terms of argument in the sense—however unusual or mistaken—which he chooses they should bear, we may without further error follow his course of thought, it is as unkind as unprofitable to lose the use of his result in quarrel with its algebraic expression; and if the reader will understand by Lord Lindsay's general term "Spirit" the susceptibility of right moral emotion, and the entire subjection of the Will to Reason; and receive his term "Sense" as not including the perception of Beauty either in sight or sound, but expressive of animal sensation only, he may follow without embarrassment to its close, his magnificently comprehensive statement of the forms of probation which the heart and faculties of man have undergone from the beginning of time. But it is far otherwise when the theory is to be applied, in all its pseudo-organization, to the separate departments of a particular art, and analogies the most subtle and speculative traced between the mental character and artistical choice or attainment of different races of men. Such analogies are always treacherous, for the [Pg 28]

amount of expression of individual mind which Art can convey is dependent on so many collateral circumstances, that it even militates against the truth of any particular system of interpretation that it should seem at first generally applicable, or its results consistent. The passages in which such interpretation has been attempted in the work before us, are too graceful to be regretted, nor is their brilliant suggestiveness otherwise than pleasing and profitable too, so long as it is received on its own grounds merely, and affects not with its uncertainty the very matter of its foundation. But all oscillation is communicable, and Lord Lindsay is much to be blamed for leaving it entirely to the reader to distinguish between the determination of his research and the activity of his fancy—between the authority of his interpretation and the aptness of his metaphor. He who would assert the true meaning of a symbolical art, in an age of strict inquiry and tardy imagination, ought rather to surrender something of the fullness which his own faith perceives, than expose the fabric of his vision, too finely woven, to the hard handling of the materialist; and we sincerely regret that discredit is likely to accrue to portions of our author's well-grounded statement of real significances, once of all men understood, because these are rashly blended with his own accidental perceptions of disputable analogy. He perpetually associates the present imaginative influence of Art with its ancient hieroglyphical teaching, and mingles fancies fit only for the framework of a sonnet, with the deciphered evidence which is to establish a serious point of history; and this the more frequently and grossly, in the endeavor to force every branch of his subject into illustration of the false division of the mental attributes which we have pointed out.

27. His theory is first clearly stated in the following passage:—

"Man is, in the strictest sense of the word, a progressive being, and with many periods of inaction and retrogression, has still held, upon the whole, a steady course towards the great end of his [Pg 29] existence, the re-union and re-harmonizing of the three elements of his being, dislocated by the Fall, in the service of his God. Each of these three elements, Sense, Intellect, and Spirit, has had its distinct development at three distant intervals, and in the personality of the three great branches of the human family. The race of Ham, giants in prowess if not in stature, cleared the earth of primeval forests and monsters, built cities, established vast empires, invented the mechanical arts, and gave the fullest expansion to the animal energies. After them, the Greeks, the elder line of Japhet, developed the intellectual faculties, Imagination and Reason, more especially the former, always the earlier to bud and blossom; poetry and fiction, history, philosophy, and science, alike look back to Greece as their birthplace; on the one hand they put a soul into Sense, peopling the world with their gay mythology—on the other they bequeathed to us, in Plato and Aristotle, the mighty patriarchs of human wisdom, the Darius and the Alexander of the two grand armies of thinking men whose antagonism has ever since divided the battlefield of the human intellect:—While, lastly, the race of Shem, the Jews, and the nations of Christendom, their *locum tenentes* as the Spiritual Israel, have, by God's blessing, been elevated in Spirit to as near and intimate communion with Deity as is possible in this stage of being. Now the peculiar interest and dignity of Art consists in her exact correspondence in her three departments with these three periods of development, and in the illustration she thus affords—more closely and markedly even than literature—to the all-important truth that men stand or fall according as they look up to the Ideal or not. For example, the Architecture of Egypt, her pyramids and temples, cumbrous and inelegant, but imposing from their vastness and their gloom, express the ideal of Sense or Matter—elevated and purified indeed, and nearly approaching the Intellectual, but Material still; we think of them as of natural scenery, in association with caves or mountains, or vast periods of time; their voice is as the voice of the sea, [Pg 30] or as that of 'many peoples,' shouting in unison:—But the Sculpture of Greece is the voice of Intellect and Thought, communing with itself in solitude, feeding on beauty and yearning after truth:—While the Painting of Christendom—(and we must remember that the glories of Christianity, in the full extent of the term, are yet to come)—is that of an immortal Spirit, conversing with its God. And as if to mark more forcibly the fact of continuous progress towards perfection, it is observable that although each of the three arts peculiarly reflects and characterizes one of the three epochs, each art of later growth has been preceded in its rise, progress, and decline, by an antecedent correspondent development of its elder sister or sisters—Sculpture, in Greece, by that of Architecture—Painting, in Europe, by that of Architecture and Sculpture. If Sculpture and Painting stand by the side of Architecture in Egypt, if Painting by that of Architecture and Sculpture in Greece, it is as younger sisters, girlish and unformed. In Europe alone are the three found linked together, in equal stature and perfection."—Vol. i, pp. xii.—xiv.

---

28. The reader must, we think, at once perceive the bold fallacy of this forced analogy—the comparison of the architecture of one nation with the sculpture of another, and the painting of a third, and the assumption as a proof of difference in moral character, of changes necessarily wrought, always in the same order, by the advance of mere mechanical experience. Architecture must precede sculpture, not because sense precedes intellect, but because men must build houses before they adorn chambers, and raise shrines before they inaugurate idols; and sculpture must precede painting, because men must learn forms in the solid before they can project them on a flat surface, and must learn to conceive designs in light and shade before they can conceive them in color, and must learn to treat subjects under positive color and in narrow groups, before they can treat them under atmospheric effect and in receding masses, and all these are mere [Pg 31]

necessities of practice, and have no more connection with any divisions of the human mind than the equally paramount necessities that men must gather stones before they build walls, or grind corn before they bake bread. And that each following nation should take up either the same art at an advanced stage, or an art altogether more difficult, is nothing but the necessary consequence of its subsequent elevation and civilization. Whatever nation had succeeded Egypt in power and knowledge, after having had communication with her, must necessarily have taken up art at the point where Egypt left it—in its turn delivering the gathered globe of heavenly snow to the youthful energy of the nation next at hand, with an exhausted "à vous le dé!" In order to arrive at any useful or true estimate of the respective rank of each people in the scale of mind, the architecture of each must be compared with the architecture of the other—sculpture with sculpture—line with line; and to have done this broadly and with a surface glance, would have set our author's theory on firmer foundation, to outward aspect, than it now rests upon. Had he compared the accumulation of the pyramid with the proportion of the peristyle, and then with the aspiration of the spire; had he set the colossal horror of the Sphinx beside the Phidian Minerva, and this beside the Pietà of M. Angelo; had he led us from beneath the iridescent capitals of Denderah, by the contested line of Apelles, to the hues and the heaven of Perugino or Bellini, we might have been tempted to assoilzie from all staying of question or stroke of partisan the invulnerable aspect of his ghostly theory; but, if, with even partial regard to some of the circumstances which physically limited the attainments of each race, we follow their individual career, we shall find the points of superiority less salient and the connection between heart and hand more embarrassed.

29. Yet let us not be misunderstood:—the great gulf between Christian and Pagan art we cannot bridge—nor do we wish to weaken one single sentence wherein its breadth or depth is asserted [Pg 32] by our author. The separation is not gradual, but instant and final—the difference not of degree, but of condition; it is the difference between the dead vapors rising from a stagnant pool, and the same vapors touched by a torch. But we would brace the weakness which Lord Lindsay has admitted in his own assertion of this great inflaming instant by confusing its fire with the mere phosphorescence of the marsh, and explaining as a successive development of the several human faculties, what was indeed the bearing of them all at once, over a threshold strewed with the fragments of their idols, into the temple of the One God.

We shall therefore, as fully as our space admits, examine the application of our author's theory to Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, successively, setting before the reader some of the more interesting passages which respect each art, while we at the same time mark with what degree of caution their conclusions are, in our judgment, to be received.

30. Accepting Lord Lindsay's first reference to Egypt, let us glance at a few of the physical accidents which influenced its types of architecture. The first of these is evidently the capability of carriage of large blocks of stone over perfectly level land. It was possible to roll to their destination along that uninterrupted plain, blocks which could neither by the Greek have been shipped in seaworthy vessels, nor carried over mountain-passes, nor raised except by extraordinary effort to the height of the rock-built fortress or seaward promontory. A small undulation of surface, or embarrassment of road, makes large difference in the portability of masses, and of consequence, in the breadth of the possible intercolumniation, the solidity of the column, and the whole scale of the building. Again, in a hill-country, architecture can be important only by position, in a level country only by bulk. Under the overwhelming mass of mountain-form it is vain to attempt the expression of majesty by size of edifice—the humblest architecture may become important by availing itself of the power of nature, but the mightiest [Pg 33] must be crushed in emulating it: the watch-towers of Amalfi are more majestic than the Superga of Piedmont; St. Peter's would look like a toy if built beneath the Alpine cliffs, which yet vouchsafe some communication of their own solemnity to the smallest chalet that glitters among their glades of pine. On the other hand, a small building is in a level country lost, and the impressiveness of bulk proportionably increased; hence the instinct of nations has always led them to the loftiest efforts where the masses of their labor might be seen looming at incalculable distance above the open line of the horizon—hence rose her four square mountains above the flat of Memphis, while the Greek pierced the recesses of Phigaleia with ranges of columns, or crowned the sea-cliffs of Sunium with a single pediment, bright, but not colossal.

31. The derivation of the Greek types of form from the forest-hut is too direct to escape observation; but sufficient attention has not been paid to the similar petrifaction, by other nations, of the rude forms and materials adopted in the haste of early settlement, or consecrated by the purity of rural life. The whole system of Swiss and German Gothic has thus been most characteristically affected by the structure of the intersecting timbers at the angles of the chalet. This was in some cases directly and without variation imitated in stone, as in the piers of the old bridge at Aarburg; and the practice obtained—partially in the German after-Gothic—universally, or nearly so, in Switzerland—of causing moldings which met at an angle to appear to interpenetrate each other, both being truncated immediately beyond the point of intersection. The painfulness of this ill-judged adaptation was conquered by association—the eye became familiarized to uncouth forms of tracery—and a stiffness and meagerness, as of cast-iron, resulted in the moldings of much of the ecclesiastical, and all the domestic Gothic of central Europe; the moldings of casements intersecting so as to form a small hollow square at the angles, and the practice being further carried out into all modes of decoration—pinnacles [Pg 34] interpenetrating crockets, as in a peculiarly bold design of archway at Besançon. The influence at Venice has been less immediate and more fortunate; it is with peculiar grace that the majestic form of the ducal palace reminds us of the years of fear and endurance when the exiles of the

Prima Venetia settled like home-less birds on the sea-sand, and that its quadrangular range of marble wall and painted chamber, raised upon multiplied columns of confused arcade,[6] presents but the exalted image of the first pile-supported hut that rose above the rippling of the lagoons.

32. In the chapter on the "Influence of Habit and Religion," of Mr. Hope's Historical Essay,[7] the reader will find further instances of the same feeling, and, bearing immediately on our present purpose, a clear account of the derivation of the Egyptian temple from the excavated cavern; but the point to which in all these cases we would direct especial attention, is, that the first perception of the great laws of architectural *proportion* is dependent for its acuteness less on the æsthetic instinct of each nation than on the mechanical conditions of stability and natural limitations of size in the primary type, whether hut, châlet, or tent.

As by the constant reminiscence of the natural proportions of his first forest-dwelling, the Greek would be restrained from all inordinate exaggeration of size—the Egyptian was from the first left without hint of any system of proportion, whether constructive, or of visible parts. The cavern—its level roof supported by amorphous piers—might be extended indefinitely into the interior of the hills, and its outer façade continued almost without term along their flanks—the solid mass of cliff above forming one gigantic entablature, poised upon props instead of columns. Hence the predisposition to attempt in the built temple the expression of infinite extent, and to heap the [Pg 35] ponderous architrave above the proportionless pier.

33. The less direct influences of external nature in the two countries were still more opposed. The sense of beauty, which among the Greek peninsulas was fostered by beating of sea and rush of river, by waving of forest and passing of cloud, by undulation of hill and poise of precipice, lay dormant beneath the shadowless sky and on the objectless plain of the Egyptians; no singing winds nor shaking leaves nor gliding shadows gave life to the line of their barren mountains—no Goddess of Beauty rose from the pacing of their silent and foamless Nile. One continual perception of stability, or changeless revolution, weighed upon their hearts—their life depended on no casual alternation of cold and heat—of drought and shower; their gift-Gods were the risen River and the eternal Sun, and the types of these were forever consecrated in the lotus decoration of the temple and the wedge of the enduring Pyramid. Add to these influences, purely physical, those dependent on the superstitions and political constitution; of the overflowing multitude of "populous No"; on their condition of prolonged peace—their simple habits of life—their respect for the dead—their separation by incommunicable privilege and inherited occupation—and it will be evident to the reader that Lord Lindsay's broad assertion of the expression of "the Ideal of Sense or Matter" by their universal style, must be received with severe modification, and is indeed thus far only true, that the mass of Life supported upon that fruitful plain could, when swayed by a despotic ruler in any given direction, accomplish by mere weight and number what to other nations had been impossible, and bestow a pre-eminence, owed to mere bulk and evidence of labor, upon public works which among the Greek republics could be rendered admirable only by the intelligence of their design.

34. Let us, for the present omitting consideration of the debasement of the Greek types which took place when their cycle of achievement had been fulfilled, pass to the germination of [Pg 36] Christian architecture, out of one of the least important elements of those fallen forms—one which, less than the least of all seeds, has risen into the fair branching stature under whose shadow we still dwell.

The principal characteristics of the new architecture, as exhibited in the Lombard cathedral, are well sketched by Lord Lindsay:—

"The three most prominent features, the eastern aspect of the sanctuary, the cruciform plan, and the soaring octagonal cupola, are borrowed from Byzantium—the latter in an improved form—the cross with a difference—the nave, or arm opposite the sanctuary, being lengthened so as to resemble the supposed shape of the actual instrument of suffering, and form what is now distinctively called the Latin Cross. The crypt and absis, or tribune, are retained from the Romish basilica, but the absis is generally pierced with windows, and the crypt is much loftier and more spacious, assuming almost the appearance of a subterranean church. The columns of the nave, no longer isolated, are clustered so as to form compound piers, massive and heavy—their capitals either a rude imitation of the Corinthian, or, especially in the earlier structures, sculptured with grotesque imagery. Triforia, or galleries for women, frequently line the nave and transepts. The roof is of stone, and vaulted. The narthex, or portico, for excluded penitents, common alike to the Greek and Roman churches, and in them continued along the whole façade of entrance, is dispensed with altogether in the oldest Lombard ones, and when afterwards resumed, in the eleventh century, was restricted to what we should now call Porches, over each door, consisting generally of little more than a canopy open at the sides, and supported by slender pillars, resting on sculptured monsters. Three doors admit from the western front; these are generally covered with sculpture, which frequently extends in belts across the façade, and even along the sides of the building. Above the central door is usually seen, in the later Lombard churches, a S. [Pg 37] Catherine's-wheel window. The roof slants at the sides, and ends in front sometimes in a single pediment, sometimes in three gables answering to three doors; while, in Lombardy at least, hundreds of slender pillars, of every form and device—those immediately adjacent to each other frequently interlaced in the true lover's knot, and all supporting round or trefoliate arches—run along, in continuous galleries, under the eaves, as if for the purpose of supporting the roof—run

up the pediment in front, are continued along the side-walls and round the eastern absis, and finally engirdle the cupola. Sometimes the western front is absolutely covered with these galleries, rising tier above tier. Though introduced merely for ornament, and therefore on a vicious principle, these fairy-like colonnades win very much on one's affections. I may add to these general features the occasional and rare one, seen to peculiar advantage in the cathedral of Cremona, of numerous slender towers, rising, like minarets, in every direction, in front and behind, and giving the east end, specially, a marked resemblance to the mosques of the Mahometans.

"The Baptistery and the Campanile, or bell-tower, are in theory invariable adjuncts to the Lombard cathedral, although detached from it. The Lombards seem to have built them with peculiar zest, and to have had a keen eye for the picturesque in grouping them with the churches they belong to.

"I need scarcely add that the round arch is exclusively employed in pure Lombard architecture.

"To translate this new style into its symbolical language is a pleasurable task. The three doors and three gable ends signify the Trinity, the Catherine-wheel window (if I mistake not) the Unity, as concentrated in Christ, the Light of the Church, from whose Greek monogram its shape was probably adopted. The monsters that support the pillars of the porch stand there as talismans to frighten away evil spirits. The crypt (as in older buildings) signifies the moral death of man, the cross, the atonement, the cupola heaven; and these three, taken in conjunction with the [Pg 38] lengthened nave, express, reconcile, and give their due and balanced prominence to the leading ideas of the Militant and Triumphant Church, respectively embodied in the architecture of Rome and Byzantium. Add to this, the symbolism of the Baptistery, and the Christian pilgrimage, from the Font to the Door of Heaven, is complete,"—Vol. ii., p. 8-11.

---

35. We have by-and-bye an equally comprehensive sketch of the essential characters of the Gothic cathedral; but this we need not quote, as it probably contains little that would be new to the reader. It is succeeded by the following interpretation of the spirit of the two styles:—

"Comparing, apart from enthusiasm, the two styles of Lombard and Pointed Architecture, they will strike you, I think, as the expression, respectively, of that alternate repose and activity which characterize the Christian life, exhibited in perfect harmony in Christ alone, who, on earth, spent His night in prayer to God, His day in doing good to man—in heaven, as we know by His own testimony, 'worketh hitherto,' conjointly with the Father—forever, at the same time, reposing on the infinity of His wisdom and of His power. Each, then, of these styles has its peculiar significance, each is perfect in its way. The Lombard Architecture, with its horizontal lines, its circular arches and expanding cupola, soothes and calms one; the Gothic, with its pointed arches, aspiring vaults and intricate tracery, rouses and excites—and why? Because the one symbolizes an infinity of Rest, the other of Action, in the adoration and service of God. And this consideration will enable us to advance a step farther:—The aim of the one style is definite, of the other indefinite; we look up to the dome of heaven and calmly acquiesce in the abstract idea of infinity; but we only realize the impossibility of conceiving it by the flight of imagination from star to star, from firmament to firmament. Even so Lombard Architecture attained perfection, expressed its [Pg 39] idea, accomplished its purpose—but Gothic never; the Ideal is unapproachable."—Vol. ii., p. 23.

---

36. This idea occurs not only in this passage:—it is carried out through the following chapters;—at page 38, the pointed arch associated with the cupola is spoken of as a "fop interrupting the meditations of a philosopher"; at page 65, the "earlier contemplative style of the Lombards" is spoken of; at page 114, Giottesque art is "the expression of that Activity of the Imagination which produced Gothic Architecture"; and, throughout, the analogy is prettily expressed, and ably supported; yet it is one of those against which we must warn the reader: it is altogether superficial, and extends not to the minds of those whose works it accidentally, and we think disputably, characterizes. The transition from Romanesque (we prefer using the generic term) to Gothic is natural and straightforward, in many points traceable to mechanical and local necessities (of which one, the dangerous weight of snow on flat roofs, has been candidly acknowledged by our author), and directed by the tendency, common to humanity in all ages, to push every newly-discovered means of delight to its most fantastic extreme, to exhibit every newly-felt power in its most admirable achievement, and to load with intrinsic decoration forms whose essential varieties have been exhausted. The arch, carelessly struck out by the Etruscan, forced by mechanical expediencies on the unwilling, uninventive Roman, remained unfelt by either. The noble form of the apparent Vault of Heaven—the line which every star follows in its journeying, extricated by the Christian architect from the fosse, the aqueduct, and the sudarium —grew into long succession of proportioned colonnade, and swelled into the white domes that glitter above the plain of Pisa, and fretted channels of Venice, like foam globes at rest.

37. But the spirit that was in these Aphrodites of the earth was not then, nor in them, to be restrained. Colonnade rose over colonnade; the pediment of the western front was lifted into a [Pg 40]

detached and scenic wall; story above story sprang the multiplied arches of the Campanile, and the eastern pyramidal fire-type, lifted from its foundation, was placed upon the summit. With the superimposed arcades of the principal front arose the necessity, instantly felt by their subtle architects, of a new proportion in the column; the lower wall inclosure, necessarily for the purposes of Christian worship continuous, and needing no peristyle, rendered the lower columns a mere facial decoration, whose proportions were evidently no more to be regulated by the laws hitherto observed in detached colonnades. The column expanded into the shaft, or into the huge pilaster rising unbanded from tier to tier; shaft and pilaster were associated in ordered groups, and the ideas of singleness and limited elevation once attached to them, swept away for ever; the stilted and variously centered arch existed already: the pure ogive followed—where first exhibited we stay not to inquire;—finally, and chief of all, the great mechanical discovery of the resistance of lateral pressure by the weight of the superimposed flanking pinnacle. Daring concentrations of pressure upon narrow piers were the immediate consequence, and the recognition of the buttress as a feature in itself agreeable and susceptible of decoration. The glorious art of painting on glass added its temptations; the darkness of northern climes both rendering the typical character of Light more deeply felt than in Italy, and necessitating its admission in larger masses; the Italian, even at the period of his most exquisite art in glass, retaining the small Lombard window, whose expediency will hardly be doubted by anyone who has experienced the transition from the scorching reverberation of the white-hot marble front, to the cool depth of shade within, and whose beauty will not be soon forgotten by those who have seen the narrow lights of the Pisan duomo announce by their redder burning, not like transparent casements, but like characters of fire searing the western wall, the decline of day upon Capraja.

38. Here, then, arose one great distinction between Northern and Transalpine Gothic, based, be it still observed, on mere necessities of climate. While the architect of Santa Maria Novella admitted to the frescoes of Ghirlandajo scarcely more of purple lancet light than had been shed by the morning sun through the veined alabasters of San Miniato; and looked to the rich blue of the quinquipartite vault above, as to the mosaic of the older concha, for conspicuous aid in the color decoration of the whole; the northern builder burst through the walls of his apse, poured over the eastern altar one unbroken blaze, and lifting his shafts like pines, and his walls like precipices, ministered to their miraculous stability by an infinite phalanx of sloped buttress and glittering pinnacle. The spire was the natural consummation. Internally, the sublimity of space in the cupola had been superseded by another kind of infinity in the prolongation of the nave; externally, the spherical surface had been proved, by the futility of Arabian efforts, incapable of decoration; its majesty depended on its simplicity, and its simplicity and leading forms were alike discordant with the rich rigidity of the body of the building. The campanile became, therefore, principal and central; its pyramidal termination was surrounded at the base by a group of pinnacles, and the spire itself, banded, or pierced into aërial tracery, crowned with its last enthusiastic effort the flamelike ascent of the perfect pile. [Pg 41]

39. The process of change was thus consistent throughout, though at intervals accelerated by the sudden discovery of resource, or invention of design; nor, had the steps been less traceable, do we think the suggestiveness of Repose, in the earlier style, or of Imaginative Activity in the latter, definite or trustworthy. We much question whether the Duomo of Verona, with its advanced guard of haughty gryphons—the mailed peers of Charlemagne frowning from its vaulted gate,—that vault itself ribbed with variegated marbles, and peopled by a crowd of monsters—-the Evangelical types not the least stern or strange; its stringcourses replaced by flat cut friezes, combats between gryphons and chain-clad paladins, stooping behind their triangular shields and fetching sweeping blows with two-handled swords; or that of Lucca—its fantastic columns clasped by writhing snakes and winged dragons, their marble scales spotted with inlaid serpentine, every available space alive with troops of dwarfish riders, with spur on heel and hawk in hood, sounding huge trumpets of chase, like those of the Swiss Urus-horn, and cheering herds of gaping dogs upon harts and hares, boars and wolves, every stone signed with its grisly beast—be one whit more soothing to the contemplative, or less exciting to the imaginative faculties, than the successive arch? and visionary shaft, and dreamy vault, and crisped foliage, and colorless stone, of our own fair abbeys, checkered with sunshine through the depth of ancient branches, or seen far off, like clouds in the valley, risen out of the pause of its river. [Pg 42]

40. And with respect to the more fitful and fantastic expression of the "Italian Gothic," our author is again to be blamed for his loose assumption, from the least reflecting of preceding writers, of this general term, as if the pointed buildings of Italy could in any wise be arranged in one class, or criticised in general terms. It is true that so far as the church interiors are concerned, the system is nearly universal, and always bad; its characteristic features being arches of enormous span, and banded foliage capitals divided into three fillets, rude in design, unsuggestive of any structural connection with the column, and looking consequently as if they might be slipped up or down, and had been only fastened in their places for the temporary purposes of a festa. But the exteriors of Italian pointed buildings display variations of principle and transitions of type quite as bold as either the advance from the Romanesque to the earliest of their forms, or the recoil from their latest to the cinque-cento.

41. The first and grandest style resulted merely from the application of the pointed arch to the frequent Romanesque window, the large semicircular arch divided by three small ones. Pointing both the superior and inferior arches, and adding to the grace of the larger one by striking another arch above it with a more removed center, and placing the voussoirs at an acute angle to the curve, we have the truly noble form of domestic Gothic, which—more or less enriched by moldings and adorned by penetration, more or less open of the space between the including and [Pg 43]

inferior arches—was immediately adopted in almost all the proudest palaces of North Italy—in the Brolettos of Como, Bergamo, Modena, and Siena—-in the palace of the Scaligers at Verona—of the Gambacorti at Pisa—of Paolo Guinigi at Lucca—besides inferior buildings innumerable:—nor is there any form of civil Gothic except the Venetian, which can be for a moment compared with it in simplicity or power. The latest is that most vicious and barbarous style of which the richest types are the lateral porches and upper pinnacles of the Cathedral of Como, and the whole of the Certosa of Pavia:—characterized by the imitative sculpture of large buildings on a small scale by way of pinnacles and niches; the substitution of candelabra for columns; and the covering of the surfaces with sculpture, often of classical subject, in high relief and daring perspective, and finished with delicacy which rather would demand preservation in a cabinet, and exhibition under a lens, than admit of exposure to the weather and removal from the eye, and which, therefore, architecturally considered, is worse than valueless, telling merely as unseemly roughness and rustication. But between these two extremes are varieties nearly countless—some of them both strange and bold, owing to the brilliant color and firm texture of the accessible materials, and the desire of the builders to crowd the greatest expression of value into the smallest space.

42. Thus it is in the promontories of serpentine which meet with their polished and gloomy green the sweep of the Gulf of Genoa, that we find the first cause of the peculiar spirit of the Tuscan and Ligurian Gothic—carried out in the Florentine duomo to the highest pitch of colored finish—adorned in the upper story of the Campanile by a transformation, peculiarly rich and exquisite, of the narrowly-pierced heading of window already described, into a veil of tracery—and aided [Pg 44] throughout by an accomplished precision of design in its moldings which we believe to be unique. In St. Petronio of Bologna, another and a barbarous type occurs; the hollow niche of Northern Gothic wrought out with diamond-shaped penetrations inclosed in squares; at Bergamo another, remarkable for the same square penetrations of its rich and daring foliation;—while at Monza and Carrara the square is adopted as the leading form of decoration on the west fronts, and a grotesque expression results—barbarous still;—which, however, in the latter duomo is associated with the arcade of slender niches—the translation of the Romanesque arcade into pointed work, which forms the second perfect order of Italian Gothic, entirely ecclesiastical, and well developed in the churches of Santa Caterina and Santa Maria della Spina at Pisa. The Veronese Gothic, distinguished by the extreme purity and severity of its ruling lines, owing to the distance of the centers of circles from which its cusps are struck, forms another, and yet a more noble school—and passes through the richer decoration of Padua and Vicenza to the full magnificence of the Venetian—distinguished by the introduction of the ogee curve without pruriency or effeminacy, and by the breadth and decision of moldings as severely determined in all examples of the style as those of any one of the Greek orders.

43. All these groups are separated by distinctions clear and bold—and many of them by that broadest of all distinctions which lies between disorganization and consistency—accumulation and adaptation, experiment and design;—yet to all one or two principles are common, which again divide the whole series from that of the Transalpine Gothic—and whose importance Lord Lindsay too lightly passes over in the general description, couched in somewhat ungraceful terms, "the vertical principle snubbed, as it were, by the horizontal." We have already alluded to the great school of color which arose in the immediate neighborhood of the Genoa serpentine. The accessibility of marble throughout North Italy similarly modified the aim of all design, by the [Pg 45] admission of undecorated surfaces. A blank space of freestone wall is always uninteresting, and sometimes offensive; there is no suggestion of preciousness in its dull color, and the stains and rents of time upon it are dark, coarse, and gloomy. But a marble surface receives in its age hues of continually increasing glow and grandeur; its stains are never foul nor dim; its undecomposing surface preserves a soft, fruit-like polish forever, slowly flushed by the maturing suns of centuries. Hence, while in the Northern Gothic the effort of the architect was always so to diffuse his ornament as to prevent the eye from permanently resting on the blank material, the Italian fearlessly left fallow large fields of uncarved surface, and concentrated the labor of the chisel on detached portions, in which the eye, being rather directed to them by their isolation than attracted by their salience, required perfect finish and pure design rather than force of shade or breadth of parts; and further, the intensity of Italian sunshine articulated by perfect gradations, and defined by sharp shadows at the edge, such inner anatomy and minuteness of outline as would have been utterly vain and valueless under the gloom of a northern sky; while again the fineness of material both admitted of, and allured to, the precision of execution which the climate was calculated to exhibit.

44. All these influences working together, and with them that of classical example and tradition, induced a delicacy of expression, a slightness of salience, a carefulness of touch, and refinement of invention, in all, even the rudest, Italian decorations, utterly unrecognized in those of Northern Gothic: which, however picturesquely adapted to their place and purpose, depend for most of their effect upon bold undercutting, accomplish little beyond graceful embarrassment of the eye, and cannot for an instant be separately regarded as works of accomplished art. Even the later and more imitative examples profess little more than picturesque vigor or ingenious intricacy. The oak leaves and acorns of the Beauvais moldings are superbly wreathed, but rigidly repeated [Pg 46] in a constant pattern; the stems are without character, and the acorns huge, straight, blunt, and unsightly. Round the southern door of the Florentine duomo runs a border of fig-leaves, each leaf modulated as if dew had just dried from off it—yet each alike, so as to secure the ordered symmetry of classical enrichment. But the Gothic fullness of thought is not therefore left without expression; at the edge of each leaf is an animal, first a cicala, then a lizard, then a bird, moth, serpent, snail—all different, and each wrought to the very life—panting—plumy—writhing—

glittering—full of breath and power. This harmony of classical restraint with exhaustless fancy, and of architectural propriety with imitative finish, is found throughout all the fine periods of the Italian Gothic, opposed to the wildness without invention, and exuberance without completion, of the North.

45. One other distinction we must notice, in the treatment of the Niche and its accessories. In Northern Gothic the niche frequently consists only of a bracket and canopy—the latter attached to the wall, independent of columnar support, pierced into openwork profusely rich, and often prolonged upwards into a crocketed pinnacle of indefinite height. But in the niche of pure Italian Gothic the classic principle of columnar support is never lost sight of. Even when its canopy is actually supported by the wall behind, it is apparently supported by two columns in front, perfectly formed with bases and capitals:—(the support of the Northern niche—if it have any—commonly takes the form of a buttress):—when it appears as a detached pinnacle, it is supported on four columns, the canopy trefoliated with very obtuse cusps, richly charged with foliage in the foliating space, but undecorated at the cusp points, and terminating above in a smooth pyramid, void of all ornament, and never very acute. This form, modified only by various grouping, is that of the noble sepulchral monuments of Verona, Lucca, Pisa, and Bologna; on a small scale it is at Venice associated with the cupola, in St. Mark's, as well as in Santa Fosca, and other minor churches. At Pisa, in the Spina chapel it occurs in its most exquisite form, the columns there being chased with checker patterns of great elegance. The windows of the Florence cathedral are all placed under a flat canopy of the same form, the columns being elongated, twisted, and enriched with mosaic patterns. The reader must at once perceive how vast is the importance of the difference in system with respect to this member; the whole of the rich, cavernous chiaroscuro of Northern Gothic being dependent on the accumulation of its niches. [Pg 47]

46. In passing to the examination of our Author's theory as tested by the progress of Sculpture, we are still struck by his utter want of attention to physical advantages or difficulties. He seems to have forgotten from the first, that the mountains of Syene are not the rocks of Paros. Neither the social habits nor intellectual powers of the Greek had so much share in inducing his advance in Sculpture beyond the Egyptian, as the difference between marble and syenite, porphyry or alabaster. Marble not only gave the power, it actually introduced the *thought* of representation or realization of form, as opposed to the mere suggestive abstraction: its translucency, tenderness of surface, and equality of tint tempting by utmost reward to the finish which of all substances it alone admits:—even ivory receiving not so delicately, as alabaster endures not so firmly, the lightest, latest touches of the completing chisel. The finer feeling of the hand cannot be put upon a hard rock like syenite—the blow must be firm and fearless—the traceless, tremulous difference between common and immortal sculpture cannot be set upon it—it cannot receive the enchanted strokes which, like Aaron's incense, separate the Living and the Dead. Were it otherwise, were finish possible, the variegated and lustrous surface would not exhibit it to the eye. The imagination itself is blunted by the resistance of the material, and by the necessity of absolute predetermination of all it would achieve. Retraction of all thought into determined and simple forms, such as might be fearlessly wrought, necessarily remained the characteristic of the school. The size of the edifice induced by other causes above stated, further limited the efforts of the sculptor. No colossal figure can be minutely finished; nor can it easily be conceived except under an imperfect form. It is a representation of Impossibility, and every effort at completion adds to the monstrous sense of Impossibility. Space would altogether fail us were we even to name one-half of the circumstances which influence the treatment of light and shade to be seen at vast distances upon surfaces of variegated or dusky color; or of the necessities by which, in masses of huge proportion, the mere laws of gravity, and the difficulty of clearing the substance out of vast hollows neither to be reached nor entered, bind the realization of absolute form. Yet all these Lord Lindsay ought rigidly to have examined, before venturing to determine anything respecting the mental relations of the Greek and Egyptian. But the fact of his overlooking these inevitablenesses of material is intimately connected with the worst flaw of his theory—his idea of a Perfection resultant from a balance of elements; a perfection which all experience has shown to be neither desirable nor possible. [Pg 48]

47. His account of Niccola Pisano, the founder of the first great school of middle age sculpture, is thus introduced:—

"Niccola's peculiar praise is this,—that, in practice at least, if not in theory, he first established the principle that the study of nature, corrected by the ideal of the antique, and animated by the spirit of Christianity, personal and social, can alone lead to excellence in art:—each of the three elements of human nature—Matter, Mind, and Spirit—being thus brought into union and co-operation in the service of God, in due relative harmony and subordination. I cannot over-estimate the importance of this principle; it was on this that, consciously or unconsciously, Niccola himself worked—it has been by following it that Donatello and Ghiberti, Leonardo, Raphael, and Michael Angelo have risen to glory. The Sienese school and the Florentine, minds contemplative and dramatic, are alike beholden to it for whatever success has attended their efforts. Like a treble-stranded rope, it drags after it the triumphal car of Christian Art. But if either of the strands be broken, if either of the three elements be pursued disjointedly from the other two, the result is, in each respective case, grossness, pedantry, or weakness:—the exclusive imitation of Nature produces a Caravaggio, a Rubens, a Rembrandt—that of the Antique, a Pellegrino di Tibaldo and a David; and though there be a native chastity and taste in religion, [Pg 49]

which restrains those who worship it too abstractedly from Intellect and Sense, from running into such extremes, it cannot at least supply that mechanical apparatus which will enable them to soar:—such devotees must be content to gaze up into heaven, like angels cropt of their wings."—Vol. ii., p. 102-3.

---

48. This is mere Bolognese eclecticism in other terms, and those terms incorrect. We are amazed to find a writer usually thoughtful, if not accurate, thus indolently adopting the worn-out falsities of our weakest writers on Taste. Does he—can he for an instant suppose that the ruffian Caravaggio, distinguished only by his preference of candlelight and black shadows for the illustration and re-enforcement of villainy, painted nature—mere nature—exclusive nature, more painfully or heartily than John Bellini or Raphael? Does he not see that whatever men imitate must be nature of some kind, material nature or spiritual, lovely or foul, brutal or human, but nature still? Does he himself see in mere, external, copyable nature, no more than Caravaggio saw, or in the Antique no more than has been comprehended by David? The fact is, that all artists are primarily divided into the two great groups of Imitators and Suggesters—their falling into one or other being dependent partly on disposition, and partly on the matter they have to subdue—(thus Perugino imitates line by line with penciled gold, the hair which Nino Pisano can only [Pg 50] suggest by a gilded marble mass, both having the will of representation alike). And each of these classes is again divided into the faithful and unfaithful imitators and suggesters; and that is a broad question of blind eye and hard heart, or seeing eye and serious heart, always co-existent; and then the faithful imitators and suggesters—artists proper, are appointed, each with his peculiar gift and affection, over the several orders and classes of things natural, to be by them illumined and set forth.

49. And that is God's doing and distributing; and none is rashly to be thought inferior to another, as if by his own fault; nor any of them stimulated to emulation, and changing places with others, although their allotted tasks be of different dignities, and their granted instruments of different keenness; for in none of them can there be a perfection or balance of all human attributes;—the great colorist becomes gradually insensible to the refinements of form which he at first intentionally omitted; the master of line is inevitably dead to many of the delights of color; the study of the true or ideal human form is inconsistent with the love of its most spiritual expressions. To one it is intrusted to record the historical realities of his age; in him the perception of character is subtle, and that of abstract beauty in measure diminished; to another, removed to the desert, or inclosed in the cloister, is given, not the noting of things transient, but the revealing of things eternal. Ghirlandajo and Titian painted men, but could not angels; Duccio and Angelico painted Saints, but could not senators. One is ordered to copy material form lovingly and slowly—his the fine finger and patient will: to another are sent visions and dreams upon the bed—his the hand fearful and swift, and impulse of passion irregular and wild. We may have occasion further to insist upon this great principle of the incommunicableness and singleness of all the highest powers; but we assert it here especially, in opposition to the idea, already so fatal to art, that either the aim of the antique may take place together with the [Pg 51] purposes, or its traditions become elevatory of the power, of Christian art; or that the glories of Giotto and the Sienese are in any wise traceable through Niccola Pisano to the venerable relics of the Campo Santo.

50. Lord Lindsay's statement, as far as it regards Niccola himself, is true.

"His improvement in Sculpture is attributable, in the first instance, to the study of an ancient sarcophagus, brought from Greece by the ships of Pisa in the eleventh century, and which, after having stood beside the door of the Duomo for many centuries as the tomb of the Countess Beatrice, mother of the celebrated Matilda, has been recently removed to the Campo Santo. The front is sculptured in bas-relief, in two compartments, the one representing Hippolytus rejecting the suit of Phædra, the other his departure for the chase:—such at least is the most plausible interpretation. The sculpture, if not super-excellent, is substantially good, and the benefit derived from it by Niccola is perceptible on the slightest examination of his works. Other remains of antiquity are preserved at Pisa, which he may have also studied, but this was the classic well from which he drew those waters which became wine when poured into the hallowing chalice of Christianity. I need scarcely add that the mere presence of such models would have availed little, had not nature endowed him with the quick eye and the intuitive apprehension of genius, together with a purity of taste which taught him how to select, how to modify and how to reinspire the germs of excellence thus presented to him."—Vol. ii., pp. 104, 105.

---

51. But whatever characters peculiarly classical were impressed upon Niccola by this study, died out gradually among his scholars; and in Orcagna the Byzantine manner finally triumphed, leading the way to the purely Christian sculpture of the school of Fiesole, in its turn swept away by the returning wave of classicalism. The sculpture of Orcagna, Giotto, and Mino da Fiesole, [Pg 52] would have been what it was, if Niccola had been buried in his sarcophagus; and this is sufficiently proved by Giotto's remaining entirely uninfluenced by the educated excellence of

Andrea Pisano, while he gradually bent the Pisan down to his own uncompromising simplicity. If, as Lord Lindsay asserts, "Giotto had learned from the works of Niccola the grand principle of Christian art," the sculptures of the Campanile of Florence would not now have stood forth in contrasted awfulness of simplicity, beside those of the south door of the Baptistery.

---

52. "Andrea's merit was indeed very great; his works, compared with those of Giovanni and Niccola Pisano, exhibit a progress in design, grace, composition and mechanical execution, at first sight unaccountable—a chasm yawns between them, deep and broad, over which the younger artist seems to have leapt at a bound,—the stream that sank into the earth at Pisa emerges a river at Florence. The solution of the mystery lies in the peculiar plasticity of Andrea's genius, and the ascendency acquired over it by Giotto, although a younger man, from the first moment they came into contact. Giotto had learnt from the works of Niccola the grand principle of Christian art, imperfectly apprehended by Giovanni and his other pupils, and by following up which he had in the natural course of things improved upon his prototype. He now repaid to Sculpture, in the person of Andrea, the sum of improvement in which he stood her debtor in that of Niccola:—so far, that is to say, as the treasury of Andrea's mind was capable of taking it in, for it would be an error to suppose that Andrea profited by Giotto in the same independent manner or degree that Giotto profited by Niccola. Andrea's was not a mind of strong individuality; he became completely Giottesque in thought and style, and as Giotto and he continued intimate friends through life, the impression never wore off:—most fortunate, indeed, that it was so, for the welfare of Sculpture in general, and for that of the buildings in decorating which the friends worked in concert. [Pg 53]

"Happily, Andrea's most important work, the bronze door of the Baptistery, still exists, and with every prospect of preservation. It is adorned with bas-reliefs from the history of S. John, with allegorical figures of virtues and heads of prophets, all most beautiful,—the historical compositions distinguished by simplicity and purity of feeling and design, the allegorical virtues perhaps still more expressive, and full of poetry in their symbols and attitudes; the whole series is executed with a delicacy of workmanship till then unknown in bronze, a precision yet softness of touch resembling that of a skillful performer on the pianoforte. Andrea was occupied upon it for nine years, from 1330 to 1339, and when finished, fixed in its place, and exposed to view, the public enthusiasm exceeded all bounds; the Signoria, with unexampled condescension, visited it in state, accompanied by the ambassadors of Naples and Sicily, and bestowed on the fortunate artist the honor and privilege of citizenship, seldom accorded to foreigners unless of lofty rank or exalted merit. The door remained in its original position—facing the Cathedral—till superseded in that post of honor by the 'Gate of Paradise,' cast by Ghiberti. It was then transferred to the Southern entrance of the Baptistery, facing the Misericordia."—Vol. ii., pp. 125-128.

---

53. A few pages farther on, the question of *Giotto's* claim to the authorship of the designs for this door is discussed at length, and, to the annihilation of the honor here attributed to *Andrea*, determined affirmatively, partly on the testimony of Vasari, partly on internal evidence—these designs being asserted by our author to be "thoroughly Giottesque." But, not to dwell on Lord Lindsay's inconsistency, in the ultimate decision his discrimination seems to us utterly at fault. Giotto has, we conceive, suffered quite enough in the abduction of the work in the Campo Santo, which was worthy of him, without being made answerable for these designs of Andrea. That he gave a rough draft of many of them, is conceivable; but if even he did this, Andrea has added cadenzas of drapery, and other scholarly commonplace, as a bad singer puts ornament into an air. It was not of such teaching that came the "Jabal" of Giotto. Sitting at his tent door, he withdraws its rude drapery with one hand: three sheep only are feeding before him, the watchdog sitting beside them; but he looks forth like a Destiny, beholding the ruined cities of the earth become places, like the valley of Achor, for herds to lie down in. [Pg 54]

54. We have not space to follow our author through his very interesting investigation of the comparatively unknown schools of Teutonic sculpture. With one beautiful anecdote, breathing the whole spirit of the time—the mingling of deep piety with the modest, manly pride of art—our readers must be indulged:—

"The Florentine Ghiberti gives a most interesting account of a sculptor of Cologne in the employment of Charles of Anjou, King of Naples, whose skill he parallels with that of the statuaries of ancient Greece; his heads, he says, and his design of the naked, were 'maravigliosamente bene,' his style full of grace, his sole defect the somewhat curtailed stature of his figures. He was no less excellent in minuter works as a goldsmith, and in that capacity had worked for his patron a 'tavola d'oro,' a tablet or screen (apparently) of gold, with his utmost care and skill; it was a work of exceeding beauty—but in some political exigency his patron wanted money, and it was broken up before his eyes. Seeing his labor vain and the pride of his heart rebuked, he threw himself on the ground, and uplifting his eyes and hands to heaven, prayed in contrition, 'Lord God Almighty, Governor and disposer of heaven and earth! Thou hast opened mine eyes that I follow from henceforth none other than Thee—Have mercy upon me!'—He

forthwith gave all he had to the poor for the love of God, and went up into a mountain where there was a great hermitage, and dwelt there the rest of his days in penitence and sanctity, [Pg 55] surviving down to the days of Pope Martin, who reigned from 1281 to 1284. 'Certain youths,' adds Ghiberti, 'who sought to be skilled in statuary, told me how he was versed both in painting and sculpture, and how he had painted in the Romitorio where he lived; he was an excellent draughtsman and very courteous. When the youths who wished to improve visited him, he received them with much humility, giving them learned instructions, showing them various proportions, and drawing for them many examples, for he was most accomplished in his art. And thus,' he concludes, 'with great humility, he ended his days in that hermitage.'"—Vol. iii., pp. 257-259.

---

55. We could have wished that Lord Lindsay had further insisted on what will be found to be a characteristic of all the truly Christian or spiritual, as opposed to classical, schools of sculpture—the scenic or painter-like management of effect. The marble is not cut into the actual form of the thing imaged, but oftener into a perspective suggestion of it—the bas-reliefs sometimes almost entirely under cut, and sharpedged, so as to come clear off a dark ground of shadow; even heads the size of life being in this way rather shadowed out than carved out, as the Madonna of Benedetto de Majano in Santa Maria Novella, one of the cheeks being advanced half an inch out of its proper place—and often the most audacious violations of proportion admitted, as in the limbs of Michael Angelo's sitting Madonna in the Uffizii; all artifices, also, of deep and sharp cutting being allowed, to gain the shadowy and spectral expressions about the brow and lip which the mere actualities of form could not have conveyed;—the sculptor never following a material model, but feeling after the most momentary and subtle aspects of the countenance—striking these out sometimes suddenly, by rude chiseling, and stopping the instant they are attained—never risking the loss of thought by the finishing of flesh surface. The heads of the Medici sacristy we believe to have been thus left unfinished, as having already the utmost [Pg 56] expression which the marble could receive, and incapable of anything but loss from further touches. So with Mino da Fiesole and Jacopo della Quercia, the workmanship is often hard, sketchy, and angular, having its full effect only at a little distance; but at that distance the statue becomes ineffably alive, even to startling, bearing an aspect of change and uncertainty, as if it were about to vanish, and withal having a light, and sweetness, and incense of passion upon it that silences the looker-on, half in delight, half in expectation. This daring stroke—this transfiguring tenderness—may be shown to characterize all truly Christian sculpture, as compared with the antique, or the pseudo-classical of subsequent periods. We agree with Lord Lindsay in thinking the Psyche of Naples the nearest approach to the Christian ideal of all ancient efforts; but even in this the approximation is more accidental than real—a fair type of feature, further exalted by the mode in which the imagination supplies the lost upper folds of the hair. The fountain of life and emotion remains sealed; nor was the opening of that fountain due to any study of the far less pure examples accessible by the Pisan sculptors. The sound of its waters had been heard long before in the aisles of the Lombard; nor was it by Ghiberti, still less by Donatello, that the bed of that Jordan was dug deepest, but by Michael Angelo (the last heir of the Byzantine traditions descending through Orcagna), opening thenceforward through thickets darker and more dark, and with waves ever more soundless and slow, into the Dead Sea wherein its waters have been stayed.

56. It is time for us to pass to the subject which occupies the largest portion of the work—-the History

---

"of Painting, as developed contemporaneously with her sister, Sculpture, and (like her) under the shadow of the Gothic Architecture, by Giotto and his successors throughout Italy, by Mino, Duccio, and their scholars at Siena, by Orcagna and Fra Angelico da Fiesole at Florence, and by the obscure but interesting primitive school of Bologna, during the fourteenth and the early years [Pg 57] of the fifteenth century. The period is one, comparatively speaking, of repose and tranquillity,—the storm sleeps and the winds are still, the currents set in one direction, and we may sail from isle to isle over a sunny sea, dallying with the time, secure of a cloudless sky and of the greetings of innocence and love wheresoever the breeze may waft us. There is in truth a holy purity, an innocent naïveté, a childlike grace and simplicity, a freshness, a fearlessness, an utter freedom from affectation, a yearning after all things truthful, lovely and of good report, in the productions of this early time, which invest them with a charm peculiar in its kind, and which few even of the most perfect works of the maturer era can boast of,—and hence the risk and danger of becoming too passionately attached to them, of losing the power of discrimination, of admiring and imitating their defects as well as their beauties, of running into affectation in seeking after simplicity and into exaggeration in our efforts to be in earnest,—in a word, of forgetting that in art as in human nature, it is the balance, harmony, and co-equal development of Sense, Intellect, and Spirit, which constitute perfection."—Vol. ii., pp. 161-163.

---

57. To the thousand islands, or how many soever they may be, we shall allow ourselves to be wafted with all willingness, but not in Lord Lindsay's three-masted vessel, with its balancing

topmasts of Sense, Intellect, and Spirit. We are utterly tired of the triplicity; and we are mistaken if its application here be not as inconsistent as it is arbitrary. Turning back to the introduction, which we have quoted, the reader will find that while Architecture is there taken for the exponent of Sense, Painting is chosen as the peculiar expression of Spirit. "The painting of Christendom is that of an immortal spirit conversing with its God." But in a note to the first chapter of the second volume, he will be surprised to find painting become a "twin of intellect," and architecture suddenly advanced from a type of sense to a type of spirit:— [Pg 58]

"Sculpture and Painting, twins of Intellect, rejoice and breathe freest in the pure ether of Architecture, or Spirit, like Castor or Pollux under the breezy heaven of their father Jupiter."—Vol. ii., p. 14.

---

58. Prepared by this passage to consider painting either as spiritual or intellectual, his patience may pardonably give way on finding in the sixth letter—(what he might, however, have conjectured from the heading of the third period in the chart of the schools)—that the peculiar prerogative of painting—color, is to be considered as a *sensual* element, and the exponent of sense, in accordance with a new analogy, here for the first time proposed, between spirit, intellect, and sense, and expression, form, and color. Lord Lindsay is peculiarly unfortunate in his adoptions from previous writers. He has taken this division of art from Fuseli and Reynolds, without perceiving that in those writers it is one of convenience merely, and, even so considered, is as injudicious as illogical. In what does expression consist but in form and color? It is one of the ends which these accomplish, and may be itself an attribute of both. Color may be expressive or inexpressive, like music; form expressive or inexpressive, like words; but expression by itself cannot exist; so that to divide painting into color, form, and expression, is precisely as rational as to divide music into notes, words, and expression. Color may be pensive, severe, exciting, appalling, gay, glowing, or sensual; in all these modes it is expressive: form may be tender or abrupt, mean or majestic, attractive or overwhelming, discomfortable or delightsome; in all these modes, and many more, it is expressive; and if Lord Lindsay's analogy be in anywise applicable to either form or color, we should have color sensual (Correggio), color intellectual (Tintoret), color spiritual (Angelico)—form sensual (French sculpture), form intellectual (Phidias), form spiritual [Pg 59] (Michael Angelo). Above all, our author should have been careful how he attached the epithet "sensual" to the element of color—not only on account of the glaring inconsistency with his own previous assertion of the spirituality of painting—(since it is certainly not merely by being flat instead of solid, representative instead of actual, that painting is—if it be—more spiritual than sculpture); but also, because this idea of sensuality in color has had much share in rendering abortive the efforts of the modern German religious painters, inducing their abandonment of its consecrating, kindling, purifying power.

59. Lord Lindsay says, in a passage which we shall presently quote, that the most sensual as well as the most religious painters have always loved the brightest colors. Not so; no painters ever were more sensual than the modern French, who are alike insensible to, and incapable of color—depending altogether on morbid gradation, waxy smoothness of surface, and lusciousness of line, the real elements of sensuality wherever it eminently exists. So far from good color being sensual, it saves, glorifies, and guards from all evil: it is with Titian, as with all great masters of flesh-painting, the redeeming and protecting element; and with the religious painters, it is a baptism with fire, an under-song of holy Litanies. Is it in sensuality that the fair flush opens upon the cheek of Francia's chanting angel,[8] until we think it comes, and fades, and returns, as his voice and his harping are louder or lower—or that the silver light rises upon wave after wave of his lifted hair; or that the burning of the blood is seen on the unclouded brows of the three angels of the Campo Santo, and of folded fire within their wings; or that the hollow blue of the highest heaven mantles the Madonna with its depth, and falls around her like raiment, as she sits beneath the throne of the Sistine Judgment? Is it in sensuality that the visible world about us is girded with an eternal iris?—is there pollution in the rose and the gentian more than in the rocks that are trusted to their robing?—is the sea-blue a stain upon its water, or the scarlet spring of [Pg 60] day upon the mountains less holy than their snow? As well call the sun itself, or the firmament, sensual, as the color which flows from the one, and fills the other.

60. We deprecate this rash assumption, however, with more regard to the forthcoming portion of the history, in which we fear it may seriously diminish the value of the author's account of the school of Venice, than to the part at present executed. This is written in a spirit rather sympathetic than critical, and rightly illustrates the feeling of early art, even where it mistakes, or leaves unanalyzed, the technical modes of its expression. It will be better, perhaps, that we confine our attention to the accounts of the three men who may be considered as sufficient representatives not only of the art of their time, but of all subsequent; Giotto, the first of the great line of dramatists, terminating in Raffaelle; Orcagna, the head of that branch of the contemplative school which leans towards sadness or terror, terminating in Michael Angelo; and Angelico, the head of the contemplatives concerned with the heavenly ideal, around whom may be grouped first Duccio, and the Sienese, who preceded him, and afterwards Pinturiccio, Perugino, and Leonardo da Vinci.

61. The fourth letter opens in the fields of Vespignano. The circumstances of the finding of Giotto

by Cimabue are well known. Vasari's anecdote of the fly painted upon the nose of one of Cimabue's figures might, we think, have been spared, or at least not instanced as proof of study from nature "nobly rewarded." Giotto certainly never either attempted or accomplished any small imitation of this kind; the story has all the look of one of the common inventions of the ignorant for the ignorant; nor, if true, would Cimabue's careless mistake of a black spot in the shape of a fly for one of the living annoyances of which there might probably be some dozen or more upon his panel at any moment, have been a matter of much credit to his young pupil. The first point of any real interest is Lord Lindsay's confirmation of Förster's attribution of the Campo Santo Life [Pg 61] of Job, till lately esteemed Giotto's, to Francesco da Volterra. Förster's evidence appears incontrovertible; yet there is curious internal evidence, we think, in favor of the designs being Giotto's, if not the execution. The landscape is especially Giottesque, the trees being all boldly massed first with dark brown, within which the leaves are painted separately in light: this very archaic treatment had been much softened and modified by the Giotteschi before the date assigned to these frescoes by Förster. But, what is more singular, the figure of Eliphaz, or the foremost of the three friends, occurs in a tempera picture of Giotto's in the Academy of Florence, the Ascension, among the apostles on the left; while the face of another of the three friends is again repeated in the "Christ disputing with the Doctors" of the small tempera series, also in the Academy; the figure of Satan shows much analogy to that of the Envy of the Arena chapel; and many other portions of the design are evidently either sketches of this very subject by Giotto himself, or dexterous compilations from his works by a loving pupil. Lord Lindsay has not done justice to the upper division—the Satan before God: it is one of the very finest thoughts ever realized by the Giotteschi. The serenity of power in the principal figure is very noble; no expression of wrath, or even of scorn, in the look which commands the evil spirit. The position of the latter, and countenance, are less grotesque and more demoniacal than is usual in paintings of the time; the triple wings expanded—the arms crossed over the breast, and holding each other above the elbow, the claws fixing in the flesh; a serpent buries its head in a cleft in the bosom, and the right hoof is lifted, as if to stamp.

62. We should have been glad if Lord Lindsay had given us some clearer idea of the internal evidence on which he founds his determination of the order or date of the works of Giotto. When no trustworthy records exist, we conceive this task to be of singular difficulty, owing to the differences of execution universally existing between the large and small works of the painter. [Pg 62] The portrait of Dante in the chapel of the Podestá is proved by Dante's exile, in 1302, to have been painted before Giotto was six and twenty; yet we remember no head in any of his works which can be compared with it for carefulness of finish and truth of drawing; the crudeness of the material vanquished by dexterous hatching; the color not only pure, but deep—a rare virtue with Giotto; the eye soft and thoughtful, the brow nobly modeled. In the fresco of the Death of the Baptist, in Santa Croce, which we agree with Lord Lindsay in attributing to the same early period, the face of the musician is drawn with great refinement, and considerable power of rounding surfaces—(though in the drapery may be remarked a very singular piece of archaic treatment: it is warm white, with yellow stripes; the dress itself falls in deep folds, but the striped pattern does not follow the foldings—it is drawn across, as if with a straight ruler).

63. But passing from these frescoes, which are nearly the size of life, to those of the Arena chapel at Padua, erected in 1303, decorated in 1306, which are much smaller, we find the execution proportionably less dexterous. Of this famous chapel Lord Lindsay says—

"nowhere (save in the Duomo of Orvieto) is the legendary history of the Virgin told with such minuteness.

"The heart must indeed be cold to the charms of youthful art that can enter this little sanctuary without a glow of delight. From the roof, with its sky of ultramarine, powdered with stars and interspersed with medallions containing the heads of our Saviour, the Virgin and the Apostles, to the mock paneling of the nave, below the windows, the whole is completely covered with frescoes, in excellent preservation, and all more or less painted by Giotto's own hand, except six in the tribune, which however have apparently been executed from his cartoons....

"These frescoes form a most important document in the history of Giotto's mind, exhibiting all his peculiar merits, although in a state as yet of immature development. They are full of fancy and [Pg 63] invention; the composition is almost always admirable, although sometimes too studiously symmetrical; the figures are few and characteristic, each speaking for itself, the impersonation of a distinct idea, and most dramatically grouped and contrasted; the attitudes are appropriate, easy, and natural; the action and gesticulation singularly vivid; the expression is excellent, except when impassioned grief induces caricature:—devoted to the study of Nature as he is, Giotto had not yet learnt that it is suppressed feeling which affects one most. The head of our Saviour is beautiful throughout—that of the Virgin not so good—she is modest, but not very graceful or celestial:—it was long before he succeeded in his Virgins—they are much too matronly: among the accessory figures, graceful female forms occasionally appear, foreshadowing those of his later works at Florence and Naples, yet they are always clumsy about the waist and bust, and most of them are under-jawed, which certainly detracts from the sweetness of the female countenance. His delineation of the naked is excellent, as compared with the works of his predecessors, but far unequal to what he attained in his later years,—the drapery, on the contrary, is noble, majestic, and statuesque; the coloring is still pale and weak,—it was long ere he improved in this point; the landscape displays little or no amendment upon the Byzantine; the

architecture, that of the fourteenth century, is to the figures that people it in the proportion of dolls' houses to the children that play with them,—an absurdity long unthinkingly acquiesced in, from its occurrence in the classic bas-reliefs from which it had been traditionally derived;—and, finally, the lineal perspective is very fair, and in three of the compositions an excellent effect is produced by the introduction of the same background with varied *dramatis personæ*, reminding one of Retszch's illustrations of Faust. The animals too are always excellent, full of spirit and character."—Vol. ii., pp. 183-199. [Pg 64]

64. This last characteristic is especially to be noticed. It is a touching proof of the influence of early years. Giotto was only ten years old when he was taken from following the sheep. For the rest, as we have above stated, the manipulation of these frescoes is just as far inferior to that of the Podestà chapel as their dimensions are less; and we think it will be found generally that the smaller the work the more rude is Giotto's hand. In this respect he seems to differ from all other masters.

"It is not difficult, gazing on these silent but eloquent walls, to repeople them with the group once, as we know-five hundred years ago—assembled within them,—Giotto intent upon his work, his wife Ciuta admiring his progress, and Dante, with abstracted eye, alternately conversing with his friend and watching the gambols of the children playing on the grass before the door. It is generally affirmed that Dante, during this visit, inspired Giotto with his taste for allegory, and that the Virtues and Vices of the Arena were the first fruits of their intercourse; it is possible, certainly, but I doubt it,—allegory was the universal language of the time, as we have seen in the history of the Pisan school."—Vol. ii., pp. 199, 200.

It ought to have been further mentioned, that the representation of the Virtues and Vices under these Giottesque figures continued long afterwards. We find them copied, for instance, on the capitals of the Ducal Palace at Venice, with an amusing variation on the "Stultitia," who has neither Indian dress nor club, as with Giotto, but is to the Venetians sufficiently distinguished by riding a horse.

65. The notice of the frescoes at Assisi consists of little more than an enumeration of the subjects, accompanied by agreeable translations of the traditions respecting St. Francis, embodied by St. Buonaventura. Nor have we space to follow the author through his examination of Giotto's works [Pg 65] at Naples and Avignon. The following account of the erection of the Campanile of Florence is too interesting to be omitted:—

"Giotto was chosen to erect it, on the ground avowedly of the universality of his talents, with the appointment of Capomaestro, or chief architect of the Cathedral and its dependencies, a yearly salary of one hundred gold florins, and the privilege of citizenship, and under the special understanding that he was not to quit Florence. His designs being approved of, the republic passed a decree in the spring of 1334, that 'the Campanile should be built so as to exceed in magnificence, height and excellence of workmanship whatever in that kind had been achieved of old by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their utmost power and greatness—"della loro più florida potenza."' The first stone was laid accordingly, with great pomp, on the 18th of July following, and the work prosecuted with such vigor and with such costliness and utter disregard of expense, that a citizen of Verona, looking on, exclaimed that the republic was taxing her strength too far,—that the united resources of two great monarchs would be insufficient to complete it; a *criticism which the Signoria resented by confining him for two months in prison*, and afterwards conducting him through the public treasury, to teach him that the Florentines could build their whole city of marble, and not one poor steeple only, were they so inclined.

"Giotto made a model of his proposed structure, on which every stone was marked, and the successive courses painted red and white, according to his design, so as to match with the Cathedral and Baptistery; this model was of course adhered to strictly during the short remnant of his life, and the work was completed in strict conformity to it after his death, with the exception of the spire, which, the taste having changed, was never added. He had intended it to be one hundred *braccia*, or one hundred and fifty feet high."—Vol. ii., pp. 247-249. [Pg 66]

The deficiency of the spire Lord Lindsay does not regret:—

"Let the reader stand before the Campanile, and ask himself whether, with Michael Scott at his elbow, or Aladdin's lamp in his hand, he would supply the deficiency? I think not."—p. 38.

We have more faith in Giotto than our author—and we will reply to his question by two others—

whether, looking down upon Florence from the hill of San Miniato, his eye rested oftener and more affectionately on the Campanile of Giotto, or on the simple tower and spire of Santa Maria Novella?—and whether, in the backgrounds of Perugino, he would willingly substitute for the church spires invariably introduced, flat-topped campaniles like the unfinished tower of Florence?

66. Giotto sculptured with his own hand two of the bas-reliefs of this campanile, and probably might have executed them all. But the purposes of his life had been accomplished; he died at Florence on the 8th of January, 1337. The concluding notice of his character and achievement is highly valuable.

---

67. "Painting indeed stands indebted to Giotto beyond any of her children. His history is a most instructive one. Endowed with the liveliest fancy, and with that facility which so often betrays genius, and achieving in youth a reputation which the age of Methuselah could not have added to, he had yet the discernment to perceive how much still remained to be done, and the resolution to bind himself (as it were) to Nature's chariot wheel, confident that she would erelong emancipate and own him as her son. Calm and unimpassioned, he seems to have commenced his career with a deliberate survey of the difficulties he had to encounter and of his resources for the conflict, and then to have worked upon a system steadily and perseveringly, prophetically sure of victory. His life was indeed one continued triumph,—and no conqueror ever mounted to the [Pg 67] Capitol with a step more equal and sedate. We find him, at first, slowly and cautiously endeavoring to infuse new life into the traditional compositions, by substituting the heads, attitudes, and drapery of the actual world for the spectral forms and conventional types of the mosaics and the Byzantine painters,—idealizing them when the personages represented were of higher mark and dignity, but in none ever outstepping truth. Advancing in his career, we find year by year the fruits of continuous unwearied study in a consistent and equable contemporary improvement in all the various minuter though most important departments of his art, in his design, his drapery, his coloring, in the dignity and expression of his men and in the grace of his women—asperities softened down, little graces unexpectedly born and playing about his path, as if to make amends for the deformity of his actual offspring—touches, daily more numerous, of that nature which makes the world akin—and ever and always a keen yet cheerful sympathy with life, a playful humor mingling with his graver lessons, which affects us the more as coming from one who, knowing himself an object personally of disgust and ridicule, could yet satirize with a smile.

"Finally, throughout his works, we are conscious of an earnest, a lofty, a religious aim and purpose, as of one who felt himself a pioneer of civilization in a newly-discovered world, the Adam of a new Eden freshly planted in the earth's wilderness, a mouthpiece of God and a preacher of righteousness to mankind.—And here we must establish a distinction very necessary to be recognized before we can duly appreciate the relative merits of the elder painters in this, the most important point in which we can view their character. Giotto's genius, however universal, was still (as I have repeatedly observed) Dramatic rather than Contemplative,—a tendency in which his scholars and successors almost to a man resembled him. Now, just as in actual life—where, with a few rare exceptions, all men rank under two great categories according as Imagination or Reason predominates in their intellectual character—two individuals may be [Pg 68] equally impressed with the truths of Christianity and yet differ essentially in its outward manifestation, the one dwelling in action, the other in contemplation, the one in strife, the other in peace, the one (so to speak) in hate, the other in love, the one struggling with devils, the other communing with angels, yet each serving as a channel of God's mercies to man, each (we may believe) offering Him service equally acceptable in His sight—even so shall we find it in art and with artists; few in whom the Dramatic power predominates will be found to excel in the expression of religious emotions of the more abstract and enthusiastic cast, even although men of indisputably pure and holy character themselves; and *vice versâ*, few of the more Contemplative but will feel bewildered and at fault, if they descend from their starry region of light into the grosser atmosphere that girdles in this world of action. The works of artists are their minds' mirror; they cannot express what they do not feel; each class dwells apart and seeks its ideal in a distinct sphere of emotion,—their object is different, and their success proportioned to the exclusiveness with which they pursue that object. A few indeed there have been in all ages, monarchs of the mind and types of our Saviour, who have lived a twofold existence of action and contemplation in art, in song, in politics, and in daily life; of these have been Abraham, Moses, David, and Cyrus in the elder world—Alfred, Charlemagne, Dante, and perhaps Shakespeare, in the new,—and in art, Niccola Pisano, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo. But Giotto, however great as the patriarch of his peculiar tribe, was not of these few, and we ought not therefore to misapprehend him, or be disappointed at finding his Madonnas (for instance) less exquisitely spiritual than the Sienese, or those of Fra Angelico and some later painters, who seem to have dipped their pencils in the rainbow that circles the throne of God,—they are pure and modest, but that is all; on the other hand, where his Contemplative rivals lack utterance, he speaks most feelingly to the heart in his own peculiar language of Dramatic composition—he glances over [Pg 69] creation with the eye of love, all the charities of life follow in his steps, and his thoughts are as the breath of the morning. A man of the world, living in it and loving it, yet with a heart that it could not spoil nor wean from its allegiance to God—'non meno buon Cristiano che eccellente pittore,' as Vasari emphatically describes him—his religion breathes of the free air of heaven rather than the cloister, neither enthusiastic nor superstitious, but practical, manly and healthy—

and this, although the picturesque biographer of S. Francis!"—Vol. ii., pp. 260-264.

---

68. This is all as admirably felt as expressed, and to those acquainted with and accustomed to love the works of the painter, it leaves nothing to be asked for; but we must again remind Lord Lindsay, that he has throughout left the *artistical* orbit of Giotto undefined, and the offense of his manner unremoved, as far as regards the uninitiated spectator. We question whether from all that he has written, the untraveled reader could form any distinct idea of the painter's peculiar merits or methods, or that the estimate, if formed, might not afterwards expose him to severe disappointment. It ought especially to have been stated, that the Giottesque system of chiaroscuro is one of pure, quiet, pervading daylight. No *cast* shadows ever occur, and this remains a marked characteristic of all the works of the Giotteschi. Of course, all subtleties of reflected light or raised color are unthought of. Shade is only given as far as it is necessary to the articulation of simple forms, nor even then is it rightly adapted to the color of the light; the folds of the draperies are well drawn, but the entire rounding of them always missed—the general forms appearing flat, and terminated by equal and severe outlines, while the masses of ungradated color often seem to divide the figure into fragments. Thus, the Madonna in the small tempera series of the Academy of Florence, is usually divided exactly in half by the dark mass of her blue robe, falling in a vertical line. In consequence of this defect, the grace of Giotto's [Pg 70] composition can hardly be felt until it is put into outline. The colors themselves are of good quality, never glaring, always gladdening, the reds inclining to orange more than purple, yellow frequent, the prevalent tone of the color groups warm; the sky always blue, the whole effect somewhat resembling that of the Northern painted glass of the same century—and chastened in the same manner by noble neutral tints or greens; yet all somewhat unconsidered and unsystematic, painful discords not unfrequent. The material and ornaments of dress are never particularized, no imitations of texture or jewelry, yet shot stuffs of two colors frequent. The drawing often powerful, though of course uninformed; the mastery of mental expression by bodily motion, and of bodily motion, past and future, by a single gesture, altogether unrivaled even by Raffaelle;—it is obtained chiefly by throwing the emphasis always on the right line, admitting straight lines of great severity, and never dividing the main drift of the drapery by inferior folds; neither are accidents allowed to interfere—the garments fall heavily and in marked angles—nor are they affected by the wind, except under circumstances of very rapid motion. The ideal of the face is often solemn—seldom beautiful; occasionally ludicrous failures occur: in the smallest designs the face is very often a dead letter, or worse: and in all, Giotto's handling is generally to be distinguished from that of any of his followers by its bluntness. In the school work we find sweeter types of feature, greater finish, stricter care, more delicate outline, fewer errors, but on the whole less life.

69. Finally, and on this we would especially insist, Giotto's genius is not to be considered as struggling with difficulty and repressed by ignorance, but as appointed, for the good of men, to come into the world exactly at the time when its rapidity of invention was not likely to be hampered by demands for imitative dexterity or neatness of finish; and when, owing to the very ignorance which has been unwisely regretted, the simplicity of his thoughts might be uttered with a childlike and innocent sweetness, never to be recovered in times of prouder knowledge. [Pg 71] The dramatic power of his works, rightly understood, could receive no addition from artificial arrangement of shade, or scientific exhibition of anatomy, and we have reason to be deeply grateful when afterwards "inland far" with Buonaroti and Titian, that we can look back to the Giotteschi—to see those children

> "Sport upon the shore
> And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

We believe Giotto himself felt this—unquestionably he could have carried many of his works much farther in finish, had he so willed it; but he chose rather to multiply motives than to complete details. Thus we recur to our great principle of Separate gift. The man who spends his life in toning colors must leave the treasures of his invention untold—let each have his perfect work; and while we thank Bellini and Leonardo for their deeply wrought dyes, and life-labored utterance of passionate thought; let us remember also what cause, but for the remorseless destruction of myriads of his works, we should have had to thank Giotto, in that, abandoning all proud effort, he chose rather to make the stones of Italy cry out with one voice of pauseless praise, and to fill with perpetual remembrance of the Saints he loved, and perpetual honor of the God he worshiped, palace chamber and convent cloister, lifted tower and lengthened wall, from the utmost blue of the plain of Padua to the Southern wildernesses of the hermit-haunted Apennine.

70. From the head of the Dramatic branch of Art, we turn to the first of the great Contemplative Triad, associated, as it most singularly happens in name as well as in heart; Orcagna—Arcagnuolo; Fra Giovanni—detto Angelico; and Michael Angelo:—the first two names being bestowed by contemporary admiration.

"Orcagna was born apparently about the middle of the (14th) century, and was christened Andrea, by which name, with the addition of that of his father, Cione, he always designated [Pg 72]

himself; that, however, of Orcagna, a corruption of Arcagnuolo, or 'The Archangel,' was given him by his contemporaries, and by this he has become known to posterity.

"The earliest works of Orcagna will be found in that sanctuary of Semi-Byzantine art, the Campo Santo of Pisa. He there painted three of the four 'Novissima,' Death, Judgment, Hell, and Paradise—the two former entirely himself, the third with the assistance of his brother Bernardo, who is said to have colored it after his designs. The first of the series, a most singular performance, had for centuries been popularly known as the 'Trionfo della Morte.' It is divided by an immense rock into two irregular portions. In that to the right, Death, personified as a female phantom, batwinged, claw-footed, her robe of linked mail [?] and her long hair streaming on the wind, swings back her scythe in order to cut down a company of the rich ones of the earth, Castruccio Castracani and his gay companions, seated under an orange-grove, and listening to the music of a troubadour and a female minstrel; little genii or Cupids, with reversed torches, float in the air above them; one young gallant caresses his hawk, a lady her lapdog,—Castruccio alone looks abstractedly away, as if his thoughts were elsewhere. But all are alike heedless and unconscious, though the sand is run out, the scythe falling and their doom sealed. Meanwhile the lame and the halt, the withered and the blind, to whom the heavens are brass and life a burthen, cry on Death with impassioned gestures, to release them from their misery,—but in vain; she sweeps past, and will not hear them. Between these two groups lie a heap of corpses, mown down already in her flight—kings, queens, bishops, cardinals, young men and maidens, secular and ecclesiastical—ensigned by their crowns, coronets, necklaces, miters and helmets—huddled together in hideous confusion; some are dead, others dying,—angels and devils draw the souls out of their mouths; that of a nun (in whose hand a purse, firmly clenched, betokens her besetting [Pg 73] sin) shrinks back aghast at the unlooked-for sight of the demon who receives it—an idea either inherited or adopted from Andrea Tafi. The whole upper half of the fresco, on this side, is filled with angels and devils carrying souls to heaven or to hell; sometimes a struggle takes place, and a soul is rescued from a demon who has unwarrantably appropriated it; the angels are very graceful, and their intercourse with their spiritual charge is full of tenderness and endearment; on the other hand, the wicked are hurried off by the devils and thrown headlong into the mouths of hell, represented as the crater of a volcano, belching out flames nearly in the center of the composition. These devils exhibit every variety of horror in form and feature."—Vol. iii., pp. 130-134.

---

71. We wish our author had been more specific in his account of this wonderful fresco. The portrait of Castruccio ought to have been signalized as a severe disappointment to the admirers of the heroic Lucchese: the face is flat, lifeless, and sensual, though fine in feature. The group of mendicants occupying the center are especially interesting, as being among the first existing examples of hard study from the model: all are evidently portraits—and the effect of deformity on the lines of the countenance rendered with appalling truth; the retractile muscles of the mouth wrinkled and fixed—the jaws projecting—the eyes hungry and glaring—the eyebrows grisly and stiff, the painter having drawn each hair separately: the two stroppiati with stumps instead of arms are especially characteristic, as the observer may at once determine by comparing them with the descendants of the originals, of whom he will at any time find two, or more, waiting to accompany his return across the meadow in front of the Duomo: the old woman also, nearest of the group, with gray disheveled hair and gray coat, with a brown girdle and gourd flask, is magnificent, and the archetype of all modern conceptions of witch. But the crowning stroke of feeling is dependent on a circumstance seldom observed. As Castruccio and his companions are [Pg 74] seated under the shade of an orange grove, so the mendicants are surrounded by a thicket of *teasels*, and a branch of ragged thorn is twisted like a crown about their sickly temples and weedy hair.

72. We do not altogether agree with our author in thinking that the devils exhibit every variety of horror; we rather fear that the spectator might at first be reminded by them of what is commonly known as the Dragon pattern of Wedgwood ware. There is invention in them however—and energy; the eyes are always terrible, though simply drawn—a black ball set forward, and two-thirds surrounded by a narrow crescent of white, under a shaggy brow; the mouths are frequently magnificent; that of a demon accompanying a thrust of a spear with a growl, on the right of the picture, is interesting as an example of the development of the canine teeth noticed by Sir Charles Bell ("Essay on Expression," p. 138)—its capacity of laceration is unlimited: another, snarling like a tiger at an angel who has pulled a soul out of his claws, is equally well conceived; we know nothing like its ferocity except Rembrandt's sketches of wounded wild beasts. The angels we think generally disappointing; they are for the most part diminutive in size, and the crossing of the extremities of the two wings that cover the feet, gives them a coleopterous, cockchafer look, which is not a little undignified; the colors of their plumes are somewhat coarse and dark—one is covered with silky hair, instead of feathers. The souls they contend for are indeed of sweet expression; but exceedingly earthly in contour, the painter being unable to deal with the nude form. On the whole, he seems to have reserved his highest powers for the fresco which follows next in order, the scene of Resurrection and Judgment.

"It is, in the main, the traditional Byzantine composition, even more rigidly symmetrical than

usual, singularly contrasting in this respect with the rush and movement of the preceding compartment. Our Saviour and the Virgin, seated side by side, each on a rainbow and within a vesica piscis, appear in the sky—Our Saviour uttering the words of malediction with uplifted arm, [Pg 75] showing the wound in his side, and nearly in the attitude of Michael Angelo, but in wrath, not in fury—the Virgin timidly drawing back and gazing down in pity and sorrow. I never saw this co-equal juxtaposition in any other representation of the Last Judgment."—Vol. iii., p. 136.

---

73. The positions of our Saviour and of the Virgin are not strictly co-equal; the glory in which the Madonna is seated is both lower and less; but the equality is more complete in the painting of the same subject in Santa M. Novella. We believe Lord Lindsay is correct in thinking Orcagna the only artist who has dared it. We question whether even wrath be intended in the countenance of the principal figure; on the contrary, we think it likely to disappoint at first, and appear lifeless in its exceeding tranquillity; the brow is indeed slightly knit, but the eyes have no local direction. They comprehend all things—are set upon all spirits alike, as in that *word-fresco* of our own, not unworthy to be set side by side with this, the Vision of the Trembling Man in the House of the Interpreter. The action is as majestic as the countenance—the right hand seems raised rather to show its wound (as the left points at the same instant to the wound in the side), than in condemnation, though its gesture has been adopted as one of threatening—first (and very nobly) by Benozzo Gozzoli, in the figure of the Angel departing, looking towards Sodom—and afterwards, with unfortunate exaggeration, by Michael Angelo. Orcagna's Madonna we think a failure, but his strength has been more happily displayed in the Apostolic circle. The head of St. John is peculiarly beautiful. The other Apostles look forward or down as in judgment—some in indignation, some in pity, some serene—but the eyes of St. John are fixed upon the Judge Himself with the stability of love—intercession and sorrow struggling for utterance with awe—and through both is seen a tremor of submissive astonishment, that the lips which had once forbidden [Pg 76] his to call down fire from heaven should now themselves burn with irrevocable condemnation.

---

74. "One feeling for the most part pervades this side of the composition,—there is far more variety in the other; agony is depicted with fearful intensity and in every degree and character; some clasp their hands, some hide their faces, some look up in despair, but none towards Christ; others seem to have grown idiots with horror:—a few gaze, as if fascinated, into the gulf of fire towards which the whole mass of misery are being urged by the ministers of doom—the flames bite them, the devils fish for and catch them with long grappling-hooks:—in sad contrast to the group on the opposite side, a queen, condemned herself but self-forgetful, vainly struggles to rescue her daughter from a demon who has caught her by the gown and is dragging her backwards into the abyss—her sister, wringing her hands, looks on in agony—it is a fearful scene.

"A vast rib or arch in the walls of pandemonium admits one into the contiguous gulf of Hell, forming the third fresco, or rather a continuation of the second—in which Satan sits in the midst, in gigantic terror, cased in armor and crunching sinners—of whom Judas, especially, is eaten and ejected, re-eaten and re-ejected again and again forever. The punishments of the wicked are portrayed in circles numberless around him. But in everything save horror this compartment is inferior to the preceding, and it has been much injured and repainted."—Vol. iii., p. 138.

---

75. We might have been spared all notice of this last compartment. Throughout Italy, owing, it may be supposed, to the interested desire of the clergy to impress upon the populace as forcibly as possible the verity of purgatorial horrors, nearly every representation of the Inferno has been repainted, and vulgar butchery substituted for the expressions of punishment which were too chaste for monkish purposes. The infernos of Giotto at Padua, and of Orcagna at Florence, have [Pg 77] thus been destroyed; but in neither case have they been replaced by anything so merely disgusting as these restorations by Solazzino in the Campo Santo. Not a line of Orcagna's remains, except in one row of figures halfway up the wall, where his firm black drawing is still distinguishable: throughout the rest of the fresco, hillocks of pink flesh have been substituted for his severe forms—and for his agonized features, puppets' heads with roaring mouths and staring eyes, the whole as coarse and sickening, and quite as weak, as any scrabble on the lowest booths of a London Fair.

76. Lord Lindsay's comparison of these frescoes of Orcagna with the great work in the Sistine, is, as a specimen of his writing, too good not to be quoted.

"While Michael Angelo's leading idea seems to be the self-concentration and utter absorption of all feeling into the one predominant thought, *Am I, individually, safe?* resolving itself into two emotions only, doubt and despair—all diversities of character, all kindred sympathies annihilated under their pressure—those emotions uttering themselves, not through the face but the form, by bodily contortion, rendering the whole composition, with all its overwhelming merits, a mighty

hubbub—Orcagna's on the contrary embraces the whole world of passions that make up the economy of man, and these not confused or crushed into each other, but expanded and enhanced in quality and intensity commensurably with the 'change' attendant upon the resurrection—variously expressed indeed, and in reference to the diversities of individual character, which will be nowise compromised by that change, yet from their very intensity suppressed and subdued, stilling the body and informing only the soul's index, the countenance. All therefore is calm; the saved have acquiesced in all things, they can mourn no more—the damned are to them as if they had never been;—among the lost, grief is too deep, too settled for caricature, and while every feeling of the spectator, every key of the soul's organ, is played upon by turns, tenderness and pity form the under-song throughout and ultimately prevail; the curse is uttered in sorrow rather [Pg 78] than wrath, and from the pitying Virgin and the weeping archangel above, to the mother endeavoring to rescue her daughter below, and the young secular led to paradise under the approving smile of S. Michael, all resolves itself into sympathy and love.—Michael Angelo's conception may be more efficacious for teaching by terror—it was his object, I believe, as the heir of Savonarola and the representative of the Protestant spirit within the bosom of Catholicism; but Orcagna's is in better taste, truer to human nature, sublimer in philosophy, and (if I mistake not) more scriptural."—Vol. iii., pp. 139-141.

---

77. We think it somewhat strange that the object of teaching by terror should be attributed to M. Angelo more than to Orcagna, seeing that the former, with his usual dignity, has refused all representation of infernal punishment—except in the figure dragged down with the hand over the face, the serpent biting the thigh, and in the fiends of the extreme angle; while Orcagna, whose intention may be conjectured even from Solazzino's restoration, exhausted himself in detailing Dante's distribution of torture, and brings into successive prominence every expedient of pain; the prong, the spit, the rack, the chain, venomous fang and rending beak, harrowing point and dividing edge, biting fiend and calcining fire. The objects of the two great painters were indeed opposed, but not in this respect. Orcagna's, like that of every great painter of his day, was to write upon the wall, as in a book, the greatest possible number of those religious facts or doctrines which the Church desired should be known to the people. This he did in the simplest and most straightforward way, regardless of artistical reputation, and desiring only to be read and understood. But Michael Angelo's object was from the beginning that of an artist. He addresses not the sympathies of his day, but the understanding of all time, and he treats the subject in the mode best adapted to bring every one of his own powers into full play. As might [Pg 79] have been expected, while the self-forgetfulness of Orcagna has given, on the one hand, an awfulness to his work, and verity, which are wanting in the studied composition of the Sistine, on the other it has admitted a puerility commensurate with the narrowness of the religion he had to teach.

78. Greater differences still result from the opposed powers and idiosyncrasies of the two men. Orcagna was unable to draw the nude—on this inability followed a coldness to the value of flowing lines, and to the power of unity in composition—neither could he indicate motion or buoyancy in flying or floating figures, nor express violence of action in the limbs—he cannot even show the difference between pulling and pushing in the muscles of the arm. In M. Angelo these conditions were directly reversed. Intense sensibility to the majesty of writhing, flowing, and connected lines, was in him associated with a power, unequaled except by Angelico, of suggesting aërial motion—motion deliberate or disturbed, inherent or impressed, impotent or inspired—gathering into glory, or gravitating to death. Orcagna was therefore compelled to range his figures symmetrically in ordered lines, while Michael Angelo bound them into chains, or hurled them into heaps, or scattered them before him as the wind does leaves. Orcagna trusted for all his expression to the countenance, or to rudely explained gesture aided by grand fall of draperies, though in all these points he was still immeasurably inferior to his colossal rival. As for his "embracing the whole world of passions which make up the economy of man," he had no such power of delineation—nor, we believe, of conception. The expressions on the inferno side are all of them varieties of grief and fear, differing merely in degree, not in character or operation: there is something dramatic in the raised hand of a man wearing a green bonnet with a white plume—but the only really far-carried effort in the group is the head of a Dominican monk (just above the queen in green), who, in the midst of the close crowd, struggling, shuddering, and howling on every side, is fixed in quiet, total despair, insensible to all things, and [Pg 80] seemingly poised in existence and sensation upon that one point in his past life when his steps first took hold on hell; this head, which is opposed to a face distorted by horror beside it, is, we repeat, the only highly wrought piece of expression in the group.

79. What Michael Angelo could do by expression of countenance alone, let the Pietà of Genoa tell, or the Lorenzo, or the parallel to this very head of Orcagna's, the face of the man borne down in the Last Judgment with the hand clenched over one of the eyes. Neither in that fresco is he wanting in dramatic episode; the adaptation of the Niobe on the spectator's left hand is far finer than Orcagna's condemned queen and princess; the groups rising below, side by side, supporting each other, are full of tenderness, and reciprocal devotion; the contest in the center for the body which a demon drags down by the hair is another kind of quarrel from that of Orcagna between a feathered angel and bristly fiend for a diminutive soul—reminding us, as it forcibly did at first, of a vociferous difference in opinion between a cat and a cockatoo. But Buonaroti knew that it was useless to concentrate interest in the countenances, in a picture of enormous size, ill lighted; and he preferred giving full play to the powers of line-grouping, for which he could have found no

nobler field. Let us not by unwise comparison mingle with our admiration of these two sublime works any sense of weakness in the naïveté of the one, or of coldness in the science of the other. Each painter has his own sufficient dominion, and he who complains of the want of knowledge in Orcagna, or of the display of it in Michael Angelo, has probably brought little to his judgment of either.

80. One passage more we must quote, well worthy of remark in these days of hollowness and haste, though we question the truth of the particular fact stated in the second volume respecting the shrine of Or San Michele. Cement is now visible enough in all the joints, but whether from recent repairs we cannot say:— [Pg 81]

"There is indeed another, a technical merit, due to Orcagna, which I would have mentioned earlier, did it not partake so strongly of a moral virtue. Whatever he undertook to do, he did well —by which I mean, better than anybody else. His Loggia, in its general structure and its provisions against injury from wet and decay, is a model of strength no less than symmetry and elegance; the junction of the marbles in the tabernacle of Or San Michele, and the exquisite manual workmanship of the bas-reliefs, have been the theme of praise for five centuries; his colors in the Campo Santo have maintained a freshness unrivaled by those of any of his successors there;—nay, even had his mosaics been preserved at Orvieto, I am confident the *commettitura* would be found more compact and polished than any previous to the sixteenth century. The secret of all this was that he made himself thoroughly an adept in the mechanism of the respective arts, and therefore his works have stood. Genius is too apt to think herself independent of form and matter—never was there such a mistake; she cannot slight either without hamstringing herself. But the rule is of universal application; without this thorough mastery of their respective tools, this determination honestly to make the best use of them, the divine, the soldier, the statesman, the philosopher, the poet—however genuine their enthusiasm, however lofty their genius—are mere empirics, pretenders to crowns they will not run for, children not men—sporters with Imagination, triflers with Reason, with the prospects of humanity, with Time, and with God."—Vol. iii., pp. 148, 149.

A noble passage this, and most true, provided we distinguish always between mastery of tool together with thorough strength of workmanship, and mere neatness of outside polish or fitting of measurement, of which ancient masters are daringly scornful.

81. None of Orcagna's pupils, except Francisco Traini, attained celebrity— [Pg 82]

"nothing in fact is known of them except their names. Had their works, however inferior, been preserved, we might have had less difficulty in establishing the links between himself and his successor in the supremacy of the Semi-Byzantine school at Florence, the Beato Fra Angelico da Fiesole.... He was born at Vicchio, near Florence, it is said in 1387, and was baptized by the name of Guido. Of a gentle nature, averse to the turmoil of the world, and pious to enthusiasm, though as free from fanaticism as his youth was innocent of vice, he determined, at the age of twenty, though well provided for in a worldly point of view, to retire to the cloister; he professed himself accordingly a brother of the monastery of S. Domenico at Fiesole in 1407, assuming his monastic name from the Apostle of love, S. John. He acquired from his residence there the distinguishing surname 'da Fiesole;' and a calmer retreat for one weary of earth and desirous of commerce with heaven would in vain be sought for;—the purity of the atmosphere, the freshness of the morning breeze, the starry clearness and delicious fragrance of the nights, the loveliness of the valley at one's feet, lengthening out, like a life of happiness, between the Apennine and the sea—with the intermingling sounds that ascend perpetually from below, softened by distance into music, and by an agreeable compromise at once giving a zest to solitude and cheating it of its loneliness—rendering Fiesole a spot which angels might alight upon by mistake in quest of paradise, a spot where it would be at once sweet to live and sweet to die."—Vol. iii., pp. 151-153.

---

82. Our readers must recollect that the convent where Fra Giovanni first resided is not that whose belfry tower and cypress grove crown the "top of Fésole." The Dominican convent is situated at the bottom of the slope of olives, distinguished only by its narrow and low spire; a cypress avenue recedes from it towards Florence—a stony path, leading to the ancient Badia of Fiesole, descends in front of the three-arched loggia which protects the entrance to the church. [Pg 83] No extended prospect is open to it; though over the low wall, and through the sharp, thickset olive leaves, may be seen one silver gleam of the Arno, and, at evening, the peaks of the Carrara mountains, purple against the twilight, dark and calm, while the fire-flies glance beneath, silent and intermittent, like stars upon the rippling of mute, soft sea.

"It is by no means an easy task to adjust the chronology of Fra Angelico's works; he has affixed no dates to them, and consequently, when external evidence is wanting, we are thrown upon

internal, which in his case is unusually fallacious. It is satisfactory therefore to possess a fixed date in 1433, the year in which he painted the great tabernacle for the Company of Flax-merchants, now removed to the gallery of the Uffizii. It represents the Virgin and child, with attendant Saints, on a gold ground—very dignified and noble, although the Madonna has not attained the exquisite spirituality of his later efforts. Round this tabernacle as a nucleus, may be classed a number of paintings, all of similar excellence—admirable that is to say, but not of his very best, and in which, if I mistake not, the type of the Virgin bears throughout a strong family resemblance."—Vol. iii., pp. 160, 161.

---

83. If the painter ever increased in power after this period (he was then forty-three), we have been unable to systematize the improvement. We much doubt whether, in his modes of execution, advance were possible. Men whose merit lies in record of natural facts, increase in knowledge; and men whose merit is in dexterity of hand increase in facility; but we much doubt whether the faculty of design, or force of feeling, increase after the age of twenty-five. By Fra Angelico, who drew always in fear and trembling, dexterous execution had been from the first repudiated; he neither needed nor sought technical knowledge of the form, and the inspiration, to which his power was owing, was not less glowing in youth than in age. The inferiority traceable (we grant) [Pg 84] in this Madonna results not from its early date, but from Fra Angelico's incapability, always visible, of drawing the head of life size. He is, in this respect, the exact reverse of Giotto; he was essentially a miniature painter, and never attained the mastery of muscular play in the features necessary in a full-sized drawing. His habit, almost constant, of surrounding the iris of the eye by a sharp black line, is, in small figures, perfectly successful, giving a transparency and tenderness not otherwise expressible. But on a larger scale it gives a stony stare to the eyeball, which not all the tenderness of the brow and mouth can conquer or redeem.

84. Further, in this particular instance, the ear has by accident been set too far back—(Fra Angelico, drawing only from feeling, was liable to gross errors of this kind,—often, however, more beautiful than other men's truths)—and the hair removed in consequence too far off the brow; in other respects the face is very noble—still more so that of the Christ. The child *stands* upon the Virgin's knees,[9] one hand raised in the usual attitude of benediction, the other holding a globe. The face looks straightforward, quiet, Jupiter-like, and very sublime, owing to the smallness of the features in proportion to the head, the eyes being placed at about three-sevenths of the whole height, leaving four-sevenths for the brow, and themselves only in length about one-sixth of the breadth of the face, half closed, giving a peculiar appearance of repose. The hair is short, golden, symmetrically curled, statuesque in its contour; the mouth tender and full of life: the red cross of the glory about the head of an intense ruby enamel, almost fire color; the dress brown, with golden girdle. In all the treatment Fra Angelico maintains his assertion of the authority of abstract imagination, which, depriving his subject of all material or actual being, contemplates it as retaining qualities eternal only—adorned by incorporeal splendor. The eyes of the beholder [Pg 85] are supernaturally unsealed: and to this miraculous vision whatever is of the earth vanishes, and all things are seen endowed with an harmonious glory—the garments falling with strange, visionary grace, glowing with indefinite gold—the walls of the chamber dazzling as of a heavenly city—the mortal forms themselves impressed with divine changelessness—no domesticity—no jest—no anxiety—no expectation—no variety of action or of thought. Love, all fulfilling, and various modes of power, are alone expressed; the Virgin never shows the complacency or petty watchfulness of maternity; she sits serene, supporting the child whom she ever looks upon, as a stranger among strangers; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord" forever written upon her brow.

85. An approach to an exception in treatment is found in the Annunciation of the upper corridor of St. Mark's, most unkindly treated by our author:—

"Probably the earliest of the series—full of faults, but imbued with the sweetest feeling; there is a look of naïve curiosity, mingling with the modest and meek humility of the Virgin, which almost provokes a smile."—iii., 176.

Many a Sabbath evening of bright summer have we passed in that lonely corridor—but not to the finding of faults, nor the provoking of smiles. The angel is perhaps something less majestic than is usual with the painter; but the Virgin is only the more to be worshiped, because here, for once, set before us in the verity of life. No gorgeous robe is upon her; no lifted throne set for her; the golden border gleams faintly on the dark blue dress; the seat is drawn into the shadow of a lowly loggia. The face is of no strange, far-sought loveliness; the features might even be thought hard, and they are worn with watching, and severe, though innocent. She stoops forward with her arms folded on her bosom: no casting down of eye nor shrinking of the frame in fear; she is too earnest, too self-forgetful for either: wonder and inquiry are there, but chastened and free from [Pg 86] doubt; meekness, yet mingled with a patient majesty; peace, yet sorrowfully sealed, as if the promise of the Angel were already underwritten by the prophecy of Simeon. They who pass and repass in the twilight of that solemn corridor, need not the adjuration inscribed beneath:—

"Virginis intactae cum veneris ante figuram
Praetereundo cave ne sileatur Ave."[10]

We in general allow the inferiority of Angelico's fresco to his tempera works; yet even that which of all these latter we think the most radiant, the Annunciation on the reliquary of Santa Maria Novella, would, we believe, if repeatedly compared with this of St. Mark's, in the end have the disadvantage. The eminent value of the tempera paintings results partly from their delicacy of line, and partly from the purity of color and force of decoration of which the material is capable.

86. The passage, to which we have before alluded, respecting Fra Angelico's color in general, is one of the most curious and fanciful in the work:—

"His coloring, on the other hand, is far more beautiful, although of questionable brilliancy. This will be found invariably the case in minds constituted like his. Spirit and Sense act on each other with livelier reciprocity the closer their approximation, the less intervention there is of Intellect. Hence the most religious and the most sensual painters have always loved the brightest colors—Spiritual Expression and a clearly defined (however inaccurate) outline forming the distinction of the former class; Animal Expression and a confused and uncertain outline (reflecting that lax morality which confounds the limits of light and darkness, right and wrong) of the latter. On the [Pg 87] other hand, the more that Intellect, or the spirit of Form, intervenes in its severe precision, the less pure, the paler grow the colors, the nearer they tend to the hue of marble, of the bas-relief. We thus find the purest and brightest colors only in Fra Angelico's pictures, with a general predominance of blue, which we have observed to prevail more or less in so many of the Semi-Byzantine painters, and which, fanciful as it may appear, I cannot but attribute, independently of mere tradition, to an inherent, instinctive sympathy between their mental constitution and the color in question; as that of red, or of blood, may be observed to prevail among painters in whom Sense or Nature predominates over Spirit—for in this, as in all things else, the moral and the material world respond to each other as closely as shadow and substance. But, in Painting as in Morals, perfection implies the due intervention of Intellect between Spirit and Sense—of Form between Expression and Coloring—as a power at once controlling and controlled—and therefore, although acknowledging its fascination, I cannot unreservedly praise the Coloring of Fra Angelico."—Vol. iii., pp. 193, 194.

---

87. There is much ingenuity, and some truth, here, but the reader, as in other of Lord Lindsay's speculations, must receive his conclusions with qualification. It is the natural character of strong effects of color, as of high light, to confuse outlines; and it is a necessity in all fine harmonies of color that many tints should merge imperceptibly into their following or succeeding ones:—we believe Lord Lindsay himself would hardly wish to mark the hues of the rainbow into divided zones, or to show its edge, as of an iron arch, against the sky, in order that it might no longer reflect (a reflection of which we profess ourselves up to this moment altogether unconscious) "that lax morality which confounds the limits of right and wrong." Again, there is a character of energy in all warm colors, as of repose in cold, which necessarily causes the former to be preferred by painters of savage subject—that is to say, commonly by the coarsest and most [Pg 88] degraded;—but when sensuality is free from ferocity, it leans to blue more than to red (as especially in the flesh tints of Guido), and when intellect prevails over this sensuality, its first step is invariably to put more red into every color, and so "rubor est virtutis color." We hardly think Lord Lindsay would willingly include Luca Giordano among his spiritual painters, though that artist's servant was materially enriched by washing the ultramarine from the brushes with which he painted the Ricardi palace; nor would he, we believe, degrade Ghirlandajo to fellowship with the herd of the sensual, though in the fresco of the vision of Zacharias there are seventeen different reds in large masses, and not a shade of blue. The fact is, there is no color of the spectrum, as there is no note of music, whose key and prevalence may not be made pure in expression, and elevating in influence, by a great and good painter, or degraded to unhallowed purpose by a base one.

88. We are sorry that our author "cannot unreservedly praise the coloring of Angelico;" but he is again curbed by his unhappy system of balanced perfectibility, and must quarrel with the gentle monk because he finds not in him the flames of Giorgione, nor the tempering of Titian, nor the melody of Cagliari. This curb of perfection we took between our teeth from the first, and we will give up our hearts to Angelico without drawback or reservation. His color is, in its sphere and to its purpose, as perfect as human work may be: wrought to radiance beyond that of the ruby and opal, its inartificialness prevents it from arresting the attention it is intended only to direct; were it composed with more science it would become vulgar from the loss of its unconsciousness; if richer, it must have parted with its purity, if deeper, with its joyfulness, if more subdued, with its sincerity. Passages are, indeed, sometimes unsuccessful; but it is to be judged in its rapture, and forgiven in its fall: he who works by law and system may be blamed when he sinks below the line above which he proposes no elevation, but to him whose eyes are on a mark far off, and whose [Pg 89] efforts are impulsive, and to the utmost of his strength, we may not unkindly count the slips of his sometime descent into the valley of humiliation.

89. The concluding notice of Angelico is true and interesting, though rendered obscure by useless

recurrence to the favorite theory.

"Such are the surviving works of a painter, who has recently been as unduly extolled as he had for three centuries past been unduly depreciated,—depreciated, through the amalgamation during those centuries of the principle of which he was the representative with baser, or at least less precious matter—extolled, through the recurrence to that principle, in its pure, unsophisticated essence, in the present —in a word, to the simple Imaginative Christianity of the middle ages, as opposed to the complex Reasoning Christianity of recent times. Creeds therefore are at issue, and no exclusive partisan, neither Catholic nor Protestant in the absolute sense of the terms, can fairly appreciate Fra Angelico. Nevertheless, to those who regard society as progressive through the gradual development of the component elements of human nature, and who believe that Providence has accommodated the mind of man, individually, to the perception of half-truths only, in order to create that antagonism from which Truth is generated in the abstract, and by which the progression is effected, his rank and position in art are clear and definite. All that Spirit could achieve by herself, anterior to that struggle with Intellect and Sense which she must in all cases pass through in order to work out her destiny, was accomplished by him. Last and most gifted of a long and imaginative race—the heir of their experience, with collateral advantages which they possessed not—and flourishing at the moment when the transition was actually taking place from the youth to the early manhood of Europe; he gave full, unreserved, and enthusiastic expression to that Love and Hope which had winged the Faith of [Pg 90] Christendom in her flight towards heaven for fourteen centuries,—to those yearnings of the Heart and the Imagination which ever precede, in Universal as well as Individual development, the severer and more chastened intelligence of Reason."—Vol. iii., pp. 188-190.

---

90. We must again repeat that if our author wishes to be truly serviceable to the schools of England, he must express himself in terms requiring less laborious translation. Clearing the above statement of its mysticism and metaphor, it amounts only to this,—that Fra Angelico was a man of (humanly speaking) *perfect* piety—humility, charity, and faith—that he never employed his art but as a means of expressing his love to God and man, and with the view, single, simple, and straightforward, of glory to the Creator, and good to the Creature. Every quality or subject of art by which these ends were not to be attained, or to be attained secondarily only, he rejected; from all study of art, as such, he withdrew; whatever might merely please the eye, or interest the intellect, he despised, and refused; he used his colors and lines, as David his harp, after a kingly fashion, for purposes of praise and not of science. To this grace and gift of holiness were added, those of a fervent imagination, vivid invention, keen sense of loveliness in lines and colors, unwearied energy, and to all these gifts the crowning one of quietness of life and mind, while yet his convent-cell was at first within view, and afterwards in the center, of a city which had lead of all the world in Intellect, and in whose streets he might see daily and hourly the noblest setting of manly features. It would perhaps be well to wait until we find another man thus actuated, thus endowed, and thus circumstanced, before we speak of "unduly extolling" the works of Fra Angelico.

91. His artistical attainments, as might be conjectured, are nothing more than the development, through practice, of his natural powers in accordance with his sacred instincts. His power of expression by bodily gesture is greater even than Giotto's, wherever he could feel or comprehend [Pg 91] the passion to be expressed; but so inherent in him was his holy tranquillity of mind, that he could not by any exertion, even for a moment, conceive either agitation, doubt, or fear—and all the actions proceeding from such passions, or, *à fortiori*, from any yet more criminal, are absurdly and powerlessly portrayed by him; while contrariwise, every gesture, consistent with emotion pure and saintly, is rendered with an intensity of truth to which there is no existing parallel; the expression being carried out into every bend of the hand, every undulation of the arm, shoulder, and neck, every fold of the dress and every wave of the hair. His drawing of movement is subject to the same influence; vulgar or vicious motion he cannot represent; his running, falling, or struggling figures are drawn with childish incapability; but give him for his scene the pavement of heaven, or pastures of Paradise, and for his subject the "inoffensive pace" of glorified souls, or the spiritual speed of Angels, and Michael Angelo alone can contend with him in majesty,—in grace and musical continuousness of motion, no one. The inspiration was in some degree caught by his pupil Benozzo, but thenceforward forever lost. The angels of Perugino appear to be let down by cords and moved by wires; that of Titian, in the sacrifice of Isaac, kicks like an awkward swimmer; Raphael's Moses and Elias of the Transfiguration are cramped at the knees; and the flight of Domenichino's angels is a sprawl paralyzed. The authority of Tintoret over movement is, on the other hand, too unlimited; the descent of his angels is the swoop of a whirlwind or the fall of a thunderbolt; his mortal impulses are oftener impetuous than pathetic, and majestic more than melodious.

92. But it is difficult by words to convey to the reader unacquainted with Angelico's works, any idea of the thoughtful variety of his rendering of movement—Earnest haste of girded faith in the Flight into Egypt, the haste of obedience, not of fear; and unweariedness, but through spiritual support, and not in human strength—Swift obedience of passive earth to the call of its Creator, in [Pg 92] the Resurrection of Lazarus—March of meditative gladness in the following of the Apostles down

the Mount of Olives—Rush of adoration breaking through the chains and shadows of death, in the Spirits in Prison. Pacing of mighty angels above the Firmament, poised on their upright wings, half opened, broad, bright, quiet, like eastern clouds before the sun is up;—or going forth, with timbrels and with dances, of souls more than conquerors, beside the shore of the last great Red Sea, the sea of glass mingled with fire, hand knit with hand, and voice with voice, the joyful winds of heaven following the measure of their motion, and the flowers of the new earth looking on, like stars pausing in their courses.

93. And yet all this is but the lowest part and narrowest reach of Angelico's conceptions. Joy and gentleness, patience and power, he could indicate by gesture—but Devotion could be told by the countenance only. There seems to have been always a stern limit by which the thoughts of other men were stayed; the religion that was painted even by Perugino, Francia, and Bellini, was finite in its spirit—the religion of earthly beings, checked, not indeed by the corruption, but by the veil and the sorrow of clay. But with Fra Angelico the glory of the countenance reaches to actual transfiguration; eyes that see no more darkly, incapable of all tears, foreheads flaming, like Belshazzar's marble wall, with the writing of the Father's name upon them, lips tremulous with love, and crimson with the light of the coals of the altar—and all this loveliness, thus enthusiastic and ineffable, yet sealed with the stability which the coming and going of ages as countless as sea-sand cannot dim nor weary, and bathed by an ever flowing river of holy thought, with God for its source, God for its shore, and God for its ocean.

94. We speak in no inconsiderate enthusiasm. We feel assured that to any person of just feeling who devotes sufficient time to the examination of these works, all terms of description must seem derogatory. Where such ends as these have been reached, it ill becomes us to speak of minor [Pg 93] deficiencies as either to be blamed or regretted: it cannot be determined how far even what we deprecate may be accessory to our delight, nor by what intricate involution what we deplore may be connected with what we love. Every good that nature herself bestows, or accomplishes, is given with a counterpoise, or gained at a sacrifice; nor is it to be expected of Man that he should win the hardest battles and tread the narrowest paths, without the betrayal of a weakness, or the acknowledgment of an error.

95. With this final warning against our author's hesitating approbation of what is greatest and best, we must close our specific examination of the mode in which his design has been worked out. We have done enough to set the reader upon his guard against whatever appears slight or inconsiderate in his theory or statements, and with the more severity, because this was alone wanting to render the book one of the most valuable gifts which Art has ever received. Of the translations from the lives of the saints we have hardly spoken; they are gracefully rendered, and all of them highly interesting—but we could wish to see these, and the enumerations of fresco subjects[11] with which the other volumes are in great part occupied, published separately for the convenience of travelers in Italy. They are something out of place in a work like that before us. For the rest, we might have more interested the reader, and gratified ourselves, by setting before him some of the many passages of tender feeling and earnest eloquence with which the volumes [Pg 94] are replete—but we felt it necessary rather to anticipate the hesitation with which they were liable to be received, and set limits to the halo of fancy by which their light is obscured—though enlarged. One or two paragraphs, however, of the closing chapter must be given before we part:—

---

96. "What a scene of beauty, what a flower-garden of art—how bright and how varied—must Italy have presented at the commencement of the sixteenth century, at the death of Raphael! The sacrileges we lament took place for the most part after that period; hundreds of frescoes, not merely of Giotto and those other elders of Christian Art, but of Gentile da Fabriano, Pietro della Francesca, Perugino and their compeers, were still existing, charming the eye, elevating the mind, and warming the heart. Now alas! few comparatively and fading are the relics of those great and good men. While Dante's voice rings as clear as ever, communing with us as friend with friend, theirs is dying gradually away, fainter and fainter, like the farewell of a spirit. Flaking off the walls, uncared for and neglected save in a few rare instances, scarce one of their frescoes will survive the century, and the labors of the next may not improbably be directed to the recovery and restoration of such as may still slumber beneath the whitewash and the daubs with which the Bronzinos and Zuccheros 'et id genus omne' have unconsciously sealed them up for posterity—their best title to our gratitude.—But why not begin at once? at all events in the instances numberless, where merely whitewash interposes between us and them.

"It is easy to reply—what need of this? They—the artists—have Moses and the prophets, the frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo—let them study them. Doubtless,—but we still reply, and with no impiety—they will not repent, they will not forsake their idols and their evil ways—they will not abandon Sense for Spirit, oils for fresco—unless these great ones of the past, these Sleepers of Ephesus, arise from the dead.... It is not by studying art in its perfection—by [Pg 95] worshiping Raphael and Michael Angelo exclusively of all other excellence—that we can expect to rival them, but by re-ascending to the fountain-head—by planting ourselves as acorns in the ground those oaks are rooted in, and growing up to their level—in a word, by studying Duccio and Giotto that we may paint like Taddeo di Bartolo and Masaccio, Taddeo di Bartolo and Masaccio that we may paint like Perugino and Luca Signorelli, Perugino and Luca Signorelli that we may paint like Raphael and Michael Angelo. And why despair of this, or even of shaming the

Vatican? For with genius and God's blessing nothing is impossible.

"I would not be a blind partisan, but, with all their faults, the old masters I plead for knew how to touch the heart. It may be difficult at first to believe this; like children, they are shy with us—like strangers, they bear an uncouth mien and aspect—like ghosts from the other world, they have an awkward habit of shocking our conventionalities with home truths. But with the dead as with the living all depends on the frankness with which we greet them, the sincerity with which we credit their kindly qualities; sympathy is the key to truth—we must love, in order to appreciate."—iii., p. 418.

---

97. These are beautiful sentences; yet this let the young painter of these days remember always, that whomsoever he may love, or from whomsoever learn, he can now no more go back to those hours of infancy and be born again.[12] About the faith, the questioning and the teaching of [Pg 96] childhood there is a joy and grace, which we may often envy, but can no more assume:—the voice and the gesture must not be imitated when the innocence is lost. Incapability and ignorance in the act of being struggled against and cast away are often endowed with a peculiar charm—but both are only contemptible when they are pretended. Whatever we have now to do, we may be sure, first, that its strength and life must be drawn from the real nature with us and about us always, and secondly, that, if worth doing, it will be something altogether different from what has ever been done before. The visions of the cloister must depart with its superstitious peace—the quick, apprehensive symbolism of early Faith must yield to the abstract teaching of disciplined Reason. Whatever else we may deem of the Progress of Nations, one character of that progress is determined and discernible. As in the encroaching of the land upon the sea, the strength of the sandy bastions is raised out of the sifted ruin of ancient inland hills—for every tongue of level land that stretches into the deep, the fall of Alps has been heard among the clouds, and as the fields of industry enlarge, the intercourse with Heaven is shortened. Let it not be doubted that as this change is inevitable, so it is expedient, though the form of teaching adopted and of duty prescribed be less mythic and contemplative, more active and unassisted: for the light of Transfiguration on the Mountain is substituted the Fire of Coals upon the Shore, and on the charge to hear the Shepherd, follows that to feed the Sheep. Doubtful we may be for a time, and apparently deserted; but if, as we wait, we still look forward with steadfast will and humble heart, so that our Hope for the Future may be fed, not dulled or diverted by our Love for the Past, we shall not long be left without a Guide:—the way will be opened, the Precursor appointed—the Hour will come, and the Man. [Pg 97]

EASTLAKE'S HISTORY OF OIL-PAINTING.[13]

98. The stranger in Florence who for the first time passes through the iron gate which opens from the Green Cloister of Santa Maria Novella into the Spezieria, can hardly fail of being surprised, and that perhaps painfully, by the suddenness of the transition from the silence and gloom of the monastic inclosure, its pavement rough with epitaphs, and its walls retaining, still legible, though crumbling and mildewed, their imaged records of Scripture History, to the activity of a traffic not less frivolous than flourishing, concerned almost exclusively with the appliances of bodily adornment or luxury. Yet perhaps, on a moment's reflection, the rose-leaves scattered on the floor, and the air filled with odor of myrtle and myrrh, aloes and cassia, may arouse associations of a different and more elevated character; the preparation of these precious perfumes may seem not altogether unfitting the hands of a religious brotherhood—or if this should not be conceded, at all events it must be matter of rejoicing to observe the evidence of intelligence and energy interrupting the apathy and languor of the cloister; nor will the institution be regarded with other than respect, as well as gratitude, when it is remembered that, as to the convent library we owe the preservation of ancient literature, to the convent laboratory [Pg 98] we owe the duration of mediæval art.

99. It is at first with surprise not altogether dissimilar, that we find a painter of refined feeling and deep thoughtfulness, after manifesting in his works the most sincere affection for what is highest in the reach of his art, devoting himself for years (there is proof of this in the work before us) to the study of the mechanical preparation of its appliances, and whatever documentary evidence exists respecting their ancient use. But it is with a revulsion of feeling more entire, that we perceive the value of the results obtained—the accuracy of the varied knowledge by which their sequence has been established—and above all, their immediate bearing upon the practice and promise of the schools of our own day.

Opposite errors, we know not which the least pardonable, but both certainly productive of great harm, have from time to time possessed the masters of modern art. It has been held by some that the great early painters owed the larger measure of their power to secrets of material and method, and that the discovery of a lost vehicle or forgotten process might at any time accomplish the regeneration of a fallen school. By others it has been asserted that all questions respecting materials or manipulation are idle and impertinent; that the methods of the older masters were either of no peculiar value, or are still in our power; that a great painter is independent of all but the simplest mechanical aids, and demonstrates his greatness by scorn of

system and carelessness of means.

100. It is evident that so long as incapability could shield itself under the first of these creeds, or presumption vindicate itself by the second; so long as the feeble painter could lay his faults on his palette and his panel; and the self-conceited painter, from the assumed identity of materials proceed to infer equality of power—(for we believe that in most instances those who deny the evil of our present methods will deny also the weakness of our present works)—little good could be [Pg 99] expected from the teaching of the abstract principles of the art; and less, if possible, from the example of any mechanical qualities, however admirable, whose means might be supposed irrecoverable on the one hand, or indeterminate on the other, or of any excellence conceived to have been either summoned by an incantation, or struck out by an accident. And of late, among our leading masters, the loss has not been merely of the system of the ancients, but of all system whatsoever: the greater number paint as if the virtue of oil pigment were its opacity, or as if its power depended on its polish; of the rest, no two agree in use or choice of materials; not many are consistent even in their own practice; and the most zealous and earnest, therefore the most discontented, reaching impatiently and desperately after better things, purchase the momentary satisfaction of their feelings by the sacrifice of security of surface and durability of hue. The walls of our galleries are for the most part divided between pictures whose dead coating of consistent paint, laid on with a heavy hand and a cold heart, secures for them the stability of dullness and the safety of mediocrity; and pictures whose reckless and experimental brilliancy, unequal in its result as lawless in its means, is as evanescent as the dust of an insect's wing, and presents in its chief perfections so many subjects of future regret.

101. But if these evils now continue, it can only be through rashness which no example can warn, or through apathy which no hope can stimulate, for Mr. Eastlake has alike withdrawn license from experimentalism and apology from indolence. He has done away with all legends of forgotten secrets; he has shown that the masters of the great Flemish and early Venetian schools possessed no means, followed no methods, but such as we may still obtain and pursue; but he has shown also, among all these masters, the most admirable care in the preparation of materials and the most simple consistency in their use; he has shown that their excellence was reached, and could only have been reached, by stern and exact science, condescending to the observance, [Pg 100] care, and conquest of the most minute physical particulars and hindrances; that the greatest of them never despised an aid nor avoided a difficulty. The loss of imaginative liberty sometimes involved in a too scrupulous attention to methods of execution is trivial compared to the evils resulting from a careless or inefficient practice. The modes in which, with every great painter, realization falls short of conception are necessarily so many and so grievous, that he can ill afford to undergo the additional discouragement caused by uncertain methods and bad materials. Not only so, but even the choice of subjects, the amount of completion attempted, nay, even the modes of conception and measure of truth are in no small degree involved in the great question of materials. On the habitual use of a light or dark ground may depend the painter's preference of a broad and faithful, or partial and scenic chiaroscuro; correspondent with the facility or fatality of alterations, may be the exercise of indolent fancy, or disciplined invention; and to the complexities of a system requiring time, patience, and succession of process, may be owing the conversion of the ready draughtsman into the resolute painter. Farther than this, who shall say how unconquerable a barrier to all self-denying effort may exist in the consciousness that the best that is accomplished can last but a few years, and that the painter's travail must perish with his life?

102. It cannot have been without strong sense of this, the true dignity and relation of his subject, that Mr. Eastlake has gone through a toil far more irksome, far less selfish than any he could have undergone in the practice of his art. The value which we attach to the volume depends, however, rather on its preceptive than its antiquarian character. As objects of historical inquiry merely, we cannot conceive any questions less interesting than those relating to mechanical operations generally, nor any honors less worthy of prolonged dispute than those which are grounded merely on the invention or amelioration of processes and pigments. The subject can only become historically interesting when the means ascertained to have been employed at any [Pg 101] period are considered in their operation upon or procession from the artistical aim of such period, the character of its chosen subjects, and the effects proposed in their treatment upon the national mind. Mr. Eastlake has as yet refused himself the indulgence of such speculation; his book is no more than its modest title expresses. For ourselves, however, without venturing in the slightest degree to anticipate the expression of his ulterior views—though we believe that we can trace their extent and direction in a few suggestive sentences, as pregnant as they are unobtrusive—we must yet, in giving a rapid sketch of the facts established, assume the privilege of directing the reader to one or two of their most obvious consequences, and, like honest 'prentices, not suffer the abstracted retirement of our master in the back parlor to diminish the just recommendation of his wares to the passers-by.

103. Eminently deficient in works representative of the earliest and purest tendencies of art, our National Gallery nevertheless affords a characteristic and sufficient series of examples of the practice of the various schools of painting, after oil had been finally substituted for the less manageable glutinous vehicles which, under the general name of tempera, were principally employed in the production of easel pictures up to the middle of the fifteenth century. If the reader were to make the circuit of this collection for the purpose of determining which picture represented with least disputable fidelity the first intention of its painter, and united in its modes of execution the highest reach of achievement with the strongest assurance of durability, we believe that—after hesitating long over hypothetical degrees of blackened shadow and yellowed

light, of lost outline and buried detail, of chilled luster, dimmed transparency, altered color, and weakened force—he would finally pause before a small picture on panel, representing two quaintly dressed figures in a dimly lighted room—dependent for its interest little on expression, and less on treatment—but eminently remarkable for reality of substance, vacuity of space, and vigor of quiet color; nor less for an elaborate finish, united with energetic freshness, which seem [Pg 102] to show that time has been much concerned in its production, and has had no power over its fate.

104. We do not say that the total force of the material is exhibited in this picture, or even that it in any degree possesses the lusciousness and fullness which are among the chief charms of oil-painting; but that upon the whole it would be selected as uniting imperishable firmness with exquisite delicacy; as approaching more unaffectedly and more closely than any other work to the simple truths of natural color and space; and as exhibiting, even in its quaint and minute treatment, conquest over many of the difficulties which the boldest practice of art involves.

This picture, bearing the inscription "Johannes Van Eyck (fuit?) hic, 1434," is probably the portrait, certainly the work, of one of those brothers to whose ingenuity the first invention of the art of oil-painting has been long ascribed. The volume before us is occupied chiefly in determining the real extent of the improvements they introduced, in examining the processes they employed, and in tracing the modifications of those processes adopted by later Flemings, especially Rubens, Rembrandt, and Vandyck. Incidental notices of the Italian system occur, so far as, in its earlier stages, it corresponded with that of the north; but the consideration of its separate character is reserved for a following volume, and though we shall expect with interest this concluding portion of the treatise, we believe that, in the present condition of the English school, the choice of the methods of Van Eyck, Bellini, or Rubens, is as much as we could modestly ask or prudently desire.

105. It would have been strange indeed if a technical perfection like that of the picture above described (equally characteristic of all the works of those brothers), had been at once reached by the first inventors of the art. So far was this from being the case, and so distinct is the evidence of the practice of oil-painting in antecedent periods, that of late years the discoveries of the Van Eycks have not unfrequently been treated as entirely fabulous; and Raspe, in particular, rests [Pg 103] their claims to gratitude on the contingent introduction of amber-varnish and poppy-oil:—"Such *perhaps*," he says, "might have been the misrepresented discovery of the Van Eycks." That tradition, however, for which the great painters of Italy, and their sufficiently vain historian, had so much respect as never to put forward any claim in opposition to it, is not to be clouded by incautious suspicion. Mr. Eastlake has approached it with more reverence, stripped it of its exaggeration, and shown the foundations for it in the fact that the Van Eycks, though they did not create the art, yet were the first to enable it for its function; that having found it in servile office and with dormant power—laid like the dead Adonis on his lettuce-bed—they gave it vitality and dominion. And fortunate it is for those who look for another such reanimation, that the method of the Van Eycks was not altogether their own discovery. Had it been so, that method might still have remained a subject of conjecture; but after being put in possession of the principles commonly acknowledged before their time, it is comparatively easy to trace the direction of their inquiry and the nature of their improvements.

106. With respect to remote periods of antiquity, we believe that the use of a hydrofuge oil-varnish for the protection of works in tempera, the only fact insisted upon by Mr. Eastlake, is also the only one which the labor of innumerable ingenious writers has established: nor up to the beginning of the twelfth century is there proof of any practice of painting except in tempera, encaustic (wax applied by the aid of heat), and fresco. Subsequent to that period, notices of works executed in solid color mixed with oil are frequent, but all that can be proved respecting earlier times is a gradually increasing acquaintance with the different kinds of oil and the modes of their adaptation to artistical uses.

Several drying oils are mentioned by the writers of the first three centuries of the Christian era—walnut by Pliny and Galen, walnut, poppy, and castor-oil (afterwards used by the painters of the [Pg 104] twelfth century as a varnish) by Dioscorides—yet these notices occur only with reference to medicinal or culinary purposes. But at length a drying oil is mentioned in connection with works of art by Aetius, a medical writer of the fifth century. His words are:—

"Walnut oil is prepared like that of almonds, either by pounding or pressing the nuts, or by throwing them, after they have been bruised, into boiling water. The (medicinal) uses are the same: but it has a use besides these, being employed by gilders or encaustic painters; for it dries, and preserves gildings and encaustic paintings for a long time."

"It is therefore clear," says Mr. Eastlake, "that an oil varnish, composed either of inspissated nut oil, or of nut oil combined with a dissolved resin, was employed on gilt surfaces and pictures, with a view to preserve them, at least as early as the fifth century. It may be added that a writer who could then state, as if from his own experience, that such varnishes had the effect of preserving works 'for a long time,' can hardly be understood to speak of a new invention."—P. 22.

Linseed-oil is also mentioned by Aetius, though still for medicinal uses only; but a varnish,

composed of linseed-oil mixed with a variety of resins, is described in a manuscript at Lucca, belonging probably to the eighth century:—

"The age of Charlemagne was an era in the arts; and the addition of linseed-oil to the materials of the varnisher and decorator may on the above evidence be assigned to it. From this time, and during many ages, the linseed-oil varnish, though composed of simpler materials (such as sandarac and mastic resin boiled in the oil), alone appears in the recipes hitherto brought to light."—*Ib.*, p. 24.

---

107. The modes of bleaching and thickening oil in the sun, as well as the siccative power of metallic oxides, were known to the classical writers, and evidence exists of the careful study of [Pg 105] Galen, Dioscorides, and others by the painters of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: the loss (recorded by Vasari) of Antonio Veneziano to the arts, "per che studio in Dioscoride le cose dell'erbe," is a remarkable instance of its less fortunate results. Still, the immixture of solid color with the oil, which had been commonly used as a varnish for tempera paintings and gilt surfaces, was hitherto unsuggested; and no distinct notice seems to occur of the first occasion of this important step, though in the twelfth century, as above stated, the process is described as frequent both in Italy and England. Mr. Eastlake's instances have been selected, for the most part, from four treatises, two of which, though in an imperfect form, have long been known to the public; the third, translated by Mrs. Merrifield, is in course of publication; the fourth, "Tractatus de Coloribus illuminatorum," is of less importance.

Respecting the dates of the first two, those of Eraclius and Theophilus, some difference of opinion exists between Mr. Eastlake and their respective editors. The former MS. was published by Raspe,[14] who inclines to the opinion of its having been written soon after the time of St. Isidore of Seville, probably therefore in the eighth century, but insists only on its being prior to the thirteenth. That of Theophilus, published first by M. Charles de l'Escalopier, and lately from a more perfect MS. by Mr. Hendrie, is ascribed by its English editor (who places Eraclius in the tenth) to the early half of the eleventh century. Mr. Hendrie maintains his opinion with much analytical ingenuity, and we are disposed to think that Mr. Eastlake attaches too much importance to the absence of reference to oil-painting in the Mappæ Clavicula (a MS. of the twelfth century), in placing Theophilus a century and a half later on that ground alone. The question is one of some importance in an antiquarian point of view, but the general reader will perhaps be satisfied with the conclusion that in MSS. which cannot possibly be later than the [Pg 106] close of the twelfth century, references to oil-painting are clear and frequent.

108. Nothing is known of the personality of either Eraclius or Theophilus, but what may be collected from their works; amounting, in the first case, to the facts of the author's "language being barbarous, his credulity exceptionable, and his knowledge superficial," together with his written description as "vir sapientissimus;" while all that is positively known of Theophilus is that he was a monk, and that Theophilus was not his real name. The character, however, of which the assumed name is truly expressive, deserves from us no unrespectful attention; we shall best possess our readers of it by laying before them one or two passages from the preface. We shall make some use of Mr. Hendrie's translation; it is evidently the work of a tasteful man, and in most cases renders the feeling of the original faithfully; but the Latin, monkish though it be, deserved a more accurate following, and many of Mr. Hendrie's deviations bear traces of unsound scholarship. An awkward instance occurs in the first paragraph:—

"Theophilus, humilis presbyter, servus servorum Dei, indignus nomine et professione monachi, omnibus mentis desidiam animique vagationem utili manuum occupatione, et delectabili novitatum meditatione declinare et calcare volentibus, retributionem cœlestis præmii!"

"I, Theophilus, an humble priest, servant of the servants of God, unworthy of the name and profession of a monk, to all wishing to overcome and avoid sloth of the mind or wandering of the soul, by useful manual occupation and the delightful contemplation of novelties, send a recompense of heavenly price."—*Theophilus*, p. 1.

Prœmium is not "price," nor is the verb understood before *retributionem* "send." Mr. Hendrie seems even less familiar with Scriptural than with monkish language, or in this and several other cases he would have recognized the adoption of apostolic formulæ. The whole paragraph is such [Pg 107] a greeting and prayer as stands at the head of the sacred epistles:—"Theophilus, to all who desire to overcome wandering of the soul, etc., etc. (wishes) recompense of heavenly reward." Thus also the dedication of the Byzantine manuscript, lately translated by M. Didron, commences "A tous les peintres, et à tous ceux qui, aimant l'instruction, étudieront ce livre, salut dans le Seigneur." So, presently afterwards, in the sentence, "divina dignatio quæ dat omnibus affluenter et non improperat" (translated, "divine *authority* which affluently and not precipitately gives to all"),

though Mr. Hendrie might have perhaps been excused for not perceiving the transitive sense of *dignatio* after *indignus* in the previous text, which indeed, even when felt, is sufficiently difficult to render in English; and might not have been aware that the word *impropero* frequently bears the sense of *opprobo*; he ought still to have recognized the Scriptural "who giveth to all men liberally and *upbraideth* not." "Qui," in the first page, translated "wherefore," mystifies a whole sentence; "ut mereretur," rendered with a schoolboy's carelessness "as he merited," reverses the meaning of another; "jactantia," in the following page, is less harmfully but not less singularly translated "jealousy." We have been obliged to alter several expressions in the following passages, in order to bring them near enough to the original for our immediate purpose:

"Which knowledge, when he has obtained, let no one magnify himself in his own eyes, as if it had been received from himself, and not from elsewhere; but let him rejoice humbly in the Lord, from whom and by whom are all things, and without whom is nothing; nor let him wrap his gifts in the folds of envy, nor hide them in the closet of an avaricious heart; but all pride of heart being repelled, let him with a cheerful mind give with simplicity to all who ask of him, and let him fear the judgment of the Gospel upon that merchant, who, failing to return to his lord a talent with accumulated interest, deprived of all reward, merited the censure from the mouth of his judge of 'wicked servant.' [Pg 108]

"Fearing to incur which sentence, I, a man unworthy and almost without name, offer gratuitously to all desirous with humility to learn, that which the divine condescension, which giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, gratuitously conceded to me: and I admonish them that in me they acknowledge the goodness, and admire the generosity of God; and I would persuade them to believe that if they also add their labor, the same gifts are within their reach.

"Wherefore, gentle son, whom God has rendered perfectly happy in this respect, that those things are offered to thee gratis, which many, plowing the sea waves with the greatest danger to life, consumed by the hardship of hunger and cold, or subjected to the weary servitude of teachers, and altogether worn out by the desire of learning, yet acquire with intolerable labor, covet with greedy looks this 'BOOK OF VARIOUS ARTS,' read it through with a tenacious memory, embrace it with an ardent love.

"Should you carefully peruse this, you will there find out whatever Greece possesses in kinds and mixtures of various colors; whatever Tuscany knows of in mosaic-work, or in variety of enamel; whatever Arabia shows forth in work of fusion, ductility, or chasing; whatever Italy ornaments with gold, in diversity of vases and sculpture of gems or ivory; whatever France loves in a costly variety of windows; whatever industrious Germany approves in work of gold, silver, copper, and iron, of woods and of stones.

"When you shall have re-read this often, and have committed it to your tenacious memory, you shall thus recompense me for this care of instruction, that as often as you shall have successfully made use of my work, you pray for me for the pity of Omnipotent God, who knows that I have written these things, which are here arranged, neither through love of human approbation, nor through desire of temporal reward, nor have I stolen anything precious or rare through envious jealousy, nor have I kept back anything reserved served for myself alone; but in augmentation of [Pg 109] the honor and glory of His name, I have consulted the progress and hastened to aid the necessities of many men."—*Ib.* pp. xlvii.-li.

---

109. There is perhaps something in the naive seriousness with which these matters of empiricism, to us of so small importance, are regarded by the good monk, which may at first tempt the reader to a smile. It is, however, to be kept in mind that some such mode of introduction was customary in all works of this order and period. The Byzantine MS., already alluded to, is prefaced still more singularly: "Que celui qui veut apprendre la science de la peinture commence à s'y préparer d'avance quelque temps en dessinant sans relache ... puis qu'il adresse à Jesus Christ la prière et oraison suivante," etc.:—the prayer being followed by a homily respecting envy, much resembling that of Theophilus. And we may rest assured that until we have again begun to teach and to learn in this spirit, art will no more recover its true power or place than springs which flow from no heavenward hills can rise to useful level in the wells of the plain. The tenderness, tranquillity, and resoluteness which we feel in such men's words and thoughts found a correspondent expression even in the movements of the hand; precious qualities resulted from them even in the most mechanical of their works, such as no reward can evoke, no academy teach, nor any other merits replace. What force can be summoned by authority, or fostered by patronage, which could for an instant equal in intensity the labor of this humble love, exerting itself for its own pleasure, looking upon its own works by the light of thankfulness, and finishing all, offering all, with the irrespective profusion of flowers opened by the wayside, where the dust may cover them, and the foot crush them?

110. Not a few passages conceived in the highest spirit of self-denying piety would, of themselves, have warranted our sincere thanks to Mr. Hendrie for his publication of the [Pg 110] manuscript. The practical value of its contents is however very variable; most of the processes described have been either improved or superseded, and many of the recipes are quite as

illustrative of the writer's credulity in reception, as generosity in communication. The references to the "land of Havilah" for gold, and to "Mount Calybe" for iron, are characteristic of monkish geographical science; the recipe for the making of Spanish gold is interesting, as affording us a clew to the meaning of the mediæval traditions respecting the basilisk. Pliny says nothing about the hatching of this chimera from cocks' eggs, and ascribes the power of killing at sight to a different animal, the catoblepas, whose head, fortunately, was so heavy that it could not be held up. Probably the word "basiliscus" in Theophilus would have been better translated "cockatrice."

"There is also a gold called Spanish gold, which is composed from red copper, powder of basilisk, and human blood, and acid. The Gentiles, whose skillfulness in this art is commendable, make basilisks in this manner. They have, underground, a house walled with stones everywhere, above and below, with two very small windows, so narrow that scarcely any light can appear through them; in this house they place two old cocks of twelve or fifteen years, and they give them plenty of food. When these have become fat, through the heat of their good condition, they agree together and lay eggs. Which being laid, the cocks are taken out and toads are placed in, which may hatch the eggs, and to which bread is given for food. The eggs being hatched, chickens issue out, like hens' chickens, to which after seven days grow the tails of serpents, and immediately, if there were not a stone pavement to the house, they would enter the earth. Guarding against which, their masters have round brass vessels of large size, perforated all over, the mouths of which are narrow, in which they place these chickens, and close the mouths with copper coverings and inter them underground, and they are nourished with the fine earth entering [Pg 111] through the holes for six months. After this they uncover them and apply a copious fire, until the animals' insides are completely burnt. Which done, when they have become cold, they are taken out and carefully ground, adding to them a third part of the blood of a red man, which blood has been dried and ground. These two compositions are tempered with sharp acid in a clean vessel; they then take very thin sheets of the purest red copper, and anoint this composition over them on both sides, and place them in the fire. And when they have become glowing, they take them out and quench and wash them in the same confection; and they do this for a long time, until this composition eats through the copper, and it takes the color of gold. This gold is proper for all work."—*Ib.* p. 267.

Our readers will find in Mr. Hendrie's interesting note the explanation of the symbolical language of this recipe; though we cannot agree with him in supposing Theophilus to have so understood it. We have no doubt the monk wrote what he had heard in good faith, and with no equivocal meaning; and we are even ourselves much disposed to regret and resist the transformation of toads into nitrates of potash, and of basilisks into sulphates of copper.

111. But whatever may be the value of the recipes of Theophilus, couched in the symbolical language of the alchemist, his evidence is as clear as it is conclusive, as far as regards the general processes adopted in his own time. The treatise of Peter de St. Audemar, contained in a volume transcribed by Jehan le Begue in 1431, bears internal evidence of being nearly coeval with that of Theophilus. And in addition to these MSS., Mr. Eastlake has examined the records of Ely and Westminster, which are full of references to decorative operations. From these sources it is not only demonstrated that oil-painting, at least in the broadest sense (striking colors mixed with oil on surfaces of wood or stone), was perfectly common both in Italy and England in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries, but every step of the process is determinable. Stone surfaces [Pg 112] were primed with white lead mixed with linseed oil, applied in successive coats, and carefully smoothed when dry. Wood was planed smooth (or, for delicate work, covered with leather of horse-skin or parchment), then coated with a mixture of white lead, wax, and pulverized tile, on which the oil and lead priming was laid. In the successive application of the coats of this priming, the painter is warned by Eraclius of the danger of letting the superimposed coat be more oily than that beneath, the shriveling of the surface being a necessary consequence.

"The observation respecting the cause, or one of the causes, of a wrinkled and shriveled surface, is not unimportant. Oil, or an oil varnish, used in abundance with the colors over a perfectly dry preparation, will produce this appearance: the employment of an oil varnish is even supposed to be detected by it.... As regards the effect itself, the best painters have not been careful to avoid it. Parts of Titian's St. Sebastian (now in the Gallery of the Vatican) are shriveled; the Giorgione in the Louvre is so; the drapery of the figure of Christ in the Duke of Wellington's Correggio exhibits the same appearance; a Madonna and Child by Reynolds, at Petworth, is in a similar state, as are also parts of some pictures by Greuze. It is the reverse of a cracked surface, and is unquestionably the less evil of the two."—"Eastlake," pp. 36-38.

---

112. On the white surface thus prepared, the colors, ground finely with linseed oil, were applied, according to the advice of Theophilus, in not less than three successive coats, and finally

protected with amber or sandarac varnish: each coat of color being carefully dried by the aid of heat or in the sun before a second was applied, and the entire work before varnishing. The practice of carefully drying each coat was continued in the best periods of art, but the necessity of exposure to the sun intimated by Theophilus appears to have arisen only from his careless preparation of the linseed oil, and ignorance of a proper drying medium. Consequent on this [Pg 113] necessity is the restriction in Theophilus, St. Audemar, and in the British Museum MS., of oil-painting to wooden surfaces, because movable panels could be dried in the sun; while, for walls, the colors are to be mixed with water, wine, gum, or the usual tempera vehicles, egg and fig-tree juice; white lead and verdigris, themselves dryers, being the only pigments which could be mixed with oil for walls. But the MS. of Eraclius and the records of our English cathedrals imply no such absolute restriction. They mention the employment of oil for the painting or varnishing of columns and interior walls, and in quantity very remarkable. Among the entries relating to St. Stephen's chapel, occur—"For 19 flagons of painter's oil, at 3*s.* 4*d.* the flagon, 43*s.* 4*d.*" (It might be as well, in the next edition, to correct the copyist's reverse of the position of the X and L, lest it should be thought that the principles of the science of arithmetic have been progressive, as well as those of art.) And presently afterwards, in May of the same year, "to John de Hennay, for *seventy* flagons and a half of painter's oil for the painting of the same chapel, at 20*d.* the flagon, 117*s.* 6*d.*" The expression "painter's oil" seems to imply more careful preparation than that directed by Theophilus, probably purification from its mucilage in the sun; but artificial heat was certainly employed to assist the drying, and after reading of flagons supplied by the score, we can hardly be surprised at finding charcoal furnished by the cartload—see an entry relating to the Painted Chamber. In one MS. of Eraclius, however, a distinct description of a drying oil in the modern sense, occurs, white lead and lime being added, and the oil thickened by exposure to the sun, as was the universal practice in Italy.

113. Such was the system of oil-painting known before the time of Van Eyck; but it remains a question in what kind of works and with what degree of refinement this system had been applied. The passages in Eraclius refer only to ornamental work, imitations of marble, etc.; and although, in the records of Ely cathedral, the words "pro ymaginibus super columnas depingendis" may [Pg 114] perhaps be understood as referring to paintings of figures, the applications of oil, which are distinctly determinable from these and other English documents, are merely decorative; and "the large supplies of it which appear in the Westminster and Ely records indicate the coarseness of the operations for which it was required." Theophilus, indeed, mentions tints for faces—*mixturas vultuum*; but it is to be remarked that Theophilus painted with a liquid oil, the drying of which in the sun he expressly says "in *ymaginibus* et aliis picturis diuturnum et tædiosum nimis est." The oil generally employed was thickened to the consistence of a varnish. Cennini recommends that it be kept in the sun until reduced one half; and in the Paris copy of Eraclius we are told that "the longer the oil remains in the sun the better it will be." Such a vehicle entirely precluded delicacy of execution.

"Paintings entirely executed with the thickened vehicle, at a time when art was in the very lowest state, and when its votaries were ill qualified to contend with unnecessary difficulties, must have been of the commonest description. Armorial bearings, patterns, and similar works of mechanical decoration, were perhaps as much as could be attempted.

"Notwithstanding the general reference to flesh-painting, 'e così fa dello incarnare,' in Cennini's directions, there are no certain examples of pictures of the fourteenth century, in which the flesh is executed in oil colors. This leads us to inquire what were the ordinary applications of oil-painting in Italy at that time. It appears that the method, when adopted at all, was considered to belong to the complemental and merely decorative parts of a picture. It was employed in portions of the work only, on draperies, and over gilding and foils. Cennini describes such operations as follows. 'Gild the surface to be occupied by the drapery; draw on it what ornaments or patterns you please; glaze the unornamented intervals with verdigris ground in oil, shading some folds [Pg 115] twice. Then, when this is dry, glaze the same color over the whole drapery, both ornaments and plain portions.'

"These operations, together with the gilt field round the figures, the stucco decorations, and the carved framework, tabernacle, or *ornamento* itself of the picture, were completed first; the faces and hands, which in Italian pictures of the fourteenth century were always in tempera, were added afterwards, or at all events after the draperies and background were finished. Cennini teaches the practice of all but the carving. In later times the work was divided, and the decorator or gilder was sometimes a more important person than the painter. Thus some works of an inferior Florentine artist were ornamented with stuccoes, carving, and gilding, by the celebrated Donatello, who, in his youth, practiced this art in connection with sculpture. Vasari observed the following inscription under a picture:—'Simone Cini, a Florentine, wrought the carved work; Gabriello Saracini executed the gilding; and Spinello di Luca, of Arezzo, painted the picture, in the year 1385.'"—*Ib.* pp. 71, 72, and 80.

---

114. We may pause to consider for a moment what effect upon the mental habits of these earlier schools might result from this separate and previous completion of minor details. It is to be remembered that the painter's object in the backgrounds of works of this period (universally, or

nearly so, of religious subject) was not the deceptive representation of a natural scene, but the adornment and setting forth of the central figures with precious work—the conversion of the picture, as far as might be, into a gem, flushed with color and alive with light. The processes necessary for this purpose were altogether mechanical; and those of stamping and burnishing the gold, and of enameling, were necessarily performed before any delicate tempera-work could be executed. Absolute decision of design was therefore necessary throughout; hard linear separations were unavoidable between the oil-color and the tempera, or between each and the gold or enamel. General harmony of effect, aërial perspective, or deceptive chiaroscuro, became [Pg 116] totally impossible; and the dignity of the picture depended exclusively on the lines of its design, the purity of its ornaments, and the beauty of expression which could be attained in those portions (the faces and hands) which, set off and framed by this splendor of decoration, became the cynosure of eyes. The painter's entire energy was given to these portions; and we can hardly imagine any discipline more calculated to insure a grand and thoughtful school of art than the necessity of discriminated character and varied expression imposed by this peculiarly separate and prominent treatment of the features. The exquisite drawing of the hand also, at least in outline, remained for this reason even to late periods one of the crowning excellences of the religious schools. It might be worthy the consideration of our present painters whether some disadvantage may not result from the exactly opposite treatment now frequently adopted, the finishing of the head before the addition of its accessories. A flimsy and indolent background is almost a necessary consequence, and probably also a false flesh-color, irrecoverable by any after-opposition.

115. The reader is in possession of most of the conclusions relating to the practice of oil-painting up to about the year 1406.

"Its inconveniences were such that tempera was not unreasonably preferred to it for works that required careful design, precision, and completeness. Hence the Van Eycks seem to have made it their first object to overcome the stigma that attached to oil-painting, as a process fit only for ordinary purposes and mechanical decorations. With an ambition partly explained by the previous coarse applications of the method, they sought to raise wonder by surpassing the finish of tempera with the very material that had long been considered intractable. Mere finish was, however, the least of the excellences of these reformers. The step was short which sufficed to [Pg 117] remove the self-imposed difficulties of the art; but that effort would probably not have been so successful as it was, in overcoming long-established prejudices, had it not been accompanied by some of the best qualities which oil-painting, as a means of imitating nature, can command."—*Ib.* p. 88.

---

116. It has been a question to which of the two brothers, Hubert or John, the honor of the invention is to be attributed. Van Mander gives the date of the birth of Hubert 1366; and his interesting epitaph in the cathedral of St. Bavon, at Ghent, determines that of his death:—

"Take warning from me, ye who walk over me. I was as you are, but am now buried dead beneath you. Thus it appears that neither art nor medicine availed me. Art, honor, wisdom, power, affluence, are spared not when death comes. I was called Hubert Van Eyck; I am now food for worms. Formerly known and highly honored in painting; this all was shortly after turned to nothing. It was in the year of the Lord one thousand four hundred and twenty-six, on the eighteenth day of September, that I rendered up my soul to God, in sufferings. Pray God for me, ye who love art, that I may attain to His sight. Flee sin; turn to the best [objects]: for you must follow me at last."

John Van Eyck appears by sufficient evidence to have been born between 1390 and 1395; and, as the improved oil-painting was certainly introduced about 1410, the probability is greater that the system had been discovered by the elder brother than by the youth of 15. What the improvement actually was is a far more important question. Vasari's account, in the Life of Antonello da Messina, is the first piece of evidence here examined (p. 205); and it is examined at once with more respect and more advantage than the half-negligent, half-embarrassed wording of the passage might appear either to deserve or to promise. Vasari states that "*Giovanni* of Bruges," [Pg 118] having finished a tempera-picture on panel, and varnished it as usual, placed it in the sun to dry —that the heat opened the joinings—and that the artist, provoked at the destruction of his work—

"began to devise means for preparing a kind of varnish which should dry in the shade, so as to avoid placing his pictures in the sun. Having made experiments with many things, both pure and mixed together, he at last found that linseed-oil and nut-oil, among the many which he had

tested, were more drying than all the rest. These, therefore, boiled with *other mixtures of his*, made him the varnish which he, nay, which all the painters of the world, had long desired. Continuing his experiments with many other things, he saw that the immixture of the colors with these kinds of oils gave them a very firm consistence, which, when dry, was proof against wet; and, moreover, that the vehicle lit up the colors so powerfully, that it gave a gloss of itself without varnish; and that which appeared to him still more admirable was, that it allowed of blending [the colors] infinitely better than tempera. Giovanni, rejoicing in this invention, and being a person of discernment, began many works."

---

117. The reader must observe that this account is based upon and clumsily accommodated to the idea, prevalent in Vasari's time throughout Italy, that Van Eyck not merely improved, but first introduced, the art of oil-painting, and that no mixture of color with linseed or nut oil had taken place before his time. We are only informed of the new and important part of the invention, under the pointedly specific and peculiarly Vasarian expression—"altre sue misture." But the real value of the passage is dependent on the one fact of which it puts us in possession, and with respect to which there is every reason to believe it trustworthy, that it was in search of a *Varnish* which would dry in the shade that Van Eyck discovered the new vehicle. The next point to be determined is the nature of the Varnish ordinarily employed, and spoken of by Cennini and many other writers under the familiar title of Vernice liquida. The derivation of the word Vernix bears materially on the question, and will not be devoid of interest for the general reader, who may perhaps be surprised at finding himself carried by Mr. Eastlake's daring philology into regions poetical and planetary:— [Pg 119]

"Eustathius, a writer of the twelfth century, in his commentary on Homer, states that the Greeks of his day called amber (ἠλεκτρον) Veronice (βερονίκη). Salmasius, quoting from a Greek medical MS. of the same period, writes it Verenice (βερενίκη). In the Lucca MS. (8th century) the word Veronica more than once occurs among the ingredients of varnishes, and it is remarkable that in the copies of the same recipes in the *Mappæ Clavicula* (12th century) the word is spelt, in the genitive, Verenicis and Vernicis. This is probably the earliest instance of the use of the Latinized word nearly in its modern form; the original nominative Vernice being afterwards changed to Vernix.

"Veronice or Verenice, as a designation for amber, must have been common at an earlier period than the date of the Lucca MS., since it there occurs as a term in ordinary use. It is scarcely necessary to remark that the letter β was sounded v by the mediæval Greeks, as it is by their present descendants. Even during the classic ages of Greece β represented φ in certain dialects. The name Berenice or Beronice, borne by more than one daughter of the Ptolemies, would be more correctly written Pherenice or Pheronice. The literal coincidence of this name and its modifications with the Vernice of the middle ages, might almost warrant the supposition that amber, which by the best ancient authorities was considered a mineral, may, at an early period, have been distinguished by the name of a constellation, the constellation of Berenice's (golden) hair."—*Eastlake*, p. 230.

---

118. We are grieved to interrupt our reader's voyage among the constellations; but the next page crystallizes us again like ants in amber, or worse, in gum-sandarach. It appears, from conclusive and abundant evidence, that the greater cheapness of sandarach, and its easier solubility in oil rendered it the usual substitute for amber, and that the word Vernice, when it occurs alone, is the common synonym for dry sandarach resin. This, dissolved by heat in linseed oil, three parts oil to one of resin, was the Vernice liquida of the Italians, sold in Cennini's time ready prepared, and the customary varnish of tempera pictures. Concrete turpentine ("oyle of fir-tree," "Pece Greca," "Pegola"), previously prepared over a slow fire until it ceased to swell, was added to assist the liquefaction of the sandarach, first in Venice, where the material could easily be procured, and afterwards in Florence. The varnish so prepared, especially when it was long boiled to render it more drying, was of a dark color, materially affecting the tints over which it was passed.[15] [Pg 120]

"It is not impossible that the lighter style of coloring introduced by Giotto may have been intended by him to counteract the effects of this varnish, the appearance of which in the Greek pictures he could not fail to observe. Another peculiarity in the works of the painters of the time referred to, particularly those of the Florentine and Sienese schools, is the greenish tone of their coloring in the flesh; produced by the mode in which they often prepared their works, viz. by a green under-painting. The appearance was neutralized by the red sandarac varnish, and pictures executed in the manner described must have looked better before it was removed."—*Ib.* p. 252.

Farther on, this remark is thus followed out:— [Pg 121]

"The paleness or freshness of the tempera may have been sometimes calculated for this brown glazing (for such it was in effect), and when this was the case, the picture was, strictly speaking, unfinished without its varnish. It is, therefore, quite conceivable that a painter, averse to mere mechanical operations, would, in his final process, still have an eye to the harmony of his work, and, seeing that the tint of his varnish was more or less adapted to display the hues over which it was spread, would vary that tint, so as to heighten the effect of the picture. The practice of tingeing varnishes was not even new, as the example given by Cardanus proves. The next step to this would be to treat the tempera picture still more as a preparation, and to calculate still further on the varnish, by modifying and adapting its color to a greater extent. A work so completed must have nearly approached the appearance of an oil picture. This was perhaps the moment when the new method opened itself to the mind of Hubert Van Eyck.... The next change necessarily consisted in using opaque as well as transparent colors; the former being applied over the light, the latter over the darker, portions of the picture; while the work in tempera was now reduced to a light chiaroscuro preparation.... It was now that the hue of the original varnish became an objection; for, as a medium, it required to be itself colorless."—*Ib.* pp. 271-273.

---

119. Our author has perhaps somewhat embarrassed this part of the argument, by giving too much importance to the conjectural adaptation of the tints of the tempera picture to the brown varnish, and too little to the bold transition from transparent to opaque color on the lights. Up to this time, we must remember, the entire drawing of the flesh had been in tempera; the varnish, however richly tinted, however delicately adjusted to the tints beneath, was still broadly applied over the whole surface, the design being seen through the transparent glaze. But the mixture of opaque color at once implies that portions of the design itself were executed with the varnish for [Pg 122] a vehicle, and therefore that the varnish had been entirely changed both in color and consistence. If, as above stated, the improvement in the varnish had been made only after it had been mixed with opaque color, it does not appear why the idea of so mixing it should have presented itself to Van Eyck more than to any other painter of the day, and Vasari's story of the split panel becomes nugatory. But we apprehend, from a previous passage (**p. 258**), that Mr. Eastlake would not have us so interpret him. We rather suppose that we are expressing his real opinion in stating our own, that Van Eyck, seeking for a varnish which would dry in the shade, first perfected the methods of dissolving amber or copal in oil, then sought for and added a good dryer, and thus obtained a varnish which, having been subjected to no long process of boiling, was nearly colorless; that in using this new varnish over tempera works he might cautiously and gradually mix it with the opaque color, whose purity he now found unaffected, by the transparent vehicle; and, finally, as the thickness of the varnish in its less perfect state was an obstacle to precision of execution, increase the proportion of its oil to the amber, or add a diluent, as occasion required.

120. Such, at all events, in the sum, whatever might be the order or occasion of discovery, were Van Eyck's improvements in the vehicle of color, and to these, applied by singular ingenuity and affection to the imitation of nature, with a fidelity hitherto unattempted, Mr. Eastlake attributes the influence which his works obtained over his contemporaries:—

"If we ask in what the chief novelty of his practice consisted, we shall at once recognize it in an amount of general excellence before unknown. At all times, from Van Eyck's day to the present, whenever nature has been surprisingly well imitated in pictures, the first and last question with the ignorant has been—What materials did the artist use? The superior mechanical secret is always supposed to be in the hands of the greatest genius; and an early example of sudden [Pg 123] perfection in art, like the fame of the heroes of antiquity, was likely to monopolize and represent the claims of many."—*Ib.* p. 266.

This is all true; that Van Eyck saw nature more truly than his predecessors is certain; but it is disputable whether this rendering of nature recommended his works to the imitation of the Italians. On the contrary, Mr. Eastlake himself observes in another place (p. 220), that the character of delicate imitation common to the Flemish pictures militated *against* the acceptance of their method:—

"The specimens of Van Eyck, Hugo van der Goes, Memling, and others, which the Florentines had seen, may have appeared, in the eyes of some severe judges (for example, those who daily studied the frescoes of Masaccio), to indicate a certain connection between oil painting and minuteness, if not always of size, yet of style. The method, by its very finish and the possible completeness of its gradations, must have seemed well calculated to exhibit numerous objects on

a small scale. That this was really the impression produced, at a later period, on one who represented the highest style of design, has been lately proved by means of an interesting document, in which the opinions of Michael Angelo on the character of Flemish pictures are recorded by a contemporary artist."[16]

---

121. It was not, we apprehend, the resemblance to nature, but the abstract power of color, which inflamed with admiration and jealousy the artists of Italy; it was not the delicate touch nor the precise verity of Van Eyck, but the "vivacita de' colori" (says Vasari) which at the first glance [Pg 124] induced Antonello da Messina to "put aside every other avocation and thought, and at once set out for Flanders," assiduously to cultivate the friendship of *Giovanni*, presenting to him many drawings and other things, until *Giovanni*, finding himself already old, was content that Antonello should see the method of his coloring in oil, nor then to quit Flanders until he had "thoroughly learned that *process*." It was this *process*, separate, mysterious, and admirable, whose communication the Venetian, Domenico, thought the most acceptable kindness which could repay his hospitality; and whose solitary possession Castagno thought cheaply purchased by the guilt of the betrayer and murderer; it was in this process, the deduction of watchful intelligence, not by fortuitous discovery, that the first impulse was given to European art. Many a plank had yawned in the sun before Van Eyck's; but he alone saw through the rent, as through an opening portal, the lofty perspective of triumph widening its rapid wedge;—many a spot of opaque color had clouded the transparent amber of earlier times; but the little cloud that rose over Van Eyck's horizon was "like unto a man's hand."

What this process was, and how far it differed from preceding practice, has hardly, perhaps, been pronounced by Mr. Eastlake with sufficient distinctness. One or two conclusions which he has not marked are, we think, deducible from his evidence, In one point, and that not an unimportant one, we believe that many careful students of coloring will be disposed to differ with him: our own intermediate opinion we will therefore venture to state, though with all diffidence.

122. We must not, however, pass entirely without notice the two chapters on the preparation of oils, and on the oleo-resinous vehicles, though to the general reader the recipes contained in them are of little interest; and in the absence of all expression of opinion on the part of Mr. Eastlake as to their comparative excellence, even to the artist, their immediate utility appears somewhat doubtful. One circumstance, however, is remarkable in all, the care taken by the great [Pg 125] painters, without exception, to avoid the yellowing of their oil. Perfect and stable clearness is the ultimate aim of all the processes described (many of them troublesome and tedious in the extreme): and the effect of the altered oil is of course most dreaded on pale and cold colors. Thus Philippe Nunez tells us how to purify linseed oil "for white and blues;" and Pacheco, "el de linaza no me quele mal: aunque ai quien diga que no a de ver el Azul ni el Blanco este Azeite."[17] De Mayerne recommends poppy oil "for painting white, blue, and similar colors, so that they shall not yellow;" and in another place, "for air-tints and blue;"—while the inclination to green is noticed as an imperfection in hempseed oil: so Vasari—speaking of linseed-oil in contemporary practice—"benchè il noce e meglio, perchè ingialla meno." The Italians generally mixed an essential oil with their delicate tints, including flesh tints (p. 431). Extraordinary methods were used by the Flemish painters to protect their blues; they were sometimes painted with size, and varnished; sometimes strewed in powder on fresh white-lead (p. 456). Leonardo gives a careful recipe for preventing the change of color in nut oil, supposing it to be owing to neglect in removing the skin of the nut. His words, given at (p. 321), are incorrectly translated: "una certa bucciolina," is not a husk or rind—but "a thin skin," meaning the white membranous covering of the nut itself, of which it is almost impossible to detach all the inner laminæ. This, "che tiene della natura del mallo," Leonardo supposes to give the expressed oil its property of forming a *skin* at the surface.

123. We think these passages interesting, because they are entirely opposed to the modern ideas of the desirableness of yellow lights and green blues, which have been introduced chiefly by the study of altered pictures. The anxiety of Rubens, expressed in various letters, quoted at p. 516, lest any of his whites should have become yellow, and his request that his pictures might be exposed to the sun to remedy the defect, if it occurred, are conclusive on this subject, as far as [Pg 126] regards the feeling of the Flemish painters: we shall presently see that the *coolness* of their light was an essential part of their scheme of color.

The testing of the various processes given in these two chapters must be a matter of time: many of them have been superseded by recent discoveries. Copal varnish is in modern practice no inefficient substitute for amber, and we believe that most artists will agree with us in thinking that the vehicles now in use are sufficient for all purposes, if used rightly. We shall, therefore, proceed in the first place to give a rapid sketch of the entire process of the Flemish school as it is stated by Mr. Eastlake in the 11th chapter, and then examine the several steps of it one by one, with the view at once of marking what seems disputable, and of deducing from what is certain some considerations respecting the consequences of its adoption in subsequent art.

124. The ground was with all the early masters pure *white*, plaster of Paris, or washed chalk with size; a preparation which has been employed without change from remote antiquity—witness the Egyptian mummy-cases. Such a ground, becoming brittle with age, is evidently unsafe on canvas, unless exceedingly thin; and even on panel is liable to crack and detach itself, unless it be carefully guarded against damp. The precautions of Van Eyck against this danger, as well as

against the warping of his panel, are remarkable instances of his regard to points apparently trivial:—

"In large altar-pieces, necessarily composed of many pieces, it may be often remarked that each separate plank has become slightly convex in front: this is particularly observable in the picture of the Transfiguration by Raphael. The heat of candles on altars is supposed to have been the cause of this not uncommon defect; but heat, if considerable, would rather produce the contrary appearance. It would seem that the layer of paint, with its substratum, slightly operates to [Pg 127] prevent the wood from contracting or becoming concave on that side; it might therefore be concluded that a similar protection at the back, by equalizing the conditions, would tend to keep the wood flat. The oak panel on which the picture by Van Eyck in the National Gallery is painted is protected at the back by a composition of gesso, size, and tow, over which a coat of black oil-paint was passed. This, whether added when the picture was executed or subsequently, has tended to preserve the wood (which is not at all worm-eaten), and perhaps to prevent its warping."—*Ib.* pp. 373, 374.

On the white ground, scraped, when it was perfectly dry, till it was "as white as milk and as smooth as ivory" (Cennini), the outline of the picture was drawn, and its light and shade expressed, usually with the pen, with all possible care; and over this outline a coating of size was applied in order to render the gesso ground *non*-absorbent. The establishment of this fact is of the greatest importance, for the whole question of the true function and use of the gesso ground hangs upon it. That use has been supposed by all previous writers on the technical processes of painting to be, by absorbing the oil, to remove in some degree the cause of yellowness in the colors. Had this been so, the ground itself would have lost its brilliancy, and it would have followed that a dark ground, equally absorbent, would have answered the purpose as well. But the evidence adduced by Mr. Eastlake on this subject is conclusive:—

"Pictures are sometimes transferred from panel to cloth. The front being secured by smooth paper or linen, the picture is laid on its face, and the wood is gradually planed and scraped away. At last the ground appears; first, the 'gesso grosso,' then, next the painted surface, the 'gesso sottile.' On scraping this it is found that it is whitest immediately next the colors; for on the inner side it may sometimes have received slight stains from the wood, if the latter was not first sized. [Pg 128] When a picture which happens to be much cracked has been oiled or varnished, the fluid will sometimes penetrate through the cracks into the ground, which in such parts had become accessible. In that case the white ground is stained in lines only, corresponding in their direction with the cracks of the picture. This last circumstance also proves that the ground was not sufficiently hard in itself to prevent the absorption of oil. Accordingly, it required to be rendered non-absorbent by a coating of size; and this was passed *over* the outline, before the oil-priming was applied."—*Ib.* pp. 383, 384.

The perfect whiteness of the ground being thus secured, a transparent warm oil-priming, in early practice flesh-colored, was usually passed over the entire picture. This custom, says Mr. Eastlake, appears to have been "a remnant of the old habit of covering tempera pictures with a warm varnish, and was sometimes omitted." When used it was permitted to dry thoroughly, and over it the shadows were painted in with a rich transparent brown, mixed with a somewhat thick oleo-resinous vehicle; the lighter colors were then added with a thinner vehicle, taking care not to disturb the transparency of the shadows by the unnecessary mixture of opaque pigments, and leaving the ground bearing bright *through the thin lights*. (?) As the art advanced, the lights were more and more loaded, and afterwards glazed, the shadows being still left in untouched transparency. This is the method of Rubens. The later Italian colorists appear to have laid opaque local color without fear even into the shadows, and to have recovered transparency by ultimate glazing.

125. Such are the principal heads of the method of the early Flemish masters, as stated by Mr. Eastlake. We have marked as questionable the influence of the ground in supporting the lights: our reasons for doing so we will give, after we have stated what we suppose to be the advantages or disadvantages of the process in its earlier stages, guiding ourselves as far as possible by the [Pg 129] passages in which any expression occurs of Mr. Eastlake's opinion.

The reader cannot but see that the *eminent* character of the whole system is its predeterminateness. From first to last its success depended on the decision and clearness of each successive step. The drawing and light and shade were secured without any interference of color; but when over these the oil-priming was once laid, the design could neither be altered nor, if lost, recovered; a color laid too opaquely in the shadow destroyed the inner organization of the picture, and remained an irremediable blemish; and it was necessary, in laying color even on the

lights, to follow the guidance of the drawing beneath with a caution and precision which rendered anything like freedom of handling, in the modern sense, totally impossible. Every quality which depends on rapidity, accident, or audacity was interdicted; no affectation of ease was suffered to disturb the humility of patient exertion. Let our readers consider in what temper such a work must be undertaken and carried through—a work in which error was irremediable, change impossible—which demanded the drudgery of a student, while it involved the deliberation of a master—in which the patience of a mechanic was to be united with the foresight of a magician—in which no license could be indulged either to fitfulness of temper or felicity of invention—in which haste was forbidden, yet languor fatal, and consistency of conception no less incumbent than continuity of toil. Let them reflect what kind of men must have been called up and trained by work such as this, and then compare the tones of mind which are likely to be produced by our present practice,—a practice in which alteration is admitted to any extent in any stage—in which neither foundation is laid nor end foreseen—in which all is dared and nothing resolved, everything periled, nothing provided for—in which men play the sycophant in the courts of their humors, and hunt wisps in the marshes of their wits—a practice which invokes accident, evades law, discredits application, despises system, and sets forth with chief exultation, [Pg 130] contingent beauty, and extempore invention.

126. But it is not only the fixed nature of the successive steps which influenced the character of these early painters. A peculiar *direction* was given to their efforts by the close attention to drawing which, as Mr. Eastlake has especially noticed, was involved in the preparation of the design on the white ground. That design was secured with a care and finish which in many instances might seem altogether supererogatory.[18] The preparation by John Bellini in the Florentine gallery is completed with exhaustless diligence into even the portions farthest removed from the light, where the thick brown of the shadows must necessarily have afterwards concealed the greater part of the work. It was the discipline undergone in producing this preparation which fixed the character of the school. The most important part of the picture was executed not with the brush, but with the point, and the refinements attainable by this instrument dictated the treatment of their subject. Hence the transition to etching and engraving, and the intense love of minute detail, accompanied by an imaginative communication of dignity and power to the smallest forms, in Albert Dürer and others. But this attention to minutiæ was not the only result; the disposition of light and shade was also affected by the method. Shade was not to be had at small cost; its masses could not be dashed on in impetuous generalization, fields for the future recovery of light. They were measured out and wrought to their depths only by expenditure of toil and time; and, as future grounds for color, they were necessarily restricted to the *natural* shadow of every object, white being left for high lights of whatever hue. In consequence, the character of pervading daylight, almost inevitably produced in the preparation, was afterwards assumed as a standard in the painting. Effectism, accidental [Pg 131] shadows, all obvious and vulgar artistical treatment, were excluded, or introduced only as the lights became more loaded, and were consequently imposed with more facility on the dark ground. Where shade was required in large mass, it was obtained by introducing an object of locally dark color. The Italian masters who followed Van Eyck's system were in the constant habit of relieving their principal figures by the darkness of some object, foliage, throne, or drapery, introduced behind the head, the open sky being left visible on each side. A green drapery is thus used with great quaintness by John Bellini in the noble picture of the Brera Gallery; a black screen, with marbled veins, behind the portraits of himself and his brother in the Louvre; a crimson velvet curtain behind the Madonna, in Francia's best picture at Bologna. Where the subject was sacred, and the painter great, this system of pervading light produced pictures of a peculiar and tranquil majesty; where the mind of the painter was irregularly or frivolously imaginative, its temptations to accumulative detail were too great to be resisted—the spectator was by the German masters overwhelmed with the copious inconsistency of a dream, or compelled to traverse the picture from corner to corner like a museum of curiosities.

127. The chalk or pen preparation being completed, and the oil-priming laid, we have seen that the shadows were laid in with a transparent *brown* in considerable body. The question next arises —What influence is this part of the process likely to have had upon the *coloring* of the school? It is to be remembered that the practice was continued to the latest times, and that when the thin light had been long abandoned, and a loaded body of color had taken its place, the brown transparent shadow was still retained, and is retained often to this day, when asphaltum is used as its base, at the risk of the destruction of the picture. The utter loss of many of Reynolds' noblest works has been caused by the lavish use of this pigment. What the pigment actually was in older times is left by Mr. Eastlake undecided:— [Pg 132]

"A rich brown, which, whether an earth or mineral alone, or a substance of the kind enriched by the addition of a transparent yellow or orange, is not an unimportant element of the glowing coloring which is remarkable in examples of the school. Such a color, by artificial combinations at least, is easily supplied; and it is repeated, that, in general, the materials now in use are quite as good as those which the Flemish masters had at their command."—*Ib.* p. 488.

At p. 446 it is also asserted that the peculiar glow of the brown of Rubens is hardly to be

accounted for by any accidental variety in the Cassel earths, but was obtained by the mixture of a transparent yellow. Evidence, however, exists of asphaltum having been used in Flemish pictures, and with safety, even though prepared in the modern manner:—

"It is not ground" (says De Mayerne), "but a drying oil is prepared with litharge, and the pulverized asphaltum mixed with this oil is placed in a glass vessel, suspended by a thread [in a water bath]. Thus exposed to the fire it melts like butter; when it begins to boil it is instantly removed. It is an excellent color for shadows, and may be glazed like lake; it lasts well."—*Ib.* p. 463.

---

128. The great advantage of this primary laying in of the darks in brown was the obtaining an unity of shadow throughout the picture, which rendered variety of hue, where it occurred, an instantly accepted evidence of light. It mattered not how vigorous or how deep in tone the masses of local color might be, the eye could not confound them with true shadow; it everywhere distinguished the transparent browns as indicative of gloom, and became acutely sensible of the presence and preciousness of light wherever local tints rose out of their depths. But however superior this method may be to the arbitrary use of polychrome shadows, utterly unrelated to the lights, which has been admitted in modern works; and however beautiful or brilliant its results might be in the hands of colorists as faithful as Van Eyck, or as inventive as Rubens; the principle [Pg 133] on which it is based becomes dangerous whenever, in assuming that the ultimate hue of every shadow is brown, it presupposes a peculiar and conventional light. It is true, that so long as the early practice of finishing the under-drawing with the pen was continued, the gray of that preparation might perhaps diminish the force of the upper color, which became in that case little more than a glowing varnish—even thus sometimes verging on too monotonous warmth, as the reader may observe in the head of Dandolo, by John Bellini, in the National Gallery. But when, by later and more impetuous hands, the point tracing was dispensed with, and the picture boldly thrown in with the brown pigment, it became matter of great improbability that the force of such a prevalent tint could afterwards be softened or melted into a pure harmony; the painter's feeling for truth was blunted; brilliancy and richness became his object rather than sincerity or solemnity; with the palled sense of color departed the love of light, and the diffused sunshine of the early schools died away in the narrowed rays of Rembrandt. We think it a deficiency in the work before us that the extreme peril of such a principle, incautiously applied, has not been pointed out, and that the method of Rubens has been so highly extolled for its technical perfection, without the slightest notice of the gross mannerism into which its facile brilliancy too frequently betrayed the mighty master.

129. Yet it remains a question how far, under certain limitations and for certain effects, this system of pure brown shadow may be successfully followed. It is not a little singular that it has already been revived in water-colors by a painter who, in his realization of light and splendor of hue, stands without a rival among living schools—Mr. Hunt; his neutral shadows being, we believe, first thrown in frankly with sepia, the color introduced upon the lights, and the central lights afterwards further raised by body color, and glazed. But in this process the sepia shadows are admitted only on objects whose local colors are warm or neutral; wherever the tint of the [Pg 134] illumined portion is delicate or peculiar, a relative hue of shade is at once laid on the white paper; and the correspondence with the Flemish school is in the use of brown as the ultimate representative of deep gloom, and in the careful preservation of its transparency, not in the application of brown universally as the shade of all colors. We apprehend that this practice represents, in another medium, the very best mode of applying the Flemish system; and that when the result proposed is an effect of vivid color under bright cool sunshine, it would be impossible to adopt any more perfect means. But a system which in any stage prescribes the use of a certain pigment, implies the adoption of a constant aim, and becomes, in that degree, conventional. Suppose that the effect desired be neither of sunlight nor of bright color, but of grave color subdued by atmosphere, and we believe that the use of brown for an ultimate shadow would be highly inexpedient. With Van Eyck and with Rubens the aim was always consistent: clear daylight, diffused in the one case, concentrated in the other, was yet the hope, the necessity of both; and any process which admitted the slightest dimness, coldness, or opacity, would have been considered an error in their system by either. Alike, to Rubens, came subjects of tumult or tranquillity, of gayety or terror; the nether, earthly, and upper world were to him animated with the same feeling, lighted by the same sun; he dyed in the same lake of fire the warp of the wedding-garment or of the winding-sheet; swept into the same delirium the recklessness of the sensualist, and rapture of the anchorite; saw in tears only their glittering, and in torture only its flush. To such a painter, regarding every subject in the same temper, and all as mere motives for the display of the power of his art, the Flemish system, improved as it became in his hands, was alike sufficient and habitual. But among the greater colorists of Italy the aim was not always so simple nor the method so determinable. We find Tintoret passing like a fire-fly from light to darkness in one oscillation, ranging from the fullest prism of solar color to the coldest grays of [Pg 135] twilight, and from the silver tingeing of a morning cloud to the lava fire of a volcano: one moment shutting himself into obscure chambers of imagery, the next plunged into the revolutionless day of heaven, and piercing space, deeper than the mind can follow or the eye fathom; we find him by turns appalling, pensive, splendid, profound, profuse; and throughout sacrificing every minor

quality to the power of his prevalent mood. By such an artist it might, perhaps, be presumed that a different system of color would be adopted in almost every picture, and that if a chiaroscuro ground were independently laid, it would be in a neutral gray, susceptible afterwards of harmony with any tone he might determine upon, and not in the vivid brown which necessitated brilliancy of subsequent effect. We believe, accordingly, that while some of the pieces of this master's richer color, such as the Adam and Eve in the Gallery of Venice, and we suspect also the miracle of St. Mark, may be executed on the pure Flemish system, the greater number of his large compositions will be found based on a gray shadow; and that this gray shadow was independently laid we have more direct proof in the assertion of Boschini, who received his information from the younger Palma: "Quando haveva stabilita questa importante distribuzione, *abboggiava il quadro tutto di chiaroscuro*;" and we have, therefore, no doubt that Tintoret's well-known reply to the question, "What were the most beautiful colors?" "*Il nero, e il bianco*," is to be received in a perfectly literal sense, beyond and above its evident reference to abstract principle. Its main and most valuable meaning was, of course, that the design and light and shade of a picture were of greater importance than its color; (and this Tintoret felt so thoroughly that there is not one of his works which would seriously lose in power if it were translated into chiaroscuro); but it implied also that Tintoret's idea of a shadowed preparation was in gray, and not in brown.

130. But there is a farther and more essential ground of difference in system of shadow between the Flemish and Italian colorists. It is a well-known optical fact that the color of shadow is complemental to that of light: and that therefore, in general terms, warm light has cool shadow, and cool light hot shadow. The noblest masters of the northern and southern schools respectively adopted these contrary keys; and while the Flemings raised their lights in frosty white and pearly grays out of a glowing shadow, the Italians opposed the deep and burning rays of their golden heaven to masses of solemn gray and majestic blue. Either, therefore, their preparation must have been different, or they were able, when they chose, to conquer the warmth of the ground by superimposed color. We believe, accordingly, that Correggio will be found—as stated in the notes of Reynolds quoted at p. 495—to have habitually grounded with black, white, and ultramarine, then glazing with golden transparent colors; while Titian used the most vigorous browns, and conquered them with cool color in mass above. The remarkable sketch of Leonardo in the Uffizii of Florence is commenced in brown—over the brown is laid an olive green, on which the highest lights are struck with white. [Pg 136]

Now it is well known to even the merely decorative painter that no color can be brilliant which is laid over one of a corresponding key, and that the best ground for any given opaque color will be a comparatively subdued tint of the complemental one; of green under red, of violet under yellow, and of *orange* or *brown* therefore under *blue*. We apprehend accordingly that the real value of the brown ground with Titian was far greater than even with Rubens; it was to support and give preciousness to cool color above, while it remained itself untouched as the representative of warm reflexes and extreme depth of transparent gloom. We believe this employment of the brown ground to be the only means of uniting majesty of hue with profundity of shade. But its value to the Fleming is connected with the management of the lights, which we have next to consider. As we here venture for the first time to disagree in some measure with Mr. Eastlake, let us be sure that we state his opinion fairly. He says:— [Pg 137]

"The light warm tint which Van Mander assumes to have been generally used in the oil-priming was sometimes omitted, as unfinished pictures prove. Under such circumstances, the picture may have been executed at once on the sized outline. In the works of Lucas van Leyden, and sometimes in those of Albert Dürer, the thin yet brilliant lights exhibit a still brighter ground underneath (p. 389).... It thus appears that the method proposed by the inventors of oil-painting, of preserving light within the colors, involved a certain order of processes. The principal conditions were: first, that the outline should be completed on the panel before the painting, properly so called, was begun. The object, in thus defining the forms, was to avoid alterations and repaintings, which might ultimately render the ground useless without supplying its place. Another condition was to avoid loading *the opaque* colors. *This limitation was not essential with regard to the transparent colors, as such could hardly exclude the bright ground* (p. 398).... The system of coloring adopted by the Van Eycks may have been influenced by the practice of glass-painting. They appear, in their first efforts at least, to have considered the white panel as representing light behind a colored and transparent medium, and aimed at giving brilliancy to their tints by allowing the white ground to shine through them. If those painters and their followers erred, it was in sometimes too literally carrying out this principle. *Their lights are always transparent* (mere white excepted) and their shadows sometimes want depth. This is in accordance with the effect of glass-staining, in which transparency may cease with darkness, but never with light. The superior method of Rubens consisted in preserving transparency chiefly in his darks, and in contrasting their lucid depth with solid lights (p. 408).... Among the technical improvements on the older process may be especially mentioned the preservation of transparency in the darker masses, the lights being loaded as required. The system of exhibiting the bright ground through the shadows still involved an adherence to the original method of defining the composition at first; and the solid painting of the lights opened the door to that freedom of execution which the works of the early masters wanted." (p. 490.) [Pg 138]

---

131. We think we cannot have erred in concluding from these scattered passages that Mr. Eastlake supposes the brilliancy of the high lights of the earlier schools to be attributable to the under-power of the white ground. This we admit, so far as that ground gave value to the transparent flesh-colored or brown preparation above it; but we doubt the transparency of the highest lights, and the power of any white ground to add brilliancy to opaque colors. We have ourselves never seen an instance of a *painted brilliant* light that was not loaded to the exclusion of the ground. Secondary lights indeed are often perfectly transparent, a warm hatching over the under-white; the highest light itself may be so—but then it is the white ground itself subdued by transparent *darker* color, not supporting a light color. In the Van Eyck in the National Gallery all the brilliant lights are loaded; mere white, Mr. Eastlake himself admits, was always so; and we believe that the flesh-color and carnations are painted with color as *opaque* as the white head-dress, but fail of brilliancy from not being *loaded enough*; the white ground beneath being utterly unable to add to the power of such tints, while its effect on more subdued tones depended in great measure on its receiving a transparent coat of warm color first. This *may* have been sometimes omitted, as stated at p. 389; when it was so, we believe that an utter loss of brilliancy must have resulted; but when it was used, the highest lights must have been raised from it by opaque color as distinctly by Van Eyck as by Rubens. Rubens' Judgment of Paris is quoted at [p. 388] as an example of the best use of the bright gesso ground:—and how in that picture, how in all Rubens' best pictures, is it used? Over the ground is thrown a transparent glowing brown tint, [Pg 139] varied and deepened in the shadow; boldly over that brown glaze, and into it, are struck and painted the opaque gray middle tints, already concealing the ground totally; and above these are loaded the high lights like gems—note the sparkling strokes on the peacock's plumes. We believe that Van Eyck's high lights were either, in proportion to the scale of picture and breadth of handling, as loaded as these, or, in the degree of their thinness, less brilliant. Was then his system the same as Rubens'? Not so; but it differed more in the management of middle tints than in the lights: the main difference was, we believe, between the careful preparation of the gradations of drawing in the one, and the daring assumption of massy light in the other. There are theorists who would assert that their system was the same—but they forget the primal work, with the point underneath, and all that it implied of transparency above. Van Eyck secured his drawing in dark, then threw a pale transparent middle tint over the whole, and recovered his *highest* lights; all was *transparent* except these. Rubens threw a dark middle tint over the whole at first, and then gave the *drawing* with opaque gray. All was *opaque* except the shadows. No slight difference this, when we reflect on the contrarieties of practice ultimately connected with the opposing principles; above all on the eminent one that, as all Van Eyck's color, except the high lights, must have been equivalent to a glaze, while the great body of *color* in Rubens was solid (ultimately glazed occasionally, but not necessarily), it was possible for Van Eyck to mix his tints to the local hues required, with far less danger of heaviness in effect than would have been incurred in the solid painting of Rubens. This is especially noticed by Mr. Eastlake, with whom we are delighted again to concur:—

"The practice of using compound tints has not been approved by colorists; the method, as introduced by the early masters, was adapted to certain conditions, but, like many of their processes, was afterwards misapplied. Vasari informs us that Lorenzo di Credi, whose [Pg 140] exaggerated nicety in technical details almost equaled that of Gerard Dow, was in the habit of mixing about thirty tints before he began to work. The opposite extreme is perhaps no less objectionable. Much may depend on the skillful use of the ground. The purest color in an opaque state and superficially light only, is less brilliant than the foulest mixture through which light shines. Hence, as long as the white ground was visible within the tints, the habit of matching colors from nature (no matter by what complication of hues, provided the ingredients were not chemically injurious to each other) was likely to combine the truth of negative hues with clearness."—*Ib.* p. 400.

---

132. These passages open to us a series of questions far too intricate to be even cursorily treated within our limits. It is to be held in mind that one and the same quality of color or kind of brilliancy is not always the best; the phases and phenomena of color are innumerable in reality, and even the modes of imitating them become expedient or otherwise, according to the aim and scale of the picture. It is no question of mere authority whether the mixture of tints to a compound one, or their juxtaposition in a state of purity, be the better practice. There is not the slightest doubt that, the ground being the same, a stippled tint is more brilliant and rich than a mixed one; nor is there doubt on the other hand that in some subjects such a tint is impossible, and in others vulgar. We have above alluded to the power of Mr. Hunt in water-color. The fruit-pieces of that artist are dependent for their splendor chiefly on the juxtaposition of pure color for compound tints, and we may safely affirm that the method is for such purpose as exemplary as its results are admirable. Yet would you desire to see the same means adopted in the execution of the fruit in Rubens' Peace and War? Or again, would the lusciousness of tint obtained by Rubens himself, adopting the same means on a grander scale in his painting of flesh, have been conducive to the ends or grateful to the feelings of the Bellinis or Albert Dürer? Each method is [Pg 141] admirable as applied by its master; and Hemling and Van Eyck are as much to be followed in the mingling of color, as Rubens and Rembrandt in its decomposition. If an award is absolutely to be made of superiority to either system, we apprehend that the palm of mechanical skill must be

rendered to the latter, and higher dignity of moral purpose confessed in the former; in proportion to the nobleness of the subject and the thoughtfulness of its treatment, simplicity of color will be found more desirable. Nor is the far higher perfection of drawing attained by the earlier method to be forgotten. Gradations which are expressed by delicate execution of the *darks*, and then aided by a few strokes of recovered light, must always be more subtle and true than those which are struck violently forth with opaque color; and it is to be remembered that the handling of the brush, with the early Italian masters, approached in its refinement to drawing with the point—the more definitely, because the work was executed, as we have just seen, with little change or play of local color. And—whatever discredit the looser and bolder practice of later masters may have thrown on the hatched and penciled execution of earlier periods—we maintain that this method, necessary in fresco, and followed habitually in the first oil pictures, has produced the noblest renderings of human expression in the whole range of the examples of art: the best works of Raphael, all the glorious portraiture of Ghirlandajo and Masaccio, all the mightiest achievements of religious zeal in Francia, Perugino, Bellini, and such others. Take as an example in fresco Masaccio's hasty sketch of himself now in the Uffizii; and in oil, the two heads of monks by Perugino in the Academy of Florence; and we shall search in vain for any work in portraiture, executed in opaque colors, which could contend with them in depth of expression or in fullness of *recorded* life—not mere imitative vitality, but chronicled action. And we have no hesitation in asserting that where the object of the painter is expression, and the picture is of a size admitting careful execution, the transparent system, developed as it is found in Bellini or Perugino, will [Pg 142] attain the most profound and serene color, while it will never betray into looseness or audacity. But if in the mind of the painter invention prevail over veneration,—if his eye be creative rather than penetrative, and his hand more powerful than patient—let him not be confined to a system where light, once lost, is as irrecoverable as time, and where all success depends on husbandry of resource. Do not measure out to him his sunshine in inches of gesso; let him have the power of striking it even out of darkness and the deep.

133. If human life were endless, or human spirit could fit its compass to its will, it is possible a perfection might be reached which should unite the majesty of invention with the meekness of love. We might conceive that the thought, arrested by the readiest means, and at first represented by the boldest symbols, might afterwards be set forth with solemn and studied expression, and that the power might know no weariness in clothing which had known no restraint in creating. But dilation and contraction are for molluscs, not for men; we are not ringed into flexibility like worms, nor gifted with opposite sight and mutable color like chameleons. The mind which molds and summons cannot at will transmute itself into that which clings and contemplates; nor is it given to us at once to have the potter's power over the lump, the fire's upon the clay, and the gilder's upon the porcelain. Even the temper in which we behold these various displays of mind must be different; and it admits of more than doubt whether, if the bold work of rapid thought were afterwards in all its forms completed with microscopic care, the result would be other than painful. In the shadow at the foot of Tintoret's picture of the Temptation, lies a broken rock-bowlder.[19] The dark ground has been first laid in, of color nearly uniform; and over it a few, not more than fifteen or twenty, strokes of the brush, loaded with a light gray, have quarried the solid block of stone out of the vacancy. Probably ten minutes are the [Pg 143] utmost time which those strokes have occupied, though the rock is some four feet square. It may safely be affirmed that no other method, however laborious, could have reached the truth of form which results from the very freedom with which the conception has been expressed; but it is a truth of the simplest kind—the definition of a stone, rather than the painting of one—and the lights are in some degree dead and cold—the natural consequence of striking a mixed opaque pigment over a dark ground. It would now be possible to treat this skeleton of a stone, which could only have been knit together by Tintoret's rough temper, with the care of a Fleming; to leave its fiercely-stricken lights emanating from a golden ground, to gradate with the pen its ponderous shadows, and in its completion, to dwell with endless and intricate precision upon fibers of moss, bells of heath, blades of grass, and films of lichen. Love like Van Eyck's would separate the fibers as if they were stems of forest, twine the ribbed grass into fanciful articulation, shadow forth capes and islands in the variegated film, and hang the purple bells in counted chiming. A year might pass away, and the work yet be incomplete; yet would the purpose of the great picture have been better answered when all had been achieved? or if so, is it to be wished that a year of the life of Tintoret (could such a thing be conceived possible) had been so devoted?

134. We have put in as broad and extravagant a view as possible the difference of object in the two systems of loaded and transparent light; but it is to be remembered that both are in a certain degree compatible, and that whatever exclusive arguments may be adduced in favor of the loaded system apply only to the ultimate stages of the work. The question is not whether the white ground be expedient in the commencement—but how far it must of necessity be preserved to the close? There cannot be the slightest doubt that, whatever the object, whatever the power of the painter, the white ground, as intensely bright and perfect as it can be obtained, should be [Pg 144] the base of his operations; that it should be preserved as long as possible, shown wherever it is possible, and sacrificed only upon good cause. There are indeed many objects which do not admit of imitation unless the hand have power of superimposing and modeling the light; but there are others which are equally unsusceptible of every rendering except that of transparent color over the pure ground.

It appears from the evidence now produced that there are at least three distinct systems traceable in the works of good colorists, each having its own merit and its peculiar application.

First, the white ground, with careful chiaroscuro preparation, transparent color in the middle tints, and opaque high lights only (Van Eyck). Secondly, white ground, transparent brown preparation, and solid painting of lights above (Rubens). Thirdly, white ground, brown preparation, and solid painting both of lights and shadows above (Titian); on which last method, indisputably the noblest, we have not insisted, as it has not yet been examined by Mr. Eastlake. But in all these methods the white ground was indispensable. It mattered not what transparent color were put over it: red, frequently, we believe, by Titian, before the brown shadows—yellow sometimes by Rubens:—whatever warm tone might be chosen for the key of the composition, and for the support of its grays, depended for its own value upon the white gesso beneath; nor can any system of color be ultimately successful which excludes it. Noble arrangement, choice, and relation of color, will indeed redeem and recommend the falsest system: our own Reynolds, and recently Turner, furnish magnificent examples of the power attainable by colorists of high caliber, after the light ground is lost—(we cannot agree with Mr. Eastlake in thinking the practice of painting first in white and black, with cool reds only, "equivalent to its preservation"):—but in the works of both, diminished splendor and sacrificed durability attest and punish the neglect of the best resources of their art.

135. We have stated, though briefly, the major part of the data which recent research has furnished respecting the early colorists; enough, certainly, to remove all theoretical obstacles to the attainment of a perfection equal to theirs. A few carefully conducted experiments, with the efficient aids of modern chemistry, would probably put us in possession of an amber varnish, if indeed this be necessary, at least not inferior to that which they employed; the rest of their materials are already in our hands, soliciting only such care in their preparation as it ought, we think, to be no irksome duty to bestow. Yet we are not sanguine of the immediate result. Mr. Eastlake has done his duty excellently; but it is hardly to be expected that, after being long in possession of means which we could apply to no profit, the knowledge that the greatest men possessed no better, should at once urge to emulation and gift with strength. We believe that some consciousness of their true position already existed in the minds of many living artists; example had at least been given by two of our Academicians, Mr. Mulready and Mr. Etty, of a splendor based on the Flemish system, and consistent, certainly, in the first case, with a high degree of permanence; while the main direction of artistic and public sympathy to works of a character altogether opposed to theirs, showed fatally how far more perceptible and appreciable to our present instincts is the mechanism of handling than the melody of hue. Indeed we firmly believe, that of all powers of enjoyment or of judgment, that which is concerned with nobility of color is least communicable: it is also perhaps the most rare. The achievements of the draughtsman are met by the curiosity of all mankind; the appeals of the dramatist answered by their sympathy; the creatures of imagination acknowledged by their fear; but the voice of the colorist has but the adder's listening, charm he never so wisely. Men vie with each other, untaught, in pursuit of smoothness and smallness—of Carlo Dolci and Van Huysum; their domestic hearts may range them in faithful armies round the throne of Raphael; meditation and [Pg 145] labor may raise them to the level of the great mountain pedestal of Buonarotti—"vestito gia de' [Pg 146] raggi del pianeta, che mena dritto altrui per ogni calle;" but neither time nor teaching will bestow the sense, when it is not innate, of that wherein consists the power of Titian and the great Venetians. There is proof of this in the various degrees of cost and care devoted to the preservation of their works. The glass, the curtain, and the cabinet guard the preciousness of what is petty, guide curiosity to what is popular, invoke worship to what is mighty;—Raphael has his palace—Michael his dome—respect protects and crowds traverse the sacristy and the saloon; but the frescoes of Titian fade in the solitudes of Padua, and the gesso falls crumbled from the flapping canvas, as the sea-winds shake the Scuola di San Rocco.

136. But if, on the one hand, mere abstract excellence of color be thus coldly regarded, it is equally certain that no work ever attains enduring celebrity which is eminently deficient in this great respect. Color cannot be indifferent; it is either beautiful and auxiliary to the purposes of the picture, or false, froward, and opposite to them. Even in the painting of Nature herself, this law is palpable; chiefly glorious when color is a predominant element in her working, she is in the next degree most impressive when it is withdrawn altogether: and forms and scenes become sublime in the neutral twilight, which were indifferent in the colors of noon. Much more is this the case in the feebleness of imitation; all color is bad which is less than beautiful; all is gross and intrusive which is not attractive; it repels where it cannot inthrall, and destroys what it cannot assist. It is besides the painter's peculiar craft; he who cannot color is no painter. It is not painting to grind earths with oil and lay them smoothly on a surface. He only is a painter who can melodize and harmonize *hue*—if he fail in this, he is no member of the brotherhood. Let him etch, or draw, or carve: better the unerring graver than the unfaithful pencil—better the true sling and stone than the brightness of the unproved armor. And let not even those who deal in the deeper magic, and feel in themselves the loftier power, presume upon that power—nor believe in the [Pg 147] reality of any success unless that which has been deserved by deliberate, resolute, successive operation. We would neither deny nor disguise the influences of sensibility or of imagination, upon this, as upon every other admirable quality of art;—we know that there is that in the very stroke and fall of the pencil in a master's hand, which creates color with an unconscious enchantment—we know that there is a brilliancy which springs from the joy of the painter's heart —a gloom which sympathizes with its seriousness—a power correlative with its will; but these are all vain unless they be ruled by a seemly caution—a manly moderation—an indivertible foresight. This we think the one great conclusion to be received from the work we have been examining, that all power is vain—all invention vain—all enthusiasm vain—all devotion even, and fidelity vain, unless these are guided by such severe and exact law as we see take place in the

development of every great natural glory; and, even in the full glow of their bright and burning operation, sealed by the cold, majestic, deep-graven impress of the signet on the right hand of Time. [Pg 148]

SAMUEL PROUT.[20]

137. The first pages in the histories of artists, worthy the name, are generally alike; records of boyish resistance to every scheme, parental or tutorial, at variance with the ruling desire and bent of the opening mind. It is so rare an accident that the love of drawing should be noticed and fostered in the child, that we are hardly entitled to form any conclusions respecting the probable result of an indulgent foresight; it is enough to admire the strength of will which usually accompanies every noble intellectual gift, and to believe that, in early life, direct resistance is better than inefficient guidance. Samuel Prout—with how many rich and picturesque imaginations is the name now associated!—was born at Plymouth, September 17th, 1783, and intended by his father for his own profession; but although the delicate health of the child might have appeared likely to induce a languid acquiescence in his parent's wish, the love of drawing occupied every leisure hour, and at last trespassed upon every other occupation. Reproofs were affectionately repeated, and every effort made to dissuade the boy from what was considered an "idle amusement," but it was soon discovered that opposition was unavailing, and the attachment too strong to be checked. It might perhaps have been otherwise, but for some rays of encouragement received from the observant kindness of his first schoolmaster. To watch the direction of the little hand when it wandered from its task, to draw the culprit to him with a smile instead of a reproof, to set him on the high stool beside his desk, and stimulate him, by the loan of his own pen, to a more patient and elaborate study of the child's usual subject, his favorite cat, was a modification of preceptorial care as easy as it was wise; but it perhaps had more influence [Pg 149] on the mind and after-life of the boy than all the rest of his education together.

138. Such happy though rare interludes in school-hours, and occasional attempts at home, usually from the carts and horses which stopped at a public-house opposite, began the studentship of the young artist before he had quitted his pinafore. An unhappy accident which happened about the same time, and which farther enfeebled his health, rendered it still less advisable to interfere with his beloved occupation. We have heard the painter express, with a melancholy smile, the distinct recollection remaining with him to this day, of a burning autumn morning, on which he had sallied forth alone, himself some four autumns old, armed with a hooked stick, to gather nuts. Unrestrainable alike with pencil or crook, he was found by a farmer, towards the close of the day, lying moaning under a hedge, prostrated by a sunstroke, and was brought home insensible. From that day forward he was subject to attacks of violent pain in the head, recurring at short intervals; and until thirty years after marriage not a week passed without one or two days of absolute confinement to his room or to his bed. "Up to this hour," we may perhaps be permitted to use his own touching words, "I have to endure a great fight of afflictions; can I therefore be sufficiently thankful for the merciful gift of a buoyant spirit?"

139. That buoyancy of spirit—one of the brightest and most marked elements of his character—never failed to sustain him between the recurrences even of his most acute suffering; and the pursuit of his most beloved Art became every year more determined and independent. The first beginnings in landscape study were made in happy truant excursions, now fondly remembered, with the painter Haydon, then also a youth. This companionship was probably rather cemented by the energy than the delicacy of Haydon's sympathies. The two boys were directly opposed in their habits of application and modes of study. Prout unremitting in diligence, patient in observation, devoted in copying what he loved in nature, never working except with his model [Pg 150] before him; Haydon restless, ambitious, and fiery; exceedingly imaginative, never captivated with simple truth, nor using his pencil on the spot, but trusting always to his powers of memory. The fates of the two youths were inevitably fixed by their opposite characters. The humble student became the originator of a new School of Art, and one of the most popular painters of his age. The self-trust of the wanderer in the wilderness of his fancy betrayed him into the extravagances, and deserted him in the suffering, with which his name must remain sadly, but not unjustly, associated.

140. There was, however, little in the sketches made by Prout at this period to indicate the presence of dormant power. Common prints, at a period when engraving was in the lowest state of decline, were the only guides which the youth could obtain; and his style, in endeavoring to copy these, became cramped and mannered; but the unremitting sketching from nature saved him. Whole days, from dawn till night, were devoted to the study of the peculiar objects of his early interest, the ivy-mantled bridges, mossy water-mills, and rock-built cottages, which characterize the valley scenery of Devon. In spite of every disadvantage, the strong love of truth, and the instinctive perception of the chief points of shade and characters of form on which his favorite effects mainly depended, enabled him not only to obtain an accumulated store of memoranda, afterwards valuable, but to publish several elementary works which obtained extensive and deserved circulation, and to which many artists, now high in reputation, have kindly and frankly confessed their early obligations.

141. At that period the art of water-color drawing was little understood at Plymouth, and practiced only by Payne, then an engineer in the citadel. Though mannered in the extreme, his

works obtained reputation; for the best drawings of the period were feeble both in color and execution, with commonplace light and shadow, a dark foreground being a *rule absolute*, as may be seen in several of Turner's first productions. But Turner was destined to annihilate such rules, [Pg 151] breaking through and scattering them with an expansive force commensurate with the rigidity of former restraint. It happened "fortunately," as it is said,—naturally and deservedly, as it *should* be said,—that Prout was at this period removed from the narrow sphere of his first efforts to one in which he could share in, and take advantage of, every progressive movement.

142. The most respectable of the Plymouth amateurs was the Rev. Dr. Bidlake, who was ever kind in his encouragement of the young painter, and with whom many delightful excursions were made. At his house, Mr. Britton, the antiquarian, happening to see some of the cottages sketches, and being pleased with them, proposed that Prout should accompany him into Cornwall, in order to aid him in collecting materials for his "Beauties of England and Wales." This was the painter's first recognized artistical employment, as well as the occasion of a friendship ever gratefully and fondly remembered. On Mr. Britton's return to London, after sending to him a portfolio of drawings, which were almost the first to create a sensation with lovers of Art, Mr. Prout received so many offers of encouragement, if he would consent to reside in London, as to induce him to take this important step—the first towards being established as an artist.

143. The immediate effect of this change of position was what might easily have been foretold, upon a mind naturally sensitive, diffident, and enthusiastic. It was a heavy discouragement. The youth felt that he had much to eradicate and more to learn, and hardly knew at first how to avail himself of the advantages presented by the study of the works of Turner, Girtin, Cousins, and others. But he had resolution and ambition as well as modesty; he knew that

> "The noblest honors of the mind
> On rigid terms descend."

He had every inducement to begin the race, in the clearer guidance and nobler ends which the very works that had disheartened him afforded and pointed out; and the first firm and certain [Pg 152] step was made. His range of subject was as yet undetermined, and was likely at one time to have been very different from that in which he has since obtained pre-eminence so confessed. Among the picturesque material of his native place, the forms of its shipping had not been neglected, though there was probably less in the order of Plymouth dockyard to catch the eye of the boy, always determined in its preference of purely picturesque arrangements, than might have been afforded by the meanest fishing hamlet. But a strong and lasting impression was made upon him by the wreck of the "Dutton" East Indiaman on the rocks under the citadel; the crew were saved by the personal courage and devotion of Sir Edward Pellew, afterwards Lord Exmouth. The wreck held together for many hours under the cliff, rolling to and fro as the surges struck her. Haydon and Prout sat on the crags together and watched her vanish fragment by fragment into the gnashing foam. Both were equally awe-struck at the time; both, on the morrow, resolved to paint their first pictures; both failed; but Haydon, always incapable of acknowledging and remaining loyal to the majesty of what he had seen, lost himself in vulgar thunder and lightning. Prout struggled to some resemblance of the actual scene, and the effect upon his mind was never effaced.

144. At the time of his first residence in London, he painted more marines than anything else. But other work was in store for him. About the year 1818, his health, which as we have seen had never been vigorous, showed signs of increasing weakness, and a short trial of continental air was recommended. The route by Havre to Rouen was chosen, and Prout found himself, for the first time, in the grotesque labyrinths of the Norman streets. There are few minds so apathetic as to receive no impulse of new delight from their first acquaintance with continental scenery and architecture; and Rouen was, of all the cities of France, the richest in those objects with which the painter's mind had the profoundest sympathy. It was other then than it is now; revolutionary [Pg 153] fury had indeed spent itself upon many of its noblest monuments, but the interference of modern restoration or improvement was unknown. Better the unloosed rage of the fiend than the scrabble of self-complacent idiocy. The façade of the cathedral was as yet unencumbered by the blocks of new stonework, never to be carved, by which it is now defaced; the Church of St. Nicholas existed, (the last fragments of the niches of its gateway were seen by the writer dashed upon the pavement in 1840 to make room for the new "Hotel St. Nicholas"); the Gothic turret had not vanished from the angle of the Place de la Pucelle, the Palais de Justice remained in its gray antiquity, and the Norman houses still lifted their fantastic ridges of gable along the busy quay (now fronted by as formal a range of hotels and offices as that of the West Cliff of Brighton). All was at unity with itself, and the city lay under its guarding hills, one labyrinth of delight, its gray and fretted towers, misty in their magnificence of height, letting the sky like blue enamel through the foiled spaces of their crowns of open work; the walls and gates of its countless churches wardered by saintly groups of solemn statuary, clasped about by wandering stems of sculptured leafage, and crowned by fretted niche and fairy pediment—meshed like gossamer with inextricable tracery: many a quaint monument of past times standing to tell its far-off tale in the place from which it has since perished—in the midst of the throng and murmur of those shadowy streets—all grim with jutting props of ebon woodwork, lightened only here and there by a sunbeam glancing down from the scaly backs, and points, and pyramids of the Norman roofs, or carried out of its narrow range by the gay progress of some snowy cap or scarlet camisole. The painter's vocation was fixed from that hour. The first effect upon his mind was irrepressible enthusiasm, with a strong feeling of a new-born attachment to Art, in a new world of exceeding interest. Previous impressions were presently obliterated, and the old embankments of fancy

[Pg 154]

gave way to the force of overwhelming anticipations, forming another and a wider channel for its future course.

145. From this time excursions were continually made to the continent, and every corner of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy ransacked for its fragments of carved stone. The enthusiasm of the painter was greater than his ambition, and the strict limitation of his aim to the rendering of architectural character permitted him to adopt a simple and consistent method of execution, from which he has rarely departed. It was adapted in the first instance to the necessities of the moldering and mystic character of Northern Gothic; and though impressions received afterwards in Italy, more especially at Venice, have retained as strong a hold upon the painter's mind as those of his earlier excursions, his methods of drawing have always been influenced by the predilections first awakened. How far his love of the picturesque, already alluded to, was reconcilable with an entire appreciation of the highest characters of Italian architecture we do not pause to inquire; but this we may assert, without hesitation, that the picturesque *elements* of that architecture were unknown until he developed them, and that since Gentile Bellini, no one had regarded the palaces of Venice with so affectionate an understanding of the purpose and expression of their wealth of detail. In this respect the City of the Sea has been, and remains, peculiarly his own. There is, probably, no single piazza nor sea-paved street from St. Georgio in Aliga to the Arsenal, of which Prout has not in order drawn every fragment of pictorial material. Probably not a pillar in Venice but occurs in some one of his innumerable studies; while the peculiarly beautiful and varied arrangements under which he has treated the angle formed by St. Mark's Church with the Doge's palace, have not only made every successful drawing of those buildings by any other hand look like plagiarism, but have added (and what is this but indeed to paint the lily!) another charm to the spot itself.

146. This exquisite dexterity of arrangement has always been one of his leading characteristics as an artist. Notwithstanding the deserved popularity of his works, his greatness in composition remains altogether unappreciated. Many modern works exhibit greater pretense at arrangement, and a more palpable system; masses of well-concentrated light or points of sudden and dextrous color are expedients in the works of our second-rate artists as attractive as they are commonplace. But the moving and natural crowd, the decomposing composition, the frank and unforced, but marvelously intricate grouping, the breadth of inartificial and unexaggerated shadow, these are merits of an order only the more elevated because unobtrusive. Nor is his system of color less admirable. It is a quality from which the character of his subjects naturally withdraws much of his attention, and of which sometimes that character precludes any high attainment; but, nevertheless, the truest and happiest association of hues in sun and shade to be found in modern water-color art,[21] (excepting only the studies of Hunt and De Wint) will be found in portions of Prout's more important works. [Pg 155]

147. Of his *peculiar* powers we need hardly speak; it would be difficult to conceive the circle of their influence widened. There is not a landscape of recent times in which the treatment of the architectural features has not been affected, however unconsciously, by principles which were first developed by Prout. Of those principles the most original was his familiarization of the sentiment, while he elevated the subject, of the picturesque. That character had been sought, before his time, either in solitude or in rusticity; it was supposed to belong only to the savageness of the desert or the simplicity of the hamlet; it lurked beneath the brows of rocks and the eaves of cottages; to seek it in a city would have been deemed an extravagance, to raise it to the height of a cathedral, an heresy. Prout did both, and both simultaneously; he found and proved in the busy shadows and sculptured gables of the Continental street sources of picturesque delight as rich and as interesting as those which had been sought amidst the darkness of thickets and the eminence of rocks; and he contrasted with the familiar circumstances of urban life, the majesty and the aërial elevation of the most noble architecture, expressing its details in more splendid accumulation, and with a more patient love than ever had been reached or manifested before his time by any artist who introduced such subjects as members of a general composition. He thus became the interpreter of a great period of the world's history, of that in which age and neglect had cast the interest of ruin over the noblest ecclesiastical structures of Europe, and in which there had been born at their feet a generation other in its feelings and thoughts than that to which they owed their existence, a generation which understood not their meaning, and regarded not their beauty, and which yet had a character of its own, full of vigor, animation, and originality, which rendered the grotesque association of the circumstances of its ordinary and active life with the solemn memorialism of the elder building, one which rather pleased by the strangeness than pained by the violence of its contrast. [Pg 156]

148. That generation is passing away, and another dynasty is putting forth its character and its laws. Care and observance, more mischievous in their misdirection than indifference or scorn, have in many places given the mediæval relics the aspect and associations of a kind of cabinet preservation, instead of that air of majestic independence, or patient and stern endurance, with which they frowned down the insult of the regardless crowd. Nominal restoration has done tenfold worse, and has hopelessly destroyed what time, and storm, and anarchy, and impiety had spared. The picturesque material of a lower kind is fast departing—and forever. There is not, so far as we know, one city scene in central Europe which has not suffered from some jarring point of modernization. The railroad and the iron wheel have done their work, and the characters of Venice, Florence, and Rouen are yielding day by day to a lifeless extension of those of Paris and Birmingham. A few lusters more, and the modernization will be complete: the archæologist may still find work among the wrecks of beauty, and here and there a solitary fragment of the old cities may exist by toleration, or rise strangely before the workmen who dig the new foundations, [Pg 157]

left like some isolated and tottering rock in the midst of sweeping sea. But the life of the middle ages is dying from their embers, and the warm mingling of the past and present will soon be forever dissolved. The works of Prout, and of those who have followed in his footsteps, will become memorials the most precious of the things that have been; to their technical value, however great, will be added the far higher interest of faithful and fond records of a strange and unreturning era of history. May he long be spared to us, and enabled to continue the noble series, conscious of a purpose and function worthy of being followed with all the zeal of even his most ardent and affectionate mind. A time will come when that zeal will be understood, and his works will be cherished with a melancholy gratitude when the pillars of Venice shall lie moldering in the salt shallows of her sea, and the stones of the goodly towers of Rouen have become ballast for the barges of the Seine. [Pg 158]

SIR JOSHUA AND HOLBEIN.[22]

149. Long ago discarded from our National Gallery, with the contempt logically due to national or English pictures,—lost to sight and memory for many a year in the Ogygian seclusions of Marlborough House—there have reappeared at last, in more honorable exile at Kensington, two great pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Two, with others; but these alone worth many an entanglement among the cross-roads of the West, to see for half an hour by spring sunshine:—the *Holy Family*, and the *Graces*, side by side now in the principal room. Great, as ever was work wrought by man. In placid strength, and subtlest science, unsurpassed;—in sweet felicity, incomparable.

150. If you truly want to know what good work of painter's hand is, study those two pictures from side to side, and miss no inch of them (you will hardly, eventually, be inclined to miss one): in some respects there is no execution like it; none so open in the magic. For the work of other great men is hidden in its wonderfulness—you cannot see how it was done. But in Sir Joshua's there is no mystery: it is all amazement. No question but that the touch was so laid; only that it *could* have been so laid, is a marvel forever. So also there is no painting so majestic in sweetness. He is lily-sceptered: his power blossoms, but burdens not. All other men of equal dignity paint more slowly; all others of equal force paint less lightly. Tintoret lays his line like a king marking the boundaries of conquered lands; but Sir Joshua leaves it as a summer wind its trace on a lake; he could have painted on a silken veil, where it fell free, and not bent it.

151. Such at least is his touch when it is life that he paints: for things lifeless he has a severer hand. If you examine that picture of the *Graces* you will find it reverses all the ordinary ideas of expedient treatment. By other men flesh is firmly painted, but accessories lightly. Sir Joshua paints accessories firmly,[23] flesh lightly;—nay, flesh not at all, but spirit. The wreath of flowers he feels to be material; and gleam by gleam strikes fearlessly the silver and violet leaves out of the darkness. But the three maidens are less substantial than rose petals. No flushed nor frosted tissue that ever faded in night wind is so tender as they; no hue may reach, no line measure, what is in them so gracious and so fair. Let the hand move softly—itself as a spirit; for this is Life, of which it touches the imagery. [Pg 159]

152. "And yet——" Yes: you do well to pause. There is a "yet" to be thought of. I did not bring you to these pictures to see wonderful work merely, or womanly beauty merely. I brought you chiefly to look at that Madonna, believing that you might remember other Madonnas, unlike her; and might think it desirable to consider wherein the difference lay:—other Madonnas not by Sir Joshua, who painted Madonnas but seldom. Who perhaps, if truth must be told, painted them never: for surely this dearest pet of an English girl, with the little curl of lovely hair under her ear, is *not* one.

153. Why did not Sir Joshua—or could not—or would not Sir Joshua—paint Madonnas? neither he, nor his great rival-friend Gainsborough? Both of them painters of women, such as since Giorgione and Correggio had not been; both painters of men, such as had not been since Titian. How is it that these English friends can so brightly paint that particular order of humanity which we call "gentlemen and ladies," but neither heroes, nor saints, nor angels? Can it be because they were both country-bred boys, and for ever after strangely sensitive to courtliness? Why, Giotto also was a country-bred boy. Allegri's native Correggio, Titian's Cadore, were but hill villages; yet these men painted, not the court, nor the drawing-room, but the Earth: and not a little of Heaven besides: while our good Sir Joshua never trusts himself outside the park palings. He could not even have drawn the strawberry girl, unless she had got through a gap in them—or rather, I think, she must have been let in at the porter's lodge, for her strawberries are in a pottle, ready for the ladies at the Hall. Giorgione would have set them, wild and fragrant, among their leaves, in her hand. Between his fairness, and Sir Joshua's May-fairness, there is a strange, impassable limit—as of the white reef that in Pacific isles encircles their inner lakelets, and shuts them from the surf and sound of sea. Clear and calm they rest, reflecting fringed shadows of the palm-trees, and the passing of fretted clouds across their own sweet circle of blue sky. But beyond, and round and round their coral bar, lies the blue of sea and heaven together—blue of eternal deep. [Pg 160]

154. You will find it a pregnant question, if you follow it forth, and leading to many others, not trivial, Why it is, that in Sir Joshua's girl, or Gainsborough's, we always think first of the Ladyhood; but in Giotto's, of the Womanhood? Why, in Sir Joshua's hero, or Vandyck's, it is

always the Prince or the Sir whom we see first; but in Titian's, the man.

Not that Titian's gentlemen are less finished than Sir Joshua's; but their gentlemanliness[24] is not the principal thing about them; their manhood absorbs, conquers, wears it as a despised thing. Nor—and this is another stern ground of separation—will Titian make a gentleman of everyone he paints. He will make him so if he is so, not otherwise; and this not merely in general [Pg 161] servitude to truth, but because in his sympathy with deeper humanity, the courtier is not more interesting to him than anyone else. "You have learned to dance and fence; you can speak with clearness, and think with precision; your hands are small, your senses acute, and your features well-shaped. Yes: I see all this in you, and will do it justice. You shall stand as none but a well-bred man could stand; and your fingers shall fall on the sword-hilt as no fingers could but those that knew the grasp of it. But for the rest, this grisly fisherman, with rusty cheek and rope-frayed hand, is a man as well as you, and might possibly make several of you, if souls were divisible. His bronze color is quite as interesting to me, Titian, as your paleness, and his hoary spray of stormy hair takes the light as well as your waving curls. Him also I will paint, with such picturesqueness as he may have; yet not putting the picturesqueness first in him, as in you I have not put the gentlemanliness first. In him I see a strong human creature, contending with all hardship: in you also a human creature, uncontending, and possibly not strong. Contention or strength, weakness or picturesqueness, and all other such accidents in either, shall have due place. But the immortality and miracle of you—this clay that burns, this color that changes—are in truth the awful things in both: these shall be first painted—and last."

155. With which question respecting treatment of character we have to connect also this further one: How is it that the attempts of so great painters as Reynolds and Gainsborough are, beyond portraiture, limited almost like children's? No domestic drama—no history—no noble natural scenes, far less any religious subject:—only market carts; girls with pigs; woodmen going home to supper; watering-places; gray cart-horses in fields, and such like. Reynolds, indeed, once or twice touched higher themes,—"among the chords his fingers laid," and recoiled: wisely; for, strange to say, his very sensibility deserts him when he leaves his courtly quiet. The horror of the subjects he chose (Cardinal Beaufort and Ugolino) showed inherent apathy: had he felt deeply, he [Pg 162] would not have sought for this strongest possible excitement of feeling,—would not willingly have dwelt on the worst conditions of despair—the despair of the ignoble. His religious subjects are conceived even with less care than these. Beautiful as it is, this Holy Family by which we stand has neither dignity nor sacredness, other than those which attach to every group of gentle mother and ruddy babe; while his Faiths, Charities, or other well-ordered and emblem-fitted virtues are even less lovely than his ordinary portraits of women.

It was a faultful temper, which, having so mighty a power of realization at command, never became so much interested in any fact of human history as to spend one touch of heartfelt skill upon it;—which, yielding momentarily to indolent imagination, ended, at best, in a Puck, or a Thais; a Mercury as Thief, or a Cupid as Linkboy. How wide the interval between this gently trivial humor, guided by the wave of a feather, or arrested by the enchantment of a smile,—and the habitual dwelling of the thoughts of the great Greeks and Florentines among the beings and the interests of the eternal world!

156. In some degree it may indeed be true that the modesty and sense of the English painters are the causes of their simple practice. All that they did, they did well, and attempted nothing over which conquest was doubtful. They knew they could paint men and women: it did not follow that they could paint angels. Their own gifts never appeared to them so great as to call for serious question as to the use to be made of them. "They could mix colors and catch likeness—yes; but were they therefore able to teach religion, or reform the world? To support themselves honorably, pass the hours of life happily, please their friends, and leave no enemies, was not this all that duty could require, or prudence recommend? Their own art was, it seemed, difficult enough to employ all their genius: was it reasonable to hope also to be poets or theologians? Such men had, indeed, existed; but the age of miracles and prophets was long past; nor, because [Pg 163] they could seize the trick of an expression, or the turn of a head, had they any right to think themselves able to conceive heroes with Homer, or gods with Michael Angelo."

157. Such was, in the main, their feeling: wise, modest, unenvious, and unambitious. Meaner men, their contemporaries or successors, raved of high art with incoherent passion; arrogated to themselves an equality with the masters of elder time, and declaimed against the degenerate tastes of a public which acknowledged not the return of the Heraclidæ. But the two great—the two only painters of their age—happy in a reputation founded as deeply in the heart as in the judgment of mankind, demanded no higher function than that of soothing the domestic affections; and achieved for themselves at last an immortality not the less noble, because in their lifetime they had concerned themselves less to claim it than to bestow.

158. Yet, while we acknowledge the discretion and simple-heartedness of these men, honoring them for both: and the more when we compare their tranquil powers with the hot egotism and hollow ambition of their inferiors: we have to remember, on the other hand, that the measure they thus set to their aims was, if a just, yet a narrow one; that amiable discretion is not the highest virtue; nor to please the frivolous, the best success. There is probably some strange weakness in the painter, and some fatal error in the age, when in thinking over the examples of their greatest work, for some type of culminating loveliness or veracity, we remember no expression either of religion or heroism, and instead of reverently naming a Madonna di San Sisto, can only whisper, modestly, "Mrs. Pelham feeding chickens."

159. The nature of the fault, so far as it exists in the painters themselves, may perhaps best be discerned by comparing them with a man who went not far beyond them in his general range of effort, but who did all his work in a wholly different temper—Hans Holbein. [Pg 164]

The first great difference between them is of course in completeness of execution. Sir Joshua's and Gainsborough's work, at its best, is only magnificent sketching; giving indeed, in places, a perfection of result unattainable by other methods, and possessing always a charm of grace and power exclusively its own; yet, in its slightness addressing itself, purposefully, to the casual glance, and common thought—eager to arrest the passer-by, but careless to detain him; or detaining him, if at all, by an unexplained enchantment, not by continuance of teaching, or development of idea. But the work of Holbein is true and thorough; accomplished, in the highest as the most literal sense, with a calm entireness of unaffected resolution, which sacrifices nothing, forgets nothing, and fears nothing.

160. In the portrait of the Hausmann George Gyzen,[25] every accessory is perfect with a fine perfection: the carnations in the glass vase by his side—the ball of gold, chased with blue enamel, suspended on the wall—the books—the steelyard—the papers on the table, the seal-ring, with its quartered bearings,—all intensely there, and there in beauty of which no one could have dreamed that even flowers or gold were capable, far less parchment or steel. But every change of shade is felt, every rich and rubied line of petal followed; every subdued gleam in the soft blue of the enamel and bending of the gold touched with a hand whose patience of regard creates rather than paints. The jewel itself was not so precious as the rays of enduring light which form it, and flash from it, beneath that errorless hand. The man himself, what he was—not more; but to all conceivable proof of sight—in all aspect of life or thought—not less. He sits alone in his accustomed room, his common work laid out before him; he is conscious of no presence, assumes no dignity, bears no sudden or superficial look of care or interest, lives only as he lived—but forever.

161. The time occupied in painting this portrait was probably twenty times greater than Sir Joshua ever spent on a single picture, however large. The result is, to the general spectator, less attractive. In some qualities of force and grace it is absolutely inferior. But it is inexhaustible. Every detail of it wins, retains, rewards the attention with a continually increasing sense of wonderfulness. It is also wholly true. So far as it reaches, it contains the absolute facts of color, form, and character, rendered with an unaccusable faithfulness. There is no question respecting things which it is best worth while to know, or things which it is unnecessary to state, or which might be overlooked with advantage. What of this man and his house were visible to Holbein, are visible to us: we may despise if we will; deny or doubt, we shall not; if we care to know anything concerning them, great or small, so much as may by the eye be known is forever knowable, reliable, indisputable. [Pg 165]

162. Respecting the advantage, or the contrary, of so great earnestness in drawing a portrait of an uncelebrated person, we raise at present no debate: I only wish the reader to note this quality of earnestness, as entirely separating Holbein from Sir Joshua,—raising him into another sphere of intellect. For here is no question of mere difference in style or in power, none of minuteness or largeness. It is a question of Entireness. Holbein is *complete* in intellect: what he sees, he sees with his whole soul: what he paints, he paints with his whole might. Sir Joshua sees partially, slightly, tenderly—catches the flying lights of things, the momentary glooms: paints also partially, tenderly, never with half his strength; content with uncertain visions, insecure delights; the truth not precious nor significant to him, only pleasing; falsehood also pleasurable, even useful on occasion—must, however, be discreetly touched, just enough to make all men noble, all women lovely: "we do not need this flattery often, most of those we know being such; and it is a pleasant world, and with diligence—for nothing can be done without diligence—every day till four" (says Sir Joshua)—"a painter's is a happy life."

Yes: and the Isis; with her swans, and shadows of Windsor Forest, is a sweet stream, touching her shores softly. The Rhine at Basle is of another temper, stern and deep, as strong, however bright its face: winding far through the solemn plain, beneath the slopes of Jura, tufted and steep: sweeping away into its regardless calm of current the waves of that little brook of St. Jakob, that bathe the Swiss Thermopylæ;[26] the low village nestling beneath a little bank of sloping fields—its spire seen white against the deep blue shadows of the Jura pines. [Pg 166]

163. Gazing on that scene day by day, Holbein went his own way, with the earnestness and silent swell of the strong river—not unconscious of the awe, nor of the sanctities of his life. The snows of the eternal Alps giving forth their strength to it; the blood of the St. Jakob brook poured into it as it passes by—not in vain. He also could feel his strength coming from white snows far off in heaven. He also bore upon him the purple stain of the earth sorrow. A grave man, knowing what steps of men keep truest time to the chanting of Death. Having grave friends also;—the same singing heard far off, it seems to me, or, perhaps, even low in the room, by that family of Sir Thomas More; or mingling with the hum of bees in the meadows outside the towered wall of Basle; or making the words of the book more tunable, which meditative Erasmus looks upon. Nay, that same soft Death-music is on the lips even of Holbein's Madonna. Who, among many, is the Virgin you had best compare with the one before whose image we have stood so long.

Holbein's is at Dresden, companioned by the Madonna di San Sisto; but both are visible enough to you here, for, by a strange coincidence, they are (at least so far as I know) the only two great pictures in the world which have been faultlessly engraved. [Pg 167]

164. The received tradition respecting the Holbein Madonna is beautiful; and I believe the interpretation to be true. A father and mother have prayed to her for the life of their sick child. She appears to them, her own Christ in her arms. She puts down her Christ beside them—takes their child into her arms instead. It lies down upon her bosom, and stretches its hand to its father and mother, saying farewell.

This interpretation of the picture has been doubted, as nearly all the most precious truths of pictures have been doubted, and forgotten. But even supposing it erroneous, the design is not less characteristic of Holbein. For that there are signs of suffering on the features of the child in the arms of the Virgin, is beyond question; and if this child be intended for the Christ, it would not be doubtful to my mind, that, of the two—Raphael and Holbein—the latter had given the truest aspect and deepest reading of the early life of the Redeemer. Raphael sought to express His power only; but Holbein His labor and sorrow.

165. There are two other pictures which you should remember together with this (attributed, indeed, but with no semblance of probability, to the elder Holbein, none of whose work, preserved at Basle, or elsewhere, approaches in the slightest degree to their power), the St. Barbara and St. Elizabeth.[27] I do not know among the pictures of the great sacred schools any at once so powerful, so simple, so pathetically expressive of the need of the heart that conceived them. Not ascetic, nor quaint, nor feverishly or fondly passionate, nor wrapt in withdrawn solemnities of thought. Only entirely true—entirely pure. No depth of glowing heaven beyond them—but the clear sharp sweetness of the northern air: no splendor of rich color, striving to adorn them with better brightness than of the day: a gray glory, as of moonlight without mist, dwelling on face and fold of dress;—all faultless-fair. Creatures they are, humble by nature, not [Pg 168] by self-condemnation; merciful by habit, not by tearful impulse; lofty without consciousness; gentle without weakness; wholly in this present world, doing its work calmly; beautiful with all that holiest life can reach—yet already freed from all that holiest death can cast away. [Pg 169]

ART.

II.

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

ITS PRINCIPLES, AND TURNER.

(*Pamphlet*, 1851.)

ITS THREE COLORS.

(*Nineteenth Century, Nov.-Dec. 1878.*) [Pg 170]

PREFACE.

Eight years ago, in the close of the first volume of "Modern Painters," I ventured to give the following advice to the young artists of England:—

"They should go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing." Advice which, whether bad or good, involved infinite labor and humiliation in the following it, and was therefore, for the most part, rejected.

It has, however, at last been carried out, to the very letter, by a group of men who, for their reward, have been assailed with the most scurrilous abuse which I ever recollect seeing issue from the public press. I have, therefore, thought it due to them to contradict the directly false statements which have been made respecting their works; and to point out the kind of merit which, however deficient in some respects, those works possess beyond the possibility of dispute.

Denmark Hill, August, 1851. [Pg 171]

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.[28]

166. It may be proved, with much certainty, that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. It

is written, "in the sweat of thy brow," but it was never written, "in the breaking of thine heart," thou shalt eat bread: and I find that, as on the one hand, infinite misery is caused by idle people, who both fail in doing what was appointed for them to do, and set in motion various springs of mischief in matters in which they should have had no concern, so on the other hand, no small misery is caused by overworked and unhappy people, in the dark views which they necessarily take up themselves, and force upon others, of work itself. Were it not so, I believe the fact of their being unhappy is in itself a violation of divine law, and a sign of some kind of folly or sin in their way of life. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it—not a doubtful sense, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work. [Pg 172]

167. The first thing then that he has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: "I don't seem quite fit for a head-manager in the firm of —— & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer." Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: "I don't seem quite fit to be head-manager in the firm of —— & Co., but I dare say I might do something in a small green-grocery business; I used to be a good judge of pease;" that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom: once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing everyone in his neighborhood by perpetual catastrophes. But this kind of humility is rendered especially difficult in these days, by the contumely thrown on men in humble employments. The very removal of the massy bars which once separated one class of society from another, has rendered it tenfold more shameful in foolish people's, *i.e.*, in most people's eyes, to remain in the lower grades of it, than ever it was before. When a man born of an artisan was looked upon as an entirely different species of animal from a man born of a noble, it made him no more uncomfortable or ashamed to remain that different species of animal, than it makes a horse ashamed to remain a horse, and not to become a giraffe. But now that a man may make money, and rise in the world, and associate himself, unreproached, with people once far above him, not only is the natural discontentedness of humanity developed to an unheard-of extent, whatever a man's position, but it becomes a veritable shame to him to remain in the state he was born in, and everybody thinks it his *duty* to try to be a "gentleman." Persons who have any influence in the management of public institutions for charitable education know how common this feeling has become. Hardly a day passes but [Pg 173] they receive letters from mothers who want all their six or eight sons to go to college, and make the grand tour in the long vacation, and who think there is something wrong in the foundations of society because this is not possible. Out of every ten letters of this kind, nine will allege, as the reason of the writers' importunity, their desire to keep their families in such and such a "station of life."[29] There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, or the moral good of the children, only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the molehill of the world—a calamity to be averted at any cost whatever, of struggle, anxiety, and shortening of life itself. I do not believe that any greater good could be achieved for the country, than the change in public feeling on this head, which might be brought about by a few benevolent men, undeniably in the class of "gentlemen," who would, on principle, enter into some of our commonest trades, and make them honorable; showing that it was possible for a man to retain his dignity, and remain, in the best sense, a gentleman, though part of his time was every day occupied in manual labor, or even in serving customers over a counter. I do not in the least see why courtesy, and gravity, and sympathy with the feelings of others, and courage, and truth, and piety, and what else goes to make up a gentleman's character, should not be found behind a counter as well as elsewhere, if they were demanded, or even hoped for, there.

168. Let us suppose, then, that the man's way of life, and manner of work have been discreetly chosen; then the next thing to be required is, that he do not overwork himself therein. I am not going to say anything here about the various errors in our systems of society and commerce, which appear (I am not sure if they ever do more than appear) to force us to overwork ourselves merely that we may live; nor about the still more fruitful cause of unhealthy toil—the incapability, in many men, of being content with the little that is indeed necessary to their happiness. I have [Pg 174] only a word or two to say about one special cause of overwork—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts: hope as vain as it is pernicious; not only making men overwork themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort*; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without* effort. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this—nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

169. I have said no great *intellectual* thing: for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of intense moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work—to the great fight with the Dragon—the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort. Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their

utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them: they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plow from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight: we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

170. How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely, humbly understood—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; that, when it is needed to be done, there is perhaps only one man in the world who can do it; but *he* can do it without any trouble—without more trouble, that is, than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less. And yet what truth lies more openly on the surface of all human [Pg 175] phenomena? Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not, "there has been a great *effort* here," but, "there has been a great *power* here"? It is not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognize in all mighty things; and that is just what we now *never* recognize, but think that we are to do great things, by help of iron bars and perspiration:—alas! we shall do nothing that way but lose some pounds of our own weight.

171. Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favorite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: "If I *am* anything, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labor." This was Newton's way of talking, and I suppose it would be the general tone of men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labor in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well as by its gigantic, incommunicable facility in exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man's business whether he has genius or not: work he must, whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done, false, hollow, and despicable. [Pg 176]

172. Then the third thing needed was, I said, that a man should be a good judge of his work; and this chiefly that he may not be dependent upon popular opinion for the manner of doing it, but also that he may have the just encouragement of the sense of progress, and an honest consciousness of victory; how else can he become

> "That awful independent on to-morrow,
> Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile "?

I am persuaded that the real nourishment and help of such a feeling as this is nearly unknown to half the workmen of the present day. For whatever appearance of self-complacency there may be in their outward bearing, it is visible enough, by their feverish jealousy of each other, how little confidence they have in the sterling value of their several doings. Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up; and there is too visible distress and hopelessness in men's aspects to admit of the supposition that they have any stable support of faith in themselves.

173. I have stated these principles generally, because there is no branch of labor to which they do not apply: but there is one in which our ignorance or forgetfulness of them has caused an incalculable amount of suffering; and I would endeavor now to reconsider them with special reference to it—the branch of the Arts.

In general, the men who are employed in the Arts have freely chosen their profession, and suppose themselves to have special faculty for it; yet, as a body, they are not happy men. For which this seems to me the reason—that they are expected, and themselves expect, to make their bread *by being clever*—not by steady or quiet work; and are therefore, for the most part, trying to be clever, and so living in an utterly false state of mind and action.

174. This is the case, to the same extent, in no other profession or employment. A lawyer may indeed suspect that, unless he has more wit than those around him, he is not likely to advance in his profession; but he will not be always thinking how he is to display his wit. He will generally [Pg 177] understand, early in his career, that wit must be left to take care of itself, and that it is hard knowledge of law and vigorous examination and collation of the facts of every case intrusted to him, which his clients will mainly demand: this it is which he is to be paid for; and this is healthy and measurable labor, payable by the hour. If he happen to have keen natural perception and quick wit, these will come into play in their due time and place, but he will not think of them as his chief power; and if he have them not, he may still hope that industry and conscientiousness may enable him to rise in his profession without them. Again in the case of clergymen: that they are sorely tempted to display their eloquence or wit, none who know their own hearts will deny, but then they *know* this to *be* a temptation: they never would suppose that cleverness was all that was to be expected from them, or would sit down deliberately to write a clever sermon: even the dullest or vainest of them would throw some veil over their vanity, and pretend to some profitableness of purpose in what they did. They would not openly ask of their hearers—Did you think my sermon ingenious, or my language poetical? They would early understand that they were not paid for being ingenious, nor called to be so, but to preach truth; that if they happened to possess wit, eloquence, or originality, these would appear and be of service in due time, but

were not to be continually sought after or exhibited; and if it should happen that they had them not, they might still be serviceable pastors without them.

175. Not so with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but everyone expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, everything is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking—honesty and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter. What function? asks the reader in some surprise. He may well ask; for I suppose few painters have any idea what their function is, or even that they have any at all. [Pg 178]

176. And yet surely it is not so difficult to discover. The faculties, which when a man finds in himself, he resolves to be a painter, are, I suppose, intenseness of observation and facility of imitation. The man is created an observer and an imitator; and his function is to convey knowledge to his fellow-men, of such things as cannot be taught otherwise than ocularly. For a long time this function remained a religious one: it was to impress upon the popular mind the reality of the objects of faith, and the truth of the histories of Scripture, by giving visible form to both. That function has now passed away, and none has as yet taken its place. The painter has no profession, no purpose. He is an idler on the earth, chasing the shadows of his own fancies.

177. But he was never meant to be this. The sudden and universal Naturalism, or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe, at the moment when the invention of printing superseded their legendary labors, was no false instinct. It was misunderstood and misapplied, but it came at the right time, and has maintained itself through all kinds of abuse; presenting, in the recent schools of landscape, perhaps only the first fruits of its power. That instinct was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—*the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty existent at the period*; representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep faithful record of every monument of past ages which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change.

178. The instinct came, as I said, exactly at the right moment; and let the reader consider what amount and kind of general knowledge might by this time have been possessed by the nations of Europe, had their painters understood and obeyed it. Suppose that, after disciplining themselves so as to be able to draw, with unerring precision, each the particular kind of subject in which he most delighted, they had separated into two great armies of historians and naturalists;—that the [Pg 179] first had painted with absolute faithfulness every edifice, every city, every battlefield, every scene of the slightest historical interest, precisely and completely rendering their aspect at the time; and that their companions, according to their several powers, had painted with like fidelity the plants and animals, the natural scenery, and the atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth—suppose that a faithful and complete record were now in our museums of every building destroyed by war, or time, or innovation, during these last 200 years—suppose that each recess of every mountain chain of Europe had been penetrated, and its rocks drawn with such accuracy that the geologist's diagram was no longer necessary—suppose that every tree of the forest had been drawn in its noblest aspect, every beast of the field in its savage life—that all these gatherings were already in our national galleries, and that the painters of the present day were laboring, happily and earnestly, to multiply them, and put such means of knowledge more and more within reach of the common people—would not that be a more honorable life for them, than gaining precarious bread by "bright effects"? They think not, perhaps. They think it easy, and therefore contemptible, to be truthful; they have been taught so all their lives. But it is not so, whoever taught it them. It is most difficult, and worthy of the greatest men's greatest effort, to render, as it should be rendered, the simplest of the natural features of the earth; but also be it remembered, no man is confined to the simplest; each may look out work for himself where he chooses, and it will be strange if he cannot find something hard enough for him. The excuse is, however, one of the lips only; for every painter knows, that when he draws back from the attempt to render nature as she is, it is oftener in cowardice than in disdain.

179. I must leave the reader to pursue this subject for himself; I have not space to suggest to him the tenth part of the advantages which would follow, both to the painter from such an understanding of his mission, and to the whole people, in the results of his labor. Consider how [Pg 180] the man himself would be elevated; how content he would become, how earnest, how full of all accurate and noble knowledge, how free from envy—knowing creation to be infinite, feeling at once the value of what he did, and yet the nothingness. Consider the advantage to the people: the immeasurably larger interest given to art itself; the easy, pleasurable, and perfect knowledge conveyed by it, in every subject; the far greater number of men who might be healthily and profitably occupied with it as a means of livelihood; the useful direction of myriads of inferior talents now left fading away in misery. Conceive all this, and then look around at our exhibitions, and behold the "cattle pieces," and "sea pieces," and "fruit pieces," and "family pieces"; the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers;—and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been.

180. Take a single instance in one branch of archæology. Let those who are interested in the history of Religion consider what a treasure we should now have possessed, if, instead of painting pots, and vegetables, and drunken peasantry, the most accurate painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been set to copy, line for line, the religious and domestic sculpture on the German, Flemish, and French cathedrals and castles; and if every building destroyed in the French or in any other subsequent revolution, had thus been drawn in all its parts with the same precision with which Gerard Dow or Mieris paint bas-reliefs of Cupids. Consider, even now, what

incalculable treasure is still left in ancient bas-reliefs, full of every kind of legendary interest, of subtle expression, of priceless evidence as to the character, feelings, habits, histories, of past generations, in neglected and shattered churches and domestic buildings, rapidly disappearing over the whole of Europe—treasure which, once lost, the labor of all men living cannot bring back again; and then look at the myriads of men, with skill enough, if they had but the commonest schooling, to record all this faithfully, who are making their bread by drawing dances of naked [Pg 181] women from academy models, or idealities of chivalry fitted out with Wardour Street armor, or eternal scenes from Gil Blas, Don Quixote, and the Vicar of Wakefield, or mountain sceneries with young idiots of Londoners wearing Highland bonnets and brandishing rifles in the foregrounds. Do but think of these things in the breadth of their inexpressible imbecility, and then go and stand before that broken bas-relief in the southern gate of Lincoln Cathedral, and see if there is no fiber of the heart in you that will break too.

181. But is there to be no place left, it will be indignantly asked, for imagination and invention, for poetical power, or love of ideal beauty? Yes, the highest, the noblest place—that which these only can attain when they are all used in the cause, and with the aid of truth. Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would give them would be the best they could receive. The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose that they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I ever have written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers—the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets?—of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labor? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish [Pg 182] brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could anything come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense, should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty, and look to heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one-seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one-third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips and chin; but mostly in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This I say is the kind of teaching which through various [Pg 183] channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters!

182. But we do worse than this. Within the last few years some sense of the real tendency of such teaching has appeared in some of our younger painters. It only *could* appear in the younger ones, our older men having become familiarized with the false system, or else having passed through it and forgotten it, not well knowing the degree of harm they had sustained. This sense appeared, among our youths,—increased,—matured into resolute action. Necessarily, to exist at all, it needed the support both of strong instincts and of considerable self-confidence, otherwise it must at once have been borne down by the weight of general authority and received canon law. Strong instincts are apt to make men strange and rude; self-confidence, however well founded, to give much of what they do or say the appearance of impertinence. Look at the self-confidence of Wordsworth, stiffening every other sentence of his prefaces into defiance; there is no more of it than was needed to enable him to do his work, yet it is not a little ungraceful here and there. Suppose this stubbornness and self-trust in a youth, laboring in an art of which the executive part is confessedly to be best learnt from masters, and we shall hardly wonder that much of his work has a certain awkwardness and stiffness in it, or that he should be regarded with disfavor by many, even the most temperate, of the judges trained in the system he was breaking through, and with utter contempt and reprobation by the envious and the dull. Consider, further, that the particular system to be overthrown was, in the present case, one of which the main characteristic was the pursuit of beauty at the expense of manliness and truth; and it will seem likely *à priori*, that the men intended successfully to resist the influence of such a system should be endowed

with little natural sense of beauty, and thus rendered dead to the temptation it presented. Summing up these conditions, there is surely little cause for surprise that pictures painted, in a [Pg 184] temper of resistance, by exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts and positive self-trust, and with little natural perception of beauty, should not be calculated, at the first glance, to win us from works enriched by plagiarism, polished by convention, invested with all the attractiveness of artificial grace, and recommended to our respect by established authority.

183. We should, however, on the other hand, have anticipated, that in proportion to the strength of character required for the effort, and to the absence of distracting sentiments, whether respect for precedent, or affection for ideal beauty, would be the energy exhibited in the pursuit of the special objects which the youths proposed to themselves, and their success in attaining them.

All this has actually been the case, but in a degree which it would have been impossible to anticipate. That two youths, of the respective ages of eighteen and twenty, should have conceived for themselves a totally independent and sincere method of study, and enthusiastically persevered in it against every kind of dissuasion and opposition, is strange enough; that in the third or fourth year of their efforts they should have produced works in many parts not inferior to the best of Albert Dürer, this is perhaps not less strange. But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised against them, the utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other—these are strangest of all—unimaginable unless they had been experienced.

184. And as if these were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small, slimy way. The very day after I had written my second letter to the "Times" in the defense of the Pre-Raphaelites,[30] I received an anonymous letter respecting one of them, from some person [Pg 185] apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a specimen of petty malignity as ever blotted paper. I think it well that the public should know this, and so get some insight into the sources of the spirit which is at work against these men: how first roused it is difficult to say, for one would hardly have thought that mere eccentricity in young artists could have excited an hostility so determined and so cruel; hostility which hesitated at no assertion, however impudent. That of the "absence of perspective" was one of the most curious pieces of the hue and cry which began with the "Times," and died away in feeble maundering in the Art Union; I contradicted it in the "Times"—I here contradict it directly for the second time. There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. But if otherwise, would it have been anything remarkable in them? I doubt if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there were one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy; I never met but with two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane, so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished among them, the author of several most valuable works, I found he actually did not know how to draw a circle in perspective. And in this state of general science our writers for the press take it upon them to tell us, that the forest-trees in Mr. Hunt's *Sylvia*, and the bunches of lilies in Mr. Collins's *Convent Thoughts*, are out of perspective.[31] [Pg 186]

185. It might not, I think, in such circumstances, have been ungraceful or unwise in the Academicians themselves to have defended their young pupils, at least by the contradiction of statements directly false respecting them,[32] and the direction of the mind and sight of the public to such real merit as they possess. If Sir Charles Eastlake, Mulready, Edwin and Charles Landseer, Cope, and Dyce would each of them simply state their own private opinion respecting their paintings, sign it, and publish it, I believe the act would be of more service to English art than anything the Academy has done since it was founded. But as I cannot hope for this, I can only ask the public to give their pictures careful examination, and to look at them at once with the indulgence and the respect which I have endeavored to show they deserve.

Yet let me not be misunderstood. I have adduced them only as examples of the kind of study which I would desire to see substituted for that of our modern schools, and of singular success in certain characters, finish of detail, and brilliancy of color. What faculties, higher than imitative, may be in these men, I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will [Pg 187] manifest themselves in due time all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe.

186. For it is always to be remembered that no one mind is like another, either in its powers or perceptions; and while the main principles of training must be the same for all, the result in each will be as various as the kinds of truth which each will apprehend; therefore, also, the modes of effort, even in men whose inner principles and final aims are exactly the same. Suppose, for instance, two men, equally honest, equally industrious, equally impressed with a humble desire to render some part of what they saw in nature faithfully; and, otherwise, trained in convictions such as I have above endeavored to induce. But one of them is quiet in temperament, has a feeble memory, no invention, and excessively keen sight. The other is impatient in temperament, has a memory which nothing escapes, an invention which never rests, and is comparatively near-sighted.

187. Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the [Pg 188] branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and

invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thoughts of seizing transient effects, or giving general impressions of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the intensity of his perceptions, or the fullness of matter in his subject.

188. Meantime, the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad, soft masses of true gradation, and the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aërial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind forever; not a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thoughts. Not only so, but thousands and thousands of such images, of older scenes, remain congregated in his mind, each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him, and these again confused with other images of his own ceaseless, sleepless imagination, flashing by in sudden troops. Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable shorthand:—as for his sitting down to "draw from Nature," there was not one of the things which he wished to represent, that stayed for so much as five seconds together: but none of them escaped for all that: they are sealed up in that strange storehouse of his; he may take one of them out perhaps, this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room, far away. Now, observe, you may tell both of these men, when they are young, that they are to be honest, that [Pg 189] they have an important function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

189. I have supposed the feebleness of sight in the last, and of invention in the first painter, that the contrast between them might be more striking; but, with very slight modification, both the characters are real. Grant to the first considerable inventive power, with exquisite sense of color; and give to the second, in addition to all his other faculties, the eye of an eagle; and the first is John Everett Millais, the second Joseph Mallard William Turner.

They are among the few men who have defied all false teaching, and have therefore, in great measure, done justice to the gifts with which they were intrusted. They stand at opposite poles, marking culminating points of art in both directions; between them, or in various relations to them, we may class five or six more living artists who, in like manner, have done justice to their powers. I trust that I may be pardoned for naming them, in order that the reader may know how the strong innate genius in each has been invariably accompanied with the same humility, earnestness, and industry in study.

190. It is hardly necessary to point out the earnestness or humility in the works of William Hunt; but it may be so to suggest the high value they possess as records of English rural life, and *still* life. Who is there who for a moment could contend with him in the unaffected, yet humorous truth with which he has painted our peasant children? Who is there who does not sympathize with him in the simple love with which he dwells on the brightness and bloom of our summer fruit and flowers? And yet there is something to be regretted concerning him: why should he be allowed continually to paint the same bunches of hot-house grapes, and supply to the Water Color Society a succession of pine-apples with the regularity of a Covent Garden fruiterer? He has of [Pg 190] late discovered that primrose banks are lovely, but there are other things grow wild besides primroses: what undreamt-of loveliness might he not bring back to us, if he would lose himself for a summer in Highland foregrounds; if he would paint the heather as it grows, and the foxglove and the harebell as they nestle in the clefts of the rocks, and the mosses and bright lichens of the rocks themselves. And then, cross to the Jura, and bring back a piece of Jura pasture in spring; with the gentians in their earliest blue, and a soldanelle beside the fading snow! And return again, and paint a gray wall of alpine crag, with budding roses crowning it like a wreath of rubies. That is what he was meant to do in this world; not to paint bouquets in china vases.

191. I have in various other places expressed my sincere respect for the works of Samuel Prout: his shortness of sight has necessarily prevented their possessing delicacy of finish or fullness of minor detail; but I think that those of no other living artist furnish an example so striking of innate and special instinct, sent to do a particular work at the exact and only period when it was possible. At the instant when peace had been established all over Europe, but when neither national character nor national architecture had as yet been seriously changed by promiscuous intercourse or modern "improvement"; when, however, nearly every ancient and beautiful building had been long left in a state of comparative neglect, so that its aspect of partial ruinousness, and of separation from recent active life, gave to every edifice a peculiar interest—half sorrowful, half sublime;—at that moment Prout was trained among the rough rocks and simple cottages of Cornwall, until his eye was accustomed to follow with delight the rents and breaks, and irregularities which, to another man, would have been offensive; and then, gifted with infinite readiness in composition, but also with infinite affection for the kind of subjects he had to portray, he was sent to preserve, in an almost innumerable series of drawings, *every one made on the spot*, the aspect borne, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by cities which, [Pg 191] in a few years more, re-kindled wars, or unexpected prosperities, were to ravage, or renovate, into nothingness.[33]

192. It seems strange to pass from Prout to John Lewis; but there is this fellowship between

them, that both seem to have been intended to appreciate the characters of foreign countries more than of their own, nay, to have been born in England chiefly that the excitement of strangeness might enhance to them the interest of the scenes they had to represent. I believe John Lewis to have done more entire justice to all his powers (and they are magnificent ones), than any other man amongst us. His mission was evidently to portray the comparatively animal life of the southern and eastern families of mankind. For this he was prepared in a somewhat singular way—by being led to study, and endowed with altogether peculiar apprehension of, the most sublime characters of animals themselves. Rubens, Rembrandt, Snyders, Tintoret, and Titian, have all, in various ways, drawn wild beasts magnificently; but they have in some sort humanized or demonized them, making them either ravenous fiends, or educated beasts, that would draw cars, and had respect for hermits. The sullen isolation of the brutal nature; the dignity and quietness of the mighty limbs; the shaggy mountainous power, mingled with grace as of a flowing stream; the stealthy restraint of strength and wrath in every soundless motion of the gigantic frame; all this seems never to have been seen, much less drawn, until Lewis drew and himself engraved a series of animal subjects, now many years ago. Since then, he has devoted himself to the portraiture of those European and Asiatic races, among whom the refinements of civilization exist without its laws or its energies, and in whom the fierceness, indolence, and subtlety of animal nature are associated with brilliant imagination and strong affections. To this task he has brought not only intense perception of the kind of character, but powers of artistical composition like those of the great Venetians, displaying, at the same time, a refinement of [Pg 192] drawing almost miraculous, and appreciable only, as the minutiæ of nature itself are appreciable, by the help of the microscope. The value, therefore, of his works, as records of the aspect of the scenery and inhabitants of the south of Spain and of the East, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is quite above all estimate.

193. I hardly know how to speak of Mulready: in delicacy and completion of drawing, and splendor of color, he takes place beside John Lewis and the Pre-Raphaelites; but he has, throughout his career, displayed no definiteness in choice of subject. He must be named among the painters who have studied with industry, and have made themselves great by doing so; but, having obtained a consummate method of execution, he has thrown it away on subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation. "The Cherry Woman," exhibited in 1850, may be named as an example of the first kind; the "Burchell and Sophia" of the second (the character of Sir William Thornhill being utterly missed); the "Seven Ages" of the third; for this subject cannot be painted. In the written passage, the thoughts are progressive and connected; in the picture they must be co-existent, and yet separate; nor can all the characters of the ages be rendered in painting at all. One may represent the soldier at the cannon's mouth, but one cannot paint the "bubble reputation" which he seeks. Mulready, therefore, while he has always produced exquisite pieces of painting, has failed in doing anything which can be of true or extensive use. He has, indeed, understood how to discipline his genius, but never how to direct it.

194. Edwin Landseer is the last painter but one whom I shall name: I need not point out to anyone acquainted with his earlier works, the labor, or watchfulness of nature which they involve, nor need I do more than allude to the peculiar faculties of his mind. It will at once be granted that the highest merits of his pictures are throughout found in those parts of them which [Pg 193] are least like what had before been accomplished; and that it was not by the study of Raphael that he attained his eminent success, but by a healthy love of Scotch terriers.

None of these painters, however, it will be answered, afford examples of the rise of the highest imaginative power out of close study of matters of fact. Be it remembered, however, that the imaginative power, in its magnificence, is not to be found every day. Lewis has it in no mean degree, but we cannot hope to find it at its highest more than once in an age. We *have* had it once, and must be content.

195. Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in grayish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed W. Turner.[34] There was nothing, however, in them at all indicative of genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colors; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

During that period the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colors of nature into a harmony of which the keynotes are grayish green and brown; pure blues, and delicate golden [Pg 194] yellows being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light: and bright local colors in extremely small quantity in figures or other minor accessories.

196. Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *color* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights

and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed with the hand; but the use of two, three, or four colors, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of color, any more than the brown engravings of the Liber Studiorum; nor would the idea of color be in general more present to the artist's mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself this advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual color of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in nature have been cold gray, but it will be drawn nevertheless of a rich brown, because it is in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze; but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool gray, because it is in the distance.

197. This at least was the general theory,—carried out with great severity in many, both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of color, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress: the conventional, easily manageable color, was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect [Pg 195] liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in all art—that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them, was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and, therefore, not only permissible, but even necessary, while more brilliant or varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind for an instant from his principal object. And, therefore, it will be generally found in the works of this period, that exactly in proportion to the importance and general toil of the composition, is the severity of the tint; and that the play of color begins to show itself first in slight and small drawings, where he felt that he could easily secure all that he wanted in form.

198. Thus the "Crossing the Brook," and such other elaborate and large compositions, are actually painted in nothing but gray, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local color in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated color occur not unfrequently in easy places; and even before the year 1800 he begins to introduce it with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies, just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit or other dangerous luxury to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft penciling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colorless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-color or gold; while, whenever the hues of nature in anywise [Pg 196] fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigor, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear, Cairngorm-like pools, and the usual serenity of his aërial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

199. The system of his color being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his color is simple; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him; we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farm-yard; and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses; Cuyp, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes (as he has himself divided them in the Liber Studiorum), no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal "gentlemen's seats," I suppose drawings [Pg 197] commissioned by the owners; then lowland pastoral scenery of every kind, including nearly all farming operations—-plowing, harrowing, hedging and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life—courtyards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, house-buildings, fairs, elections, etc.; then all kinds of inner domestic life—interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn, round the whole coast of England—pilchard fishing at St. Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance—one of the Victory after the

battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the death of Nelson, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealized into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes, and Carthages, and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures—nymphs, monsters, and specters; heroes and divinities.[35]

200. What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can possibly pervade all this? This, the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite—a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakspeare comparable with it. A soldier's wife resting by the roadside is not beneath it;[36] Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carry away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he [Pg 198] can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

201. This is the root of the man's greatness; and it follows as a matter of course that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the characters of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed. The man who can best feel the difference between rudeness and tenderness in humanity, perceives also more difference between the branches of an oak and a willow than anyone else would; and, therefore, necessarily the most striking character of the drawings themselves is the speciality of whatever they represent—the thorough stiffness of what is stiff, and grace of what is graceful, and vastness of what is vast; but through and beyond all this, the condition of the mind of the painter himself is easily enough discoverable by comparison of a large number of the drawings. It is singularly serene and peaceful: in itself quite passionless, though entering with ease into the external passion which it contemplates. By the effort of its will it sympathizes with tumult or distress, even in their extremes, but there is no tumult, no sorrow in itself, only a chastened and exquisitely peaceful cheerfulness, deeply meditative; touched, without loss of its own perfect balance, by sadness on the one side, and stooping to playfulness upon the other. I shall never cease to regret the destruction, by fire, now several years ago, of a drawing which always seemed to me to be the perfect image of the painter's mind at this period,—the drawing of Brignal Church near Rokeby, of which a feeble idea may still be gathered from the engraving (in the Yorkshire series). The spectator stands on the "Brignal banks," looking down into the glen at twilight; the sky is still full of soft rays, though the sun is gone, and the Greta glances brightly in the valley, singing its even-song; two white clouds, following each other, move without wind through the hollows of the ravine, and others lie couched on the far away moorlands; every leaf of the woods is still in the [Pg 199] delicate air; a boy's kite, incapable of rising, has become entangled in their branches, he is climbing to recover it; and just behind it in the picture, almost indicated by it, the lowly church is seen in its secluded field between the rocks and the stream; and around, it the low churchyard wall, and a few white stones which mark the resting places of those who can climb the rocks no more, nor hear the river sing as it passes.

There are many other existing drawings which indicate the same character of mind, though I think none so touching or so beautiful: yet they are not, as I said above, more numerous than those which express his sympathy with sublimer or more active scenes; but they are almost always marked by a tenderness of execution, and have a look of being beloved in every part of them, which shows them to be the truest expression of his own feelings.

202. One other characteristic of his mind at this period remains to be noticed—its reverence for talent in others. Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they were the laws of nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great text-book of nature itself. Turner thus studied almost every preceding landscape painter, chiefly Claude, Poussin, Vandevelde, Loutherbourg, and Wilson. It was probably by the Sir George Beaumonts and other feeble conventionalists of the period, that he was persuaded to devote his attention to the works of these men; and his having done so will be thought, a few scores of years hence, evidence of perhaps the greatest modesty ever shown by a man of original power. Modesty at once admirable and unfortunate, for the study of the works of Vandevelde and Claude was productive of unmixed mischief to him: he spoiled many of his marine pictures, as for instance Lord Ellesmere's, by imitation of the former; and from the latter learned a false ideal, which, confirmed by the notions of Greek art prevalent in London in the [Pg 200] beginning of this century, has manifested itself in many vulgarities in his composition pictures, vulgarities which may perhaps be best expressed by the general term "Twickenham Classicism," as consisting principally in conceptions of ancient or of rural life such as have influenced the erection of most of our suburban villas. From Nicole Poussin and Loutherbourg he seems to have derived advantage; perhaps also from Wilson; and much in his subsequent travels from far higher men, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese. I have myself heard him speaking with singular delight of the putting in of the beech leaves in the upper right-hand corner of Titian's Peter Martyr. I cannot in any of his works trace the slightest influence of Salvator; and I am not surprised at it, for though Salvator was a man of far higher powers than either Vandevelde or Claude, he was a willful and gross caricaturist. Turner would condescend to be helped by feeble men, but could not be corrupted by false men. Besides, he had never himself seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as competent authority for it. But he *had* seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them.

203. One of the most characteristic drawings of this period fortunately bears a date, 1818, and brings us within two years of another dated drawing, no less characteristic of what I shall henceforward call Turner's Second period. It is in the possession of Mr. Hawkesworth Fawkes of Farnley, one of Turner's earliest and truest friends; and bears the inscription, unusually conspicuous, heaving itself up and down over the eminences of the foreground—"Passage of Mont Cenis. J. M. W. Turner, January 15th, 1820."

The scene is on the summit of the pass close to the hospice, or what seems to have been a hospice at that time,—I do not remember any such at present,—a small square built house, built as if partly for a fortress, with a detached flight of stone steps in front of it, and a kind of drawbridge to the door. This building, about 400 or 500 yards off, is seen in a dim, ashy gray against the light, which by help of a violent blast of mountain wind has broken through the depth [Pg 201] of clouds which hang upon the crags. There is no sky, properly so called, nothing but this roof of drifting cloud; but neither is there any weight of darkness—the high air is too thin for it,—all savage, howling, and luminous with cold, the massy bases of the granite hills jutting out here and there grimly through the snow wreaths. There is a desolate-looking refuge on the left, with its number 16, marked on it in long ghastly figures, and the wind is drifting the snow off the roof and through its window in a frantic whirl; the near ground is all wan with half-thawed, half-trampled snow; a diligence in front, whose horses, unable to face the wind, have turned right round with fright, its passengers struggling to escape, jammed in the window; a little farther on is another carriage off the road, some figures pushing at its wheels, and its driver at the horses' heads, pulling and lashing with all his strength, his lifted arm stretched out against the light of the distance, though too far off for the whip to be seen.

204. Now I am perfectly certain that anyone thoroughly accustomed to the earlier works of the painter, and shown this picture for the first time, would be struck by two altogether new characters in it.

The first, a seeming enjoyment of the excitement of the scene, totally different from the contemplative philosophy with which it would formerly have been regarded. Every incident of motion and of energy is seized upon with indescribable delight, and every line of the composition animated with a force and fury which are now no longer the mere expression of a contemplated external truth, but have origin in some inherent feeling in the painter's mind.

The second, that although the subject is one in itself almost incapable of color, and although, in order to increase the wildness of the impression, all brilliant local color has been refused even where it might easily have been introduced, as in the figures; yet in the low minor key which has been chosen, the melodies of *color* have been elaborated to the utmost possible pitch, so as to [Pg 202] become a leading, instead of a subordinate, element in the composition; the subdued warm hues of the granite promontories, the dull stone color of the walls of the buildings, clearly opposed, even in shade, to the gray of the snow wreaths heaped against them, and the faint greens and ghastly blues of the glacier ice, being all expressed with delicacies of transition utterly unexampled in any previous drawings.

205. These, accordingly, are the chief characteristics of the works of Turner's second period, as distinguished from the first,—a new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of Color, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design.

Not that it is impossible, or even unusual, to find drawings of serene subject, and perfectly quiet feeling, among the compositions of this period; but the repose is in them, just as the energy and tumult were in the earlier period, an external quality, which the painter images by an effort of the will: it is no longer a character inherent in himself. The "Ulleswater," in the England series, is one of those which are in most perfect peace; in the "Cowes," the silence is only broken by the dash of the boat's oars, and in the "Alnwick" by a stag drinking; but in at least nine drawings out of ten, either sky, water, or figures are in rapid motion, and the grandest drawings are almost always those which have even violent action in one or other, or in all; *e.g.* high force of Tees, Coventry, Llanthony, Salisbury, Llanberis, and such others.

206. The color is, however, a more absolute distinction; and we must return to Mr. Fawkes's collection in order to see how the change in it was effected. That such a change would take place at one time or other was of course to be securely anticipated, the conventional system of the first period being, as above stated, merely a means of study. But the immediate cause was the journey of the year 1820. As might be guessed from the legend on the drawing above described, "Passage [Pg 203] of Mont Cenis, January 15th, 1820," that drawing represents what happened on the day in question to the painter himself. He passed the Alps then in the winter of 1820; and either in the previous or subsequent summer, but on the same journey, he made a series of sketches on the Rhine, in body color, now in Mr. Fawkes's collection. Every one of those sketches is the almost instantaneous record of an *effect* of color or atmosphere, taken strictly from nature, the drawing and the details of every subject being comparatively subordinate, and the color nearly as principal as the light and shade had been before,—certainly the leading feature, though the light and shade are always exquisitely harmonized with it. And naturally, as the color becomes the leading object, those times of day are chosen in which it is most lovely; and whereas before, at least five out of six of Turner's drawings represented ordinary daylight, we now find his attention directed constantly to the evening: and, for the first time, we have those rosy lights upon the hills, those gorgeous falls of sun through flaming heavens, those solemn twilights, with the blue moon rising as the western sky grows dim, which have ever since been the themes of his

mightiest thoughts.

207. I have no doubt, that the *immediate* reason of this change was the impression made upon him by the colors of the continental skies. When he first traveled on the Continent (1800), he was comparatively a young student; not yet able to draw form as he wanted, he was forced to give all his thoughts and strength to this primary object. But now he was free to receive other impressions; the time was come for perfecting his art, and the first sunset which he saw on the Rhine taught him that all previous landscape art was vain and valueless, that in comparison with natural color, the things that had been called paintings were mere ink and charcoal, and that all precedent and all authority must be cast away at once, and trodden underfoot. He cast them away: the memories of Vandevelde and Claude were at once weeded out of the great mind they had encumbered; they and all the rubbish of the schools together with them; the waves of the [Pg 204] Rhine swept them away forever: and a new dawn rose over the rocks of the Siebengebirge.

208. There was another motive at work, which rendered the change still more complete. His fellow artists were already conscious enough of his superior power in drawing, and their best hope was that he might not be able to color. They had begun to express this hope loudly enough for it to reach his ears. The engraver of one of his most important marine pictures told me, not long ago, that one day about the period in question, Turner came into his room to examine the progress of the plate, not having seen his own picture for several months. It was one of his dark early pictures, but in the foreground was a little piece of luxury, a pearly fish wrought into hues like those of an opal. He stood before the picture for some moments; then laughed, and pointed joyously to the fish:—"They say that Turner can't color!" and turned away.

209. Under the force of these various impulses the change was total. *Every subject thenceforward was primarily conceived in color*; and no engraving ever gave the slightest idea of any drawing of this period.

The artists who had any perception of the truth were in despair; the Beaumontites, classicalists, and "owl species" in general, in as much indignation as their dullness was capable of. They had deliberately closed their eyes to all nature, and had gone on inquiring, "Where do you put your brown 'tree'?" A vast revelation was made to them at once, enough to have dazzled anyone; but to *them*, light unendurable as incomprehensible. They "did to the moon complain," in one vociferous, unanimous, continuous "Tu whoo." Shrieking rose from all dark places at the same instant, just the same kind of shrieking that is now raised against the Pre-Raphaelites. Those glorious old Arabian Nights, how true they are! Mocking and whispering, and abuse loud and low by turns, from all the black stones beside the road, when one living soul is toiling up the hill to get the golden water. Mocking and whispering, that he may look back, and become a black stone [Pg 205] like themselves.

210. Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with his fingers in his ears. He retired into himself; he could look no longer for help, or counsel, or sympathy from anyone; and the spirit of defiance in which he was forced to labor led him sometimes into violences, from which the slightest expression of sympathy would have saved him. The new energy that was upon him, and the utter isolation into which he was driven, were both alike dangerous, and many drawings of the time show the evil effects of both; some of them being hasty, wild, or experimental, and others little more than magnificent expressions of defiance of public opinion.

But all have this noble virtue—they are in everything his own: there are no more reminiscences of dead masters, no more trials of skill in the manner of Claude or Poussin; every faculty of his soul is fixed upon nature only, as he saw her, or as he remembered her.

211. I have spoken above of his gigantic memory: it is especially necessary to notice this, in order that we may understand the kind of grasp which a man of real imagination takes of all things that are once brought within his reach—grasp thenceforth not to be relaxed forever.

On looking over any catalogues of his works, or of particular series of them, we shall notice the recurrence of the same subject two, three, or even many times. In any other artist this would be nothing remarkable. Probably, most modern landscape painters multiply a favorite subject twenty, thirty, or sixty fold, putting the shadows and the clouds in different places, and "inventing," as they are pleased to call it, a new "effect" every time. But if we examine the successions of Turner's subjects, we shall find them either the records of a succession of impressions actually received by him at some favorite locality, or else repetitions of one impression received in early youth, and again and again realized as his increasing powers [Pg 206] enabled him to do better justice to it. In either case we shall find them records of *seen facts*; *never* compositions in his room to fill up a favorite outline.

212. For instance, every traveler—at least, every traveler of thirty years' standing—must love Calais, the place where he first felt himself in a strange world. Turner evidently loved it excessively. I have never catalogued his studies of Calais, but I remember, at this moment, five: there is first the "Pas de Calais," a very large oil painting, which is what he saw in broad daylight as he crossed over, when he got near the French side. It is a careful study of French fishing-boats running for the shore before the wind, with the picturesque old city in the distance. Then there is the "Calais Harbor" in the Liber Studiorum: that is what he saw just as he was going into the harbor—a heavy brig warping out, and very likely to get in his way or run against the pier, and bad weather coming on. Then there is the "Calais Pier," a large painting, engraved some years ago by Mr. Lupton:[37] that is what he saw when he had landed, and ran back directly to the pier

to see what had become of the brig. The weather had got still worse, the fishwomen were being blown about in a distressful manner on the pier head, and some more fishing-boats were running in with all speed. Then there is the "Fortrouge," Calais: that is what he saw after he had been home to Dessein's, and dined, and went out again in the evening to walk on the sands, the tide being down. He had never seen such a waste of sands before, and it made an impression on him. The shrimp girls were all scattered over them too, and moved about in white spots on the wild shore; and the storm had lulled a little, and there was a sunset—such a sunset!—and the bars of Fortrouge seen against it, skeleton-wise. He did not paint that directly; thought over it—painted it a long while afterwards.

213. Then there is the vignette in the illustrations to Scott. That is what he saw as he was going home, meditatively; and the revolving lighthouse came blazing out upon him suddenly, and disturbed him. He did not like that so much; made a vignette of it, however, when he was asked to do a bit of Calais, twenty or thirty years afterwards, having already done all the rest. [Pg 207]

Turner never told me all this, but anyone may see it if he will compare the pictures. They might, possibly, not be impressions of a single day, but of two days or three; though, in all human probability, they were seen just as I have stated them;[38] but they *are* records of successive impressions, as plainly written as ever traveler's diary. All of them pure veracities. Therefore immortal.

214. I could multiply these series almost indefinitely from the rest of his works. What is curious, some of them have a kind of private mark running through all the subjects. Thus, I know three drawings of Scarborough, and all of them have a starfish in the foreground: I do not remember any others of his marine subjects which have a starfish.

The other kind of repetition—the recurrence to one early impression—is, however, still more remarkable. In the collection of F. H. Bale, Esq., there is a small drawing of Llanthony Abbey. It is in his boyish manner, its date probably about 1795; evidently a sketch from nature, finished at home. It had been a showery day; the hills were partially concealed by the rain, and gleams of sunshine breaking out at intervals. A man was fishing in the mountain stream. The young Turner sought a place of some shelter under the bushes; made his sketch; took great pains when he got home to imitate the rain, as he best could; added his child's luxury of a rainbow; put in the very bush under which he had taken shelter, and the fisherman, a somewhat ill-jointed and long-legged fisherman, in the courtly short breeches which were the fashion of the time.

215. Some thirty years afterwards, with all his powers in their strongest training, and after the total change in his feelings and principles, which I have endeavored to describe, he undertook the series of "England and Wales," and in that series introduced the subject of Llanthony Abbey. And behold, he went back to his boy's sketch and boy's thought. He kept the very bushes in their places, but brought the fisherman to the other side of the river, and put him, in somewhat less courtly dress, under their shelter, instead of himself. And then he set all his gained strength and new knowledge at work on the well-remembered shower of rain, that had fallen thirty years before, to do it better. The resultant drawing[39] is one of the very noblest of his second period. [Pg 208]

216. Another of the drawings of the England series, Ulleswater, is the repetition of one in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which, by the method of its execution, I should conjecture to have been executed about the year 1808 or 1810: at all events, it is a very quiet drawing of the first period. The lake is quite calm; the western hills in gray shadow, the eastern massed in light. Helvellyn rising like a mist between them, all being mirrored in the calm water. Some thin and slightly evanescent cows are standing in the shallow water in front; a boat floats motionless about a hundred yards from the shore; the foreground is of broken rocks, with some lovely pieces of copse on the right and left.

This was evidently Turner's record of a quiet evening by the shore of Ulleswater, but it was a feeble one. He could not at that time render the sunset colors: he went back to it, therefore, in the England series, and painted it again with his new power. The same hills are there, the same shadows, the same cows,—they had stood in his mind, on the same spot, for twenty years,—the same boat, the same rocks, only the copse is cut away—it interfered with the masses of his color. Some figures are introduced bathing; and what was gray, and feeble gold in the first drawing, becomes purple and burning rose-color in the last.

217. But perhaps one of the most curious examples is in the series of subjects from Winchelsea. That in the Liber Studiorum, "Winchelsea, Sussex," bears date 1812, and its figures consist of a soldier speaking to a woman, who is resting on the bank beside the road. There is another small subject, with Winchelsea in the distance, of which the engraving bears date 1817. It has *two* women with bundles, and *two* soldiers toiling along the embankment in the plain, and a baggage wagon in the distance. Neither of these seems to have satisfied him, and at last he did another for the England series, of which the engraving bears date 1830. There is now a regiment on the march; the baggage wagon is there, having got no farther on in the thirteen years, but one of the women is tired, and has fainted on the bank; another is supporting her against her bundle, and giving her drink; a third sympathetic woman is added, and the two soldiers have stopped, and one is drinking from his canteen.[40] [Pg 209]

218. Nor is it merely of entire scenes, or of particular incidents that Turner's memory is thus tenacious. The slightest passages of color or arrangement that have pleased him—the fork of a bough, the casting of a shadow, the fracture of a stone—will be taken up again and again, and

strangely worked into new relations with other thoughts. There is a single sketch from nature in one of the portfolios at Farnley, of a common wood-walk on the estate, which has furnished passages to no fewer than three of the most elaborate compositions in the Liber Studiorum.

219. I am thus tedious in dwelling on Turner's powers of memory, because I wish it to be thoroughly seen how all his greatness, all his infinite luxuriance of invention, depends on his taking possession of everything that he sees,—on his grasping all, and losing hold of nothing,—on his forgetting himself, and forgetting nothing else. I wish it to be understood how every great man paints what he sees or did see, his greatness being indeed little else than his intense sense of fact. And thus Pre-Raphaelitism and Raphaelitism, and Turnerism, are all one and the same, so [Pg 210] far as education can influence them. They are different in their choice, different in their faculties, but all the same in this, that Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who preceded or followed him who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man's own mind, not as he had been taught to see them, except by the God who made both him and them.

220. There is, however, one more characteristic of Turner's second period, on which I have still to dwell, especially with reference to what has been above advanced respecting the fallacy of overtoil; namely, the magnificent ease with which all is done when it is *successfully* done. For there are one or two drawings of this time which are *not* done easily. Turner had in these set himself to do a fine thing to exhibit his powers; in the common phrase, to excel himself; so sure as he does this, the work is a failure. The worst drawings that have ever come from his hands are some of this second period, on which he has spent much time and laborious thought; drawings filled with incident from one side to the other, with skies stippled into morbid blue, and warm lights set against them in violent contrast; one of Bamborough Castle, a large water-color, may be named as an example. But the truly noble works are those in which, without effort, he has expressed his thoughts as they came, and forgotten himself; and in these the outpouring of invention is not less miraculous than the swiftness and obedience of the mighty hand that expresses it. Anyone who examines the drawings may see the evidence of this facility, in the strange freshness and sharpness of every touch of color; but when the multitude of delicate touches, with which all the aërial tones are worked, is taken into consideration, it would still appear impossible that the drawing could have been completed with *ease*, unless we had direct evidence on the matter: fortunately, it is not wanting. There is a drawing in Mr. Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores: it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about sixteen inches by eleven: it does not appear one of the most highly finished, but it is still [Pg 211] farther removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator, seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her port-holes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed; there are two other ships of the line in the middle distance, drawn with equal precision; a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing-room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr. Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot.

221. Let this single fact be quietly meditated upon by our ordinary painters, and they will see the truth of what was above asserted,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; and let them not torment themselves with twisting of compositions this way and that, and repeating, and experimenting, and scene-shifting. If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept in most of my works, on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not "teaching people how to arrange masses;" for not "attributing sufficient importance to composition." Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do;—so much importance, that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a Divina Commedia, or King Lear, as how to "compose," in the true sense, a single building or picture. The marvelous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that [Pg 212] what they call, "principles of composition," are mere principles of common sense in everything, as well as in pictures and buildings;—A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in anything else,—no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was everything, and so cover our academy walls with Shacabac feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered, but the dishes empty.

222. It is not, however, only in invention that men overwork themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence in failing portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so long upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any more to obey the heart. And, besides this, there are certain qualities of drawing which they miss from over-

carefulness. For, let them be assured, there is a great truth lurking in that common desire of men to see things done in what they call a "masterly," or "bold," or "broad," manner: a truth oppressed and abused, like almost every other in this world, but an eternal one nevertheless; and whatever mischief may have followed from men's looking for nothing else but this facility of execution, and supposing that a picture was assuredly all right if only it were done with broad dashes of the brush, still the truth remains the same:—that because it is not intended that men shall torment or [Pg 213] weary themselves with any earthly labor, it is appointed that the noblest results should only be attainable by a certain ease and decision of manipulation. I only wish people understood this much of sculpture, as well as of painting, and could see that the finely finished statue is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a far more vulgar work than that which shows rough signs of the right hand laid to the workman's hammer: but at all events, in painting it is felt by all men, and justly felt. The freedom of the lines of nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them; there are curves in the flow of the hair, and in the form of the features, and in the muscular outline of the body, which can in no wise be caught but by a sympathetic freedom in the stroke of the pencil. I do not care what example is taken; be it the most subtle and careful work of Leonardo himself, there will be found a play and power and ease in the outlines, which no *slow* effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.

223. These then are the principal lessons which we have to learn from Turner, in his second or central period of labor. There is one more, however, to be received; and that is a warning; for towards the close of it, what with doing small conventional vignettes for publishers, making showy drawings from sketches taken by other people of places he had never seen, and touching up the bad engravings from his works submitted to him almost every day,—engravings utterly destitute of animation, and which had to be raised into a specious brilliancy by scratching them over with white, spotty lights, he gradually got inured to many conventionalities, and even falsities; and, having trusted for ten or twelve years almost entirely to his memory and invention, living, I believe, mostly in London, and receiving a new sensation only from the burning of the [Pg 214] Houses of Parliament, he painted many pictures between 1830 and 1840 altogether unworthy of him. But he was not thus to close his career.

224. In the summer either of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was then at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps; (the source of the Arveron, in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which could not have been painted till he had seen the thing itself, bears date 1800,) and the direction of his journey in 1840 marks his fond memory of that earliest one; for, if we look over the Swiss studies and drawings executed in his first period, we shall be struck by his fondness for the pass of the St. Gothard; the most elaborate drawing in the Farnley collection is one of the Lake of Lucerne from Fluelen; and, counting the Liber Studiorum subjects, there are, to my knowledge, six compositions taken at the same period from the pass of St. Gothard, and, probably, several others are in existence. The valleys of Sallenche and Chamouni, and Lake of Geneva, are the only other Swiss scenes which seem to have made very profound impressions on him.

He returned in 1841 to Lucerne; walked up Mont Pilate on foot, crossed the St. Gothard, and returned by Lausanne and Geneva. He made a large number of colored sketches on this journey, and realized several of them on his return. The drawings thus produced are different from all that had preceded them, and are the first which belong definitely to what I shall henceforward call his Third period.

The perfect repose of his youth had returned to his mind, while the faculties of imagination and execution appeared in renewed strength; all conventionality being done away by the force of the impression which he had received from the Alps, after his long separation from them. The drawings are marked by a peculiar largeness and simplicity of thought: most of them by deep serenity, passing into melancholy; all by a richness of color, such as he had never before conceived. They, and the works done in following years, bear the same relation to those of the [Pg 215] rest of his life that the colors of sunset do to those of the day; and will be recognized, in a few years more, as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect.

225. Such has been the career of the greatest painter of this century. Many a century may pass away before there rises such another; but what greatness any among us may be capable of, will, at least, be best attained by following in his path;—by beginning in all quietness and hopefulness to use whatever powers we may possess to represent the things around us as we see and feel them; trusting to the close of life to give the perfect crown to the course of its labors, and knowing assuredly that the determination of the degree in which watchfulness is to be exalted into invention, rests with a higher will than our own. And, if not greatness, at least a certain good, is thus to be achieved; for though I have above spoken of the mission of the more humble artist, as if it were merely to be subservient to that of the antiquarian or the man of science, there is an ulterior aspect, in which it is not subservient, but superior. Every archæologist, every natural philosopher, knows that there is a peculiar rigidity of mind brought on by long devotion to logical and analytical inquiries. Weak men, giving themselves to such studies, are utterly hardened by them, and become incapable of understanding anything nobler, or even of feeling the value of the results to which they lead. But even the best men are in a sort injured by them, and pay a definite price, as in most other matters, for definite advantages. They gain a peculiar strength, but lose in tenderness, elasticity, and impressibility. The man who has gone, hammer in

hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are adorned in the mind of the passing traveler. In his more informed conception, they arrange themselves like a dissected model: where another man would be awe- [Pg 216] struck by the magnificence of the precipice, he sees nothing but the emergence of a fossiliferous rock, familiarized already to his imagination as extending in a shallow stratum, over a perhaps uninteresting district; where the unlearned spectator would be touched with strong emotion by the aspect of the snowy summits which rise in the distance, he sees only the culminating points of a metamorphic formation, with an uncomfortable web of fanlike fissures radiating, in his imagination, though their centers.[41] That in the grasp he has obtained of the inner relations of all these things to the universe, and to man, that in the views which have been opened to him of natural energies such as no human mind would have ventured to conceive, and of past states of being, each in some new way bearing witness to the unity of purpose and everlastingly consistent providence of the Maker of all things, he has received reward well worthy the sacrifice, I would not for an instant deny; but the sense of the loss is not less painful to him if his mind be rightly constituted; and it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect; should make them dazzling with the splendor of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity; should restore to [Pg 217] the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe the naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death. [Pg 218]

THE THREE COLORS OF PRE-RAPHAELITISM.[42]

I.

226. I was lately staying in a country house, in which, opposite each other at the sides of the drawing-room window, were two pictures, belonging to what in the nineteenth century must be called old times, namely Rossetti's "Annunciation," and Millais' "Blind Girl"; while, at the corner of the chimney-piece in the same room, there was a little drawing of a Marriage-dance, by Edward Burne Jones. And in my bedroom, at one side of my bed, there was a photograph of the tomb of Ilaria di Caretto at Lucca, and on the other, an engraving, in long since superannuated manner, from Raphael's "Transfiguration." Also over the looking-glass in my bedroom, there was this large illuminated text, fairly well written, but with more vermilion in it than was needful; "Lord, teach us to pray."

And for many reasons I would fain endeavor to tell my Oxford pupils some facts which seem to me worth memory about these six works of art; which, if they will reflect upon, being, in the present state of my health, the best I can do for them in the way of autumn lecturing, it will be kind to me. And as I cannot speak what I would say, and believe my pupils are more likely to read it if printed in the *Nineteenth Century* than in a separate pamphlet, I have asked, and obtained of the editor, space in columns which ought, nevertheless, I think, usually to be occupied with sterner subjects, as the Fates are now driving the nineteenth century on its missionary path.

227. The first picture I named, Rossetti's "Annunciation," was, I believe, among the earliest that drew some public attention to the so-called "Pre-Raphaelite" school. The one opposite to it,— [Pg 219] Millais' "Blind Girl," is among those chiefly characteristic of that school in its determined manner. And the third, though small and unimportant, is no less characteristic, in its essential qualities, of the mind of the greatest master whom that school has yet produced.

I believe most readers will start at the application of the term "master," to any English painter. For the hope of the nineteenth century is more and more distinctly every day, to teach all men how to live without mastership either in art or morals (primarily, of course, substituting for the words of Christ, "Ye say well, for so I am,"—the probable emendation, "Ye say ill, for so I am not"); and to limit the idea of magistracy altogether, no less than the functions of the magistrate, to the suppression of disturbance in the manufacturing districts.

Nor would I myself use the word "Master" in any but the most qualified sense, of any "modern painter"; scarcely even of Turner, and not at all, except for convenience and as a matter of courtesy, of any workman of the Pre-Raphaelite school, as yet. In such courtesy, only, let the masterless reader permit it me.

228. I must endeavor first to give, as well as I can by description, some general notion of the subjects and treatment of the three pictures.

Rossetti's "Annunciation" differs from every previous conception of the scene known to me, in representing the angel as waking the Virgin from sleep to give her his message. The Messenger himself also differs from angels as they are commonly represented, in not depending, for recognition of his supernatural character, on the insertion of bird's wings at his shoulders. If we are to know him for an angel at all, it must be by his face, which is that simply of youthful, but

grave, manhood. He is neither transparent in body, luminous in presence, nor auriferous in apparel;—wears a plain, long, white robe,—casts a natural and undiminished shadow,—and, although there are flames beneath his feet, which upbear him, so that he does not touch the earth, these are unseen by the Virgin. [Pg 220]

She herself is an English, not a Jewish girl, of about sixteen or seventeen, of such pale and thoughtful beauty as Rossetti could best imagine for her; concerning which effort, and its degree of success, we will inquire farther presently.

She has risen half up, not *started* up, in being awakened; and is not looking at the angel, but only thinking, it seems, with eyes cast down, as if supposing herself in a strange dream. The morning light fills the room, and shows at the foot of her little pallet-bed, her embroidery work, left off the evening before,—an upright lily.

Upright, and very accurately upright, as also the edges of the piece of cloth in its frame,—as also the gliding form of the angel,—as also, in severe foreshortening, that of the Virgin herself. It has been studied, so far as it has been studied at all, from a very thin model; and the disturbed coverlid is thrown into confused angular folds, which admit no suggestion whatever of ordinary girlish grace. So that, to any spectator little inclined towards the praise of barren "uprightnesse," and accustomed on the contrary to expect radiance in archangels, and grace in Madonnas, the first effect of the design must be extremely displeasing, and the first is perhaps, with most art-amateurs of modern days, likely to be the last.

229. The background of the second picture (Millais' "Blind Girl"), is an open English common, skirted by the tidy houses of a well-to-do village in the cockney rural districts. I have no doubt the scene is a real one within some twenty miles from London, and painted mostly on the spot. The houses are entirely uninteresting, but decent, trim, as human dwellings should be, and on the whole inoffensive—not "cottages," mind you, in any sense, but respectable brick-walled and slated constructions, old-fashioned in the sense of "old" at, suppose, Bromley or Sevenoaks, and with a pretty little church belonging to them, its window traceries freshly whitewashed by order of the careful warden. [Pg 221]

The common is a fairly spacious bit of ragged pasture, with a couple of donkeys feeding on it, and a cow or two, and at the side of the public road passing over it, the blind girl has sat down to rest awhile. She is a simple beggar, not a poetical or vicious one;—being peripatetic with musical instrument, she will, I suppose, come under the general term of tramp; a girl of eighteen or twenty, extremely plain-featured, but healthy, and just now resting, as any one of us would rest, not because she is much tired, but because the sun has but this moment come out after a shower, and the smell of the grass is pleasant.

The shower has been heavy, and is so still in the distance, where an intensely bright double rainbow is relieved against the departing thunder-cloud. The freshly wet grass is all radiant through and through with the new sunshine; full noon at its purest, the very donkeys bathed in the rain-dew, and prismatic with it under their rough breasts as they graze; the weeds at the girl's side as bright as a Byzantine enamel, and inlaid with blue veronica; her upturned face all aglow with the light that seeks its way through her wet eyelashes (wet only with the rain). Very quiet she is,—so quiet that a radiant butterfly has settled on her shoulder, and basks there in the warm sun. Against her knee, on which her poor instrument of musical beggary rests (harmonium), leans another child, half her age—her guide;—indifferent, this one, either to sun or rain, only a little tired of waiting. No more than a half profile of her face is seen; and that is quite expressionless, and not the least pretty.

230. Both of these pictures are oil-paintings. The third, Mr. Burne Jones's "Bridal," is a small water-color drawing, scarcely more than a sketch; but full and deep in such color as it admits. Any careful readers of my recent lectures at Oxford know that I entirely ignore the difference of material between oil and water as diluents of color, when I am examining any grave art question: nor shall I hereafter, throughout this paper, take notice of it. Nor do I think it needful to ask the pardon of any of the three artists for confining the reader's attention at present to comparatively minor and elementary examples of their works. If I can succeed in explaining the principles involved in them, their application by the reader will be easily extended to the enjoyment of better examples. [Pg 222]

This drawing of Mr. Jones's, however, is far less representative of his scale of power than either of the two pieces already described, which have both cost their artists much care and time; while this little water-color has been perhaps done in the course of a summer afternoon. It is only about seven inches by nine: the figures of the average size of Angelico's on any altar predella; and the heads, of those on an average Corinthian or Syracusan coin. The bride and bridegroom sit on a slightly raised throne at the side of the picture, the bride nearest us; her head seen in profile, a little bowed. Before them, the three bridesmaids and their groomsmen dance in circle, holding each other's hands, bare-footed, and dressed in long dark blue robes. Their figures are scarcely detached from the dark background, which is a willful mingling of shadow and light, as the artist chose to put them, representing, as far as I remember, nothing in particular. The deep tone of the picture leaves several of the faces in obscurity, and none are drawn with much care, not even the bride's; but with enough to show that her features are at least as beautiful as those of an ordinary Greek goddess, while the depth of the distant background throws out her pale head in an almost lunar, yet unexaggerated, light; and the white and blue flowers of her narrow coronal, though *merely* white and blue, shine, one knows not how, like gems. Her bridegroom stoops forward a little to look at her, so that we see his front face, and can see also that he loves her.

231. Such being the respective effort and design of the three pictures, although I put by, for the moment, any question of their mechanical skill or manner, it must yet, I believe, be felt by the reader that, as works of young men, they contained, and even nailed to the Academy gates, a kind of Lutheran challenge to the then accepted teachers in all European schools of Art: perhaps [Pg 223] a little too shrill and petulant in the tone of it, but yet curiously resolute and steady in its triple Fraternity, as of William of Burglen with his Melchthal and Stauffacher, in the Grutli meadow, not wholly to be scorned by even the knightliest powers of the Past.

We have indeed, since these pictures were first exhibited, become accustomed to many forms both of pleasing and revolting innovation: but consider, in those early times, how the pious persons who had always been accustomed to see their Madonnas dressed in scrupulously folded and exquisitely falling robes of blue, with edges embroidered in gold,—to find them also, sitting under arcades of exquisitest architecture by Bernini,—and reverently to observe them receive the angel's message with their hands folded on their breasts in the most graceful positions, and the missals they had been previously studying laid open on their knees, (see my own outline from Angelico of the "Ancilla Domini," the first plate of the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*);—consider, I repeat, the shock to the feelings of all these delicately minded persons, on being asked to conceive a Virgin waking from her sleep on a pallet bed, in a plain room, startled by sudden words and ghostly presence which she does not comprehend, and casting in her mind what manner of Salutation this should be.

232. Again, consider, with respect to the second picture, how the learned possessors of works of established reputation by the ancient masters, classically catalogued as "landscapes with figures"; and who held it for eternal, artistic law that such pictures should either consist of a rock, with a Spanish chestnut growing out of the side of it, and three banditti in helmets and big feathers on the top, or else of a Corinthian temple, built beside an arm of the sea, with the Queen of Sheba beneath, preparing for embarkation to visit Solomon,—the whole properly toned down with amber varnish;—imagine the first consternation, and final wrath, of these *cognoscenti*, at being asked to contemplate, deliberately, and to the last rent of her ragged gown, and for [Pg 224] principal object in a finished picture, a vagrant who ought at once to have been sent to the workhouse; and some really green grass and blue flowers, as they actually may any day be seen on an English common-side.

And finally, let us imagine, if imagination fail us not, the far more wide and weighty indignation of the public, accustomed always to see its paintings of marriages elaborated in Christian propriety and splendor; with a bishop officiating, assisted by a dean and an archdeacon; the modesty of the bride expressed by a veil of the most expensive Valenciennes, and the robes of the bridesmaids designed by the perfectest of Parisian artists, and looped up with stuffed robins or other such tender rarities;—think with what sense of hitherto unheard-of impropriety, the British public must have received a picture of a marriage, in which the bride was only crowned with flowers,—at which the bridesmaids danced barefoot,—and in which nothing was known, or even conjecturable, respecting the bridegroom, but his love!

233. Such being the manifestly opponent and agonistic temper of these three pictures (and admitting, which I will crave the reader to do for the nonce, their real worth and power to be considerable), it surely becomes a matter of no little interest to see what spirit it is that they have in common, which, recognized as revolutionary in the minds of the young artists themselves, caused them, with more or less of firmness, to constitute themselves into a society, partly monastic, partly predicatory, called "Pre-Raphaelite": and also recognized as such, with indignation, by the public, caused the youthfully didactic society to be regarded with various degrees of contempt, passing into anger (as of offended personal dignity), and embittered farther, among certain classes of persons, even into a kind of instinctive abhorrence.

234. I believe the reader will discover, on reflection, that there is really only one quite common and sympathetic impulse shown in these three works, otherwise so distinct in aim and execution. And this fraternal link he will, if careful in reflection, discover to be an effort to represent, so far [Pg 225] as in these youths lay either the choice or the power, things as they are, or were, or may be, instead of, according to the practice of their instructors and the wishes of their public, things as they are *not*, never were, and never can be: this effort being founded deeply on a conviction that it is at first better, and finally more pleasing, for human minds to contemplate things as they are, than as they are not.

Thus, Mr. Rossetti, in this and subsequent works of the kind, thought it better for himself and his public to make some effort towards a real notion of what actually did happen in the carpenter's cottage at Nazareth, giving rise to the subsequent traditions delivered in the Gospels, than merely to produce a variety in the pattern of Virgin, pattern of Virgin's gown, and pattern of Virgin's house, which had been set by the jewelers of the fifteenth century.

Similarly, Mr. Millais, in this and other works of the kind, thought it desirable rather to paint such grass and foliage as he saw in Kent, Surrey, and other solidly accessible English counties, than to imitate even the most Elysian fields enameled by Claude, or the gloomiest branches of Hades forest rent by Salvator: and yet more, to manifest his own strong personal feeling that the humanity, no less than the herbage, near us and around, was that which it was the painter's duty first to portray; and that, if Wordsworth were indeed right in feeling that the meanest flower that blows can give,—much more, for any kindly heart it should be true that the meanest tramp that walks can give—"thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

235. And if at first—or even always to careless sight—the third of these pictures seem opposite to the two others in the very point of choice, between what is and what is not; insomuch that while *they* with all their strength avouch realities, *this* with simplest confession dwells upon a dream,—yet in this very separation from them it sums their power and seals their brotherhood; reaching beyond them to the more perfect truth of things, not only that once were,—not only that now are, [Pg 226]
—but which are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;—the love by whose ordaining the world itself, and all that dwell therein, live, and move, and have their being; by which the Morning stars rejoice in their courses—in which the virgins of deathless Israel rejoice in the dance—and in whose constancy the Giver of light to stars, and love to men, Himself is glad in the creatures of His hand,—day by new day proclaiming to His Church of all the ages, "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy Lord rejoice over thee."

Such, the reader will find, if he cares to learn it, is indeed the purport and effort of these three designs—so far as, by youthful hands and in a time of trouble and rebuke, such effort could be brought to good end. Of their visible weaknesses, with the best justice I may,—of their veritable merits with the best insight I may, and of the farther history of the school which these masters founded, I hope to be permitted to speak more under the branches that do not "remember their green felicity"; adding a corollary or two respecting the other pieces of art above named[43] as having taken part in the tenor of my country hours of idleness. [Pg 227]

THE THREE COLORS OF PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

II.

236. The feeling which, in the foregoing notes on the pictures that entertained my vacation, I endeavored to illustrate as dominant over early Pre-Raphaelite work, is very far from being new in the world. Demonstrations in support of fact against fancy have been periodical motives of earthquake and heartquake, under the two rigidly incumbent burdens of drifted tradition, which, throughout the history of humanity, during phases of languid thought, cover the vaults of searching fire that must at last try every man's work, what it is.

But the movement under present question derived unusual force, and in some directions a morbid and mischievous force, from the vulgarly called[44] "scientific" modes of investigation which had destroyed in the minds of the public it appealed to, all possibility, or even conception, of reverence for anything, past, present, or future, invisible to the eyes of a mob, and inexpressible by popular vociferation. It was indeed, and had long been, too true, as the wisest of us felt, that the mystery of the domain between things that are universally visible, and are only occasionally so to some persons,—no less than the myths or words in which those who had entered that kingdom related what they had seen, had become, the one uninviting, and the other useless, to men dealing with the immediate business of our day; so that the historian of the last of [Pg 228]
European kings might most reasonably mourn that "the Berlin Galleries, which are made up, like other galleries, of goat-footed Pan, Europa's Bull, Romulus's She-wolf, and the Correggiosity of Correggio, contain, for instance, no portrait of Friedrich the Great; no likeness at all, or next to none at all, of the noble series of human realities, or of any part of them, who have sprung not from the idle brains of dreaming dilettanti, but from the Head of God Almighty, to make this poor authentic earth a little memorable for us, and to do a little work that may be eternal there."

---

237. But we must surely, in fairness to modernism, remember that although no portraits of great Frederick, of a trustworthy character, may be found at Berlin, portraits of the English squire, be he great or small, may usually be seen at his country house. And Edinburgh, as I lately saw,—if she boasts of no Venetian perfectness of art in the portraiture of her Bruce or James, her Douglas or Knox, at Holyrood, has at least a charming portrait of a Scottish beauty in the Attic Institution, whose majesty, together with that of the more extensive glass roofs of the railway station, and the tall chimney of the gasworks, inflates the Caledonian mind, contemplative around the spot where the last of its minstrels appears to be awaiting eternal extinction under his special extinguisher;—and pronouncing of all its works and ways that they are very good.

And are there not also sufficiently resembling portraits of all the mouthpieces of constituents in British Parliament—as their vocal powers advance them into that worshipful society—presented to the people, with due felicitation on the new pipe it has got to its organ, in the *Illustrated* or other graphic *News*? Surely, therefore, it cannot be portraiture of merely human greatness of mind that we are anyway short of; but another manner of greatness altogether? And may we not regret that as great Frederick is dead, so also great Pan is dead, and only the goat-footed Pan, or rather the goat's feet of him without the Pan, left for portraiture?

---

238. I chanced to walk, to-day, 9th of November, through the gallery of the Liverpool Museum, in [Pg 229]
which the good zeal and sense of Mr. Gatty have already, in beautiful order, arranged the

Egyptian antiquities, but have not yet prevailed far enough to group, in like manner, the scattered Byzantine and Italian ivories above. Out of which collection, every way valuable, two primarily important pieces, it seems to me, may be recommended for accurate juxtaposition, bringing then for us into briefest compass an extensive story of the Arts of Mankind.

The first is an image of St. John the Baptist, carved in the eleventh century; being then conceived by the image-maker as decently covered by his raiment of camel's hair; bearing a gentle aspect, because the herald of a gentle Lord; and pointing to his quite legibly written message concerning the Lamb which is that gentle Lord's heraldic symbol.

The other carving is also of St. John the Baptist, Italian work of the sixteenth century. He is represented thereby as bearing no aspect, for he is without his head;—wearing no camel's hair, for he is without his raiment;—and indicative of no message, for he has none to bring.

239. Now if these two carvings are ever put in due relative position, they will constitute a precise and permanent art-lecture to the museum-visitants of Liverpool-burg; exhibiting to them instantly, and in sum, the conditions of the change in the aims of art which, beginning in the thirteenth century under Niccolo Pisano, consummated itself three hundred years afterwards in Raphael and his scholars. Niccolo, first among Italians, thought mainly in carving the Crucifixion, not how heavy Christ's head was when He bowed it;—but how heavy His body was when people came to take it down. And the apotheosis of flesh, or, in modern scientific terms, the molecular development of flesh, went steadily on, until at last, as we see in the instance before us, it became really of small consequence to the artists of the Renaissance Incarnadine, whether a man had his head on or not, so only that his legs were handsome: and the decapitation, whether of St. John or St. Cecilia; the massacre of any quantity of Innocents; the flaying, whether of Marsyas or [Pg 230] St. Bartholomew, and the deaths, it might be of Laocoon by his vipers, it might be of Adonis by his pig, or it might be of Christ by His people, became, one and all, simply subjects for analysis of muscular mortification; and the vast body of artists accurately, therefore, little more than a chirurgically useless sect of medical students.

Of course there were many reactionary tendencies among the men who had been trained in the pure Tuscan schools, which partly concealed, or adorned, the materialism of their advance; and Raphael himself, after profoundly studying the arabesques of Pompeii and of the palace of the Cæsars, beguiled the tedium, and illustrated the spirituality of the converse of Moses and Elias with Christ concerning His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, by placing them, above the Mount of Transfiguration, in the attitudes of two humming-birds on the top of a honeysuckle.

240. But the best of these ornamental arrangements were insufficient to sustain the vivacity, while they conclusively undermined the sincerity, of the Christian faith, and "the real consequences of the acceptance of this kind (Roman Bath and Sarcophagus kind)" of religious idealism were instant and manifold.[45]

So far as it was received and trusted in by thoughtful persons, it only served to chill all the conceptions of sacred history which they might otherwise have obtained. Whatever they could have fancied for themselves about the wild, strange, infinitely stern, infinitely tender, infinitely varied veracities of the life of Christ, was blotted out by the vapid fineries of Raphael: the rough Galilean pilot, the orderly custom receiver, and all the questioning wonder and fire of uneducated apostleship, were obscured under an antique mask of philosophical faces and long robes. The [Pg 231] feeble, subtle, suffering, ceaseless energy and humiliation of St. Paul were confused with an idea of a meditative Hercules leaning on a sweeping sword; and the mighty presences of Moses and Elias were softened by introductions of delicate grace, adopted from dancing nymphs and rising Auroras.

Now no vigorously minded religious person could possibly receive pleasure or help from such art as this; and the necessary result was the instant rejection of it by the healthy religion of the world. Raphael ministered, with applause, to the impious luxury of the Vatican, but was trampled underfoot at once by every believing and advancing Christian of his own and subsequent times; and thenceforward pure Christianity and "high art" took separate roads, and fared on, as best they might, independently of each other.

But although Calvin, and Knox, and Luther, and their flocks, with all the hardest-headed and truest-hearted faithful left in Christendom, thus spurned away the spurious art, and all art with it (not without harm to themselves, such as a man must needs sustain in cutting off a decayed limb), certain conditions of weaker Christianity suffered the false system to retain influence over them; and to this day the clear and tasteless poison of the art of Raphael infects with sleep of infidelity the hearts of millions of Christians. It is the first cause of all that pre-eminent *dullness* which characterizes what Protestants call sacred art; a dullness not merely baneful in making religion distasteful to the young, but in sickening, as we have seen, all vital belief of religion in the old. A dim sense of impossibility attaches itself always to the graceful emptiness of the representation; we feel instinctively that the painted Christ and painted apostle are not beings that ever did or could exist; and this fatal sense of fair fabulousness, and well-composed impossibility, steals gradually from the picture into the history, until we find ourselves reading St. Mark or St. Luke with the same admiring, but uninterested, incredulity, with which we

[Pg 232]

contemplate Raphael.

241. Without claiming,—nay, so far as my knowledge can reach, utterly disclaiming—any personal influence over, or any originality of suggestion to, the men who founded our presently realistic schools, I may yet be permitted to point out the sympathy which I had as an outstanding spectator with their effort; and the more or less active fellowship with it, which, unrecognized, I had held from the beginning. The passage I have just quoted (with many others enforcing similar truths) is in the third volume of *Modern Painters*; but if the reader can refer to the close of the preface to the second edition[46] of the first, he will find this very principle of realism asserted for the groundwork of all I had to teach in that volume. The lesson so far pleased the public of that day, that ever since, they have refused to listen to any corollaries or conclusions from it, assuring me, year by year, continually, that the older I grew, the less I knew, and the worse I wrote. Nevertheless, that first volume of *Modern Painters* did by no means contain all that even then I knew; and in the third, nominally treating of "Many Things," will be found the full expression of what I knew best; namely, that all "things," many or few, which we ought to paint, must be first distinguished boldly from the nothings which we ought not; and that a faithful realist, before he could question whether his art was representing anything truly, had first to ask whether it meant seriously to represent anything at all!

242. And such definition has in these days become more needful than ever before, in this solid, or spectral—which-ever the reader pleases to consider it—world of ours. For some of us, who have no perception but of solidity, are agreed to consider all that is not solid, or weighably liquid, nothing. And others of us, who have also perception of the spectral, are sometimes too much inclined to call what is no more than solid, or weighably liquid, nothing. But the general reader may be at least assured that it is not at all possible for the student to enter into useful discussion [Pg 233] concerning the qualities of art which takes on itself to represent things as they are, unless he include in its subjects the spectral, no less than the substantial, reality; and understand what difference must be between the powers of veritable representation, for the men whose models are of ponderable flesh, as for instance, the "Sculptor's model," lately under debate in Liverpool, —and the men whose models pause perhaps only for an instant—painted on the immeasurable air,—forms which they themselves can but discern darkly, and remember uncertainly, saying: "A vision passed before me, but I could not discern the form thereof."

243. And the most curious, yet the most common, deficiency in the modern contemplative mind, is its inability to comprehend that these phenomena of true imagination are yet no less real, and often more vivid than phenomena of matter. We continually hear artists blamed or praised for having painted this or that (either of material or spectral kind), without the slightest implied inquiry whether they *saw* this, or that. Whereas the quite primal difference between the first and second order of artists, is that the first is indeed painting what he has seen; and the second only what he would like to see! But as the one that can paint what he would like, has therefore the power, if he chooses, of painting more or less what also his public likes, he has a chance of being received with sympathetic applause, on all hands, while the first, it may be, meets only reproach for not having painted something more agreeable. Thus Mr. Millais, going out at Tunbridge or Sevenoaks, sees a blind vagrant led by an ugly child; and paints that highly objectionable group, as they appeared to him. But your pliably minded painter gives you a beautiful young lady guiding a sightless Belisarius (see the gift by one of our most tasteful modistes to our National Gallery), and the gratified public never troubles itself to ask whether these ethereal mendicants were ever indeed apparent in this world, or any other. Much more, if, in deeper vistas of his imagination, some presently graphic Zechariah paint—(let us say) four carpenters, the public will [Pg 234] most likely declare that he ought to have painted persons in a higher class of life, without ever inquiring whether the Lord had shown him four carpenters or not. And the worst of the business is that the public impatience, in such sort, is not wholly unreasonable. For truly, a painter who has eyes can, for the most part, see what he "likes" with them; and is, by divine law, answerable for his liking. And, even at this late hour of the day, it is still conceivable that such of them as would *verily* prefer to see, suppose, instead of a tramp with a harmonium, Orpheus with his lute, or Arion on his dolphin, pleased Proteus rising beside him from the sea,—might, standing on the "pleasant lea" of Margate or Brighton, have sight of those personages.

Orpheus with his lute,—Jubal with his harp and horn,—Harmonia, bride of the warrior seed-sower,—Musica herself, lady of all timely thought and sweetly ordered things,—Cantatrice and Incantatrice to all but the museless adder; these the Amphion of Fésole saw, as he shaped the marble of his tower; these, Memmi of Siena, fair-figured on the shadows of his vault;—but for us, here is the only manifestation granted to our best practical painter—a vagrant with harmonium—and yonder blackbirds and iridescent jackasses, to be harmonized thereby.

244. Our best *painter* (among the living) I say;—no question has ever been of that. Since Van Eyck and Dürer there has nothing been seen so well done in laying of clear oil-color within definite line. And what he might have painted for us, if *we* had only known what we would have of him! Heaven only knows. But we none of us knew,—nor he neither; and on the whole the perfectest of his works, and the representative picture of that generation—was no Annunciate Maria bowing herself; but only a Newsless Mariana stretching herself: which is indeed the best symbol of the mud-moated Nineteenth century; in *its* Grange, Stable—Sty, or whatever name of dwelling may best befit the things it calls Houses and Cities: imprisoned therein by the unassailablest of walls, and blackest of ditches—by the pride of Babel, and the filthiness of [Pg 235] Aholah and Aholibamah; and their worse younger sister;—craving for any manner of News from any world—and getting none trustworthy even of its own.

245. I said that in this second paper I would try to give some brief history of the rise, and the issue, of that Pre-Raphaelite school: but, as I look over two of the essays[47] that were printed with mine in that last number of the *Nineteenth Century*—the first—in laud of the Science which accepts for practical spirits, inside of men, only Avarice and Indolence; and the other,—in laud of the Science which "rejects the Worker" outside of Men, I am less and less confident in offering to the readers of the *Nineteenth Century* any History relating to such despised things as unavaricious industry,—or incorporeal vision. I will be as brief as I can.

246. The central branch of the school, represented by the central picture above described:—"The Blind Girl"—was essentially and vitally an uneducated one. It was headed, in literary power, by Wordsworth; but the first pure example of its mind and manner of Art, as opposed to the erudite and *artificial* schools, will be found, so far as I know, in Molière's song: *j'aime mieux ma mie*.

Its mental power consisted in discerning what was lovely in present nature, and in pure moral emotion concerning it.

Its physical power, in an intense veracity of direct realization to the eye.

So far as Mr. Millais saw what was beautiful in vagrants, or commons, or crows, or donkeys, or the straw under children's feet in the Ark (Noah's or anybody else's does not matter),—in the Huguenot and his mistress, or the ivy behind them,—in the face of Ophelia, or in the flowers floating over it as it sank;—much more, so far as he saw what instantly comprehensible nobleness of passion might be in the binding of a handkerchief,—in the utterance of two words, "Trust me" or the like: he prevailed, and rightly prevailed, over all prejudice and opposition; to that extent he will in what he has done, or may yet do, take, as a standard-bearer, an honorable place among the reformers of our day. [Pg 236]

So far as he could not see what was beautiful, but what was essentially and forever common (in that God had not cleansed it), and so far as he did not see truly what he thought he saw; (as for instance, in this picture, under immediate consideration, when he paints the spark of light in a crow's eye a hundred yards off, as if he were only painting a miniature of a crow close by,)—he failed of his purpose and hope; but how far I have neither the power nor the disposition to consider.

247. The school represented by Mr. Rossetti's picture and adopted for his own by Mr. Holman Hunt, professed, necessarily, to be a learned one; and to represent things which had happened long ago, in a manner credible to any moderns who were interested in them. The value to us of such a school necessarily depends on the things it chooses to represent, out of the infinite history of mankind. For instance, David, of the first Republican Academe, was a true master of this school; and, painting the Horatii receiving their swords, foretold the triumph of that Republican Power. Gérôme, of the latest Republican Academe, paints the dying Polichinelle, and the *morituri* gladiators: foretelling, in like manner, the shame and virtual ruin of modern Republicanism. What our own painters have done for us in this kind has been too unworthy of their real powers, for Mr. Rossetti threw more than half his strength into literature, and, in that precise measure, left himself unequal to his appointed task in painting; while Mr. Hunt, not knowing the necessity of masters any more than the rest of our painters, and attaching too great importance to the externals of the life of Christ, separated himself for long years from all discipline by the recognized laws of his art; and fell into errors which wofully shortened his hand and discredited his cause—into which again I hold it no part of my duty to enter. But such works as either of these painters have done, without antagonism or ostentation, and in their own true instincts; as all Rossetti's drawing from the life of Christ, more especially that of the Madonna gathering the bitter herbs for the Passover when He was twelve years old; and that of the Magdalen leaving her companions to come to Him; these, together with all the mythic scenes which he painted from the *Vita Nuova* and *Paradiso* of Dante, are of quite imperishable power and value: as also many of the poems to which he gave up part of his painter's strength. Of Holman Hunt's "Light of the World," and "Awakening Conscience," I have publicly spoken and written, now for many years, as standard in their kind: the study of sunset on the Egean, lately placed by me in the schools of Oxford, is not less authoritative in landscape, so far as its aim extends. [Pg 237]

248. But the School represented by the third painting, "The Bridal," is that into which the greatest masters of *all* ages are gathered, and in which they are walled round as in Elysian fields, unapproachable but by the reverent and loving souls, in some sort already among the Dead.

They interpret to those of us who can read them, so far as they already see and know, the things that are forever. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail—tongues, they shall cease—knowledge, it shall vanish."

And the one message they bear to us is the commandment of the Eternal Charity. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with *all* thine heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." As thyself—no more, even the dearest of neighbors.

"Therefore let every man see that he love his wife even as himself."

No more—else she has become an idol, not a fellow-servant; a creature between us and our Master.

And they teach us that what higher creatures exist between Him and us, we are also bound to know, and to love in their place and state, as they ascend and descend on the stairs of their watch and ward. [Pg 238]

The principal masters of this faithful religious school in painting, known to me, are Giotto, Angelico, Sandro Botticelli, Filippo Lippi, Luini, and Carpaccio; but for a central illustration of their mind, I take that piece of work by the sculptor of Quercia,[48] of which some shadow of representation, true to an available degree, is within reach of my reader.

249. This sculpture is central in every respect; being the last Florentine work in which the proper form of the Etruscan tomb is preserved, and the first in which all right Christian sentiment respecting death is embodied. It is perfectly severe in classical tradition, and perfectly frank in concession to the passions of existing life. It submits to all the laws of the past, and expresses all the hopes of the future.

Now every work of the great Christian schools expresses primarily, conquest over death; conquest not grievous, but absolute and serene; rising with the greatest of them, into rapture.

But this, as a *central* work, has all the peace of the Christian Eternity, but only in part its gladness. Young children wreathe round the tomb a garland of abundant flowers, but she herself, Ilaria, yet sleeps; the time is not yet come for her to be awakened out of sleep.

Her image is a simple portrait of her—how much less beautiful than she was in life, we cannot know—but as beautiful as marble can be.

And through and in the marble we may see that the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth: yet as visibly a sleep that shall know no ending until the last day break, and the last shadow flee away; [Pg 239] until then, she "shall not return." Her hands are laid on her breast—not praying—she has no need to pray now. She wears her dress of every day, clasped at her throat, girdled at her waist, the hem of it drooping over her feet. No disturbance of its folds by pain of sickness, no binding, no shrouding of her sweet form, in death more than in life. As a soft, low wave of summer sea, her breast rises; no more: the rippled gathering of its close mantle droops to the belt, then sweeps to her feet, straight as drifting snow. And at her feet her dog lies watching her; the mystery of his mortal life joined, by love, to her immortal one.

Few know, and fewer love, the tomb and its place,—not shrine, for it stands bare by the cathedral wall: only, by chance, a cross is cut deep into one of the foundation stones behind her head. But no goddess statue of the Greek cities, no nun's image among the cloisters of Apennine, no fancied light of angel in the homes of heaven, has more divine rank among the thoughts of men.

250. In so much as the reader can see of it, and learn, either by print or cast, or beside it; (and he would do well to stay longer in that transept than in the Tribune at Florence,) he may receive from it, unerring canon of what is evermore Lovely and Right in the dealing of the Art of Man with his fate, and his passions. Evermore *lovely*, and *right*. These two virtues of visible things go always hand in hand: but the workman is bound to assure himself of his Rightness first; then the loveliness will come.

And primarily, from this sculpture, you are to learn what a "Master" is. Here was one man at least, who knew his business, once upon a time! Unaccusably;—none of your fool's heads or clown's hearts can find a fault here! "Dog-fancier,[49] cobbler, tailor, or churl, look here"—says Master Jacopo—"look! I know what a brute is, better than you, I know what a silken tassel is—what a leathern belt is—Also, what a woman is; and also—what a Law of God is, if you care to [Pg 240] know." This it is, to be a Master.

Then secondly—you are to note that with all the certain rightness of its material fact, this sculpture still is the Sculpture of a Dream. Ilaria is dressed as she was in life. But she never lay so on her pillow! nor so, in her grave. Those straight folds, straightly laid as a snowdrift, are impossible; known by the Master to be so—chiseled with a hand as steady as an iron beam, and as true as a ray of light—in defiance of your law of Gravity to the Earth. *That* law prevailed on her shroud, and prevails on her dust: but not on herself, nor on the Vision of her.

Then thirdly, and lastly. You are to learn that the doing of a piece of Art such as this is *possible* to the hand of Man just in the measure of his obedience to the laws which are indeed over his heart, and not over his dust: primarily, as I have said, to that great one, "Thou shalt *Love* the Lord thy God." Which command is straight and clear; and all men may obey it if they will,—so only that they be early taught to know Him.

And that is precisely the piece of exact Science which is not taught at present in our Board Schools—so that although my friend, with whom I was staying, was not himself, in the modern sense, ill-educated; neither did he conceive me to be so,—he yet thought it good for himself and me to have that Inscription, "Lord, teach us to Pray," illuminated on the house wall—if perchance either he or I could yet learn what John (when he still had his head) taught *his* Disciples.

251. But alas, for us only at last, among the people of all ages and in all climes, the lesson has become too difficult; and the Father of all, in every age, in every clime adored, is Rejected of science, as an Outside Worker, in Cockneydom of the nineteenth century.

Rejected of Science: well; but not yet, not yet—by the men who can do, as well as know. And though I have neither strength nor time, nor at present the mind to go into any review of the work done by the Third and chief School of our younger painters, headed by Burne Jones;[50] and [Pg 241] though I know its faults, palpable enough, like those of Turner, to the poorest sight; and though I am discouraged in all its discouragements, I still hold in fullness to the hope of it in which I wrote the close of the third lecture I ever gave in Oxford—of which I will ask the reader here in

conclusion to weigh the words, set down in the days of my best strength, so far as I know; and with the uttermost care given to that inaugural Oxford work, to "speak only that which I did know."

252. "Think of it, and you will find that so far from art being immoral, little else *except* art is moral;—that life without industry is guilt, and industry without art is brutality: and for the words 'good,' and 'wicked,' used of men, you may almost substitute the words 'Makers' or 'Destroyers.'

"Far the greater part of the seeming prosperity of the world is, so far as our present knowledge extends, vain: wholly useless for any kind of good, but having assigned to it a certain inevitable sequence of destruction and of sorrow.

"Its stress is only the stress of wandering storm; its beauty the hectic of plague: and what is called the history of mankind is too often the record of the whirlwind, and the map of the spreading of the leprosy. But underneath all that, or in narrow spaces of dominion in the midst of it, the work of every man, 'qui non accepit in vanitatem animam suam,' endures and prospers; a [Pg 242] small remnant or green bud of it prevailing at last over evil. And though faint with sickness, and encumbered in ruin, the true workers redeem inch by inch the wilderness into garden ground; by the help of their joined hands the order of all things is surely sustained and vitally expanded, and although with strange vacillation, in the eyes of the watcher, the morning cometh, and also the night, there is no hour of human existence that does not draw on towards the perfect day.

"And perfect the day shall be, when it is of all men understood that the beauty of Holiness must be in labor as well as in rest. Nay! more, if it may be, in labor; in our strength, rather than in our weakness; and in the choice of what we shall work for through the six days, and may know to be good at their evening time, than in the choice of what we pray for on the seventh, of reward or repose. With the multitude that keep holiday, we may perhaps sometimes vainly have gone up to the house of the Lord, and vainly there asked for what we fancied would be mercy; but for the few who labor as their Lord would have them, the mercy needs no seeking, and their wide home no hallowing. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow them, all the days of their life, and they shall dwell in the house of the Lord—For Ever."[51] [Pg 243]

ART.

III.

ARCHITECTURE.

THE OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

(*Pamphlet, 1854.*)

THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE IN OUR SCHOOLS.

(*R.I.B.A. Transactions, 1865.*) [Pg 244]

THE OPENING OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE.[52] [Pg 245]

253. I read the account in the *Times* newspaper of the opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham as I ascended the hill between Vevay and Chatel St. Denis, and the thoughts which it called up haunted me all day long as my road wound among the grassy slopes of the Simmenthal. There was a strange contrast between the image of that mighty palace, raised so high above the hills on which it is built as to make them seem little else than a basement for its glittering stateliness, and those lowland huts, half hidden beneath their coverts of forest, and scattered like gray stones along the masses of far-away mountain. Here man contending with the power of Nature for his existence; there commanding them for his recreation; here a feeble folk nested among the rocks with the wild goat and the coney, and retaining the same quiet thoughts from generation to generation; there a great multitude triumphing in the splendor of immeasurable habitation, and haughty with hope of endless progress and irresistible power.

254. It is indeed impossible to limit, in imagination, the beneficent results which may follow from the undertaking thus happily begun.[53] For the first time in the history of the world, a national museum is formed in which a whole nation is interested; formed on a scale which permits the exhibition of monuments of art in unbroken symmetry, and of the productions of nature in unthwarted growth,—formed under the auspices of science which can hardly err, and of wealth [Pg 246] which can hardly be exhausted; and placed in the close neighborhood of a metropolis overflowing with a population weary of labor, yet thirsting for knowledge, where contemplation may be consistent with rest, and instruction with enjoyment. It is impossible, I repeat, to estimate the influence of such an institution on the minds of the working-classes. How many hours once

wasted may now be profitably dedicated to pursuits in which interest was first awakened by some accidental display in the Norwood palace; how many constitutions, almost broken, may be restored by the healthy temptation into the country air; how many intellects, once dormant, may be roused into activity within the crystal walls, and how these noble results may go on multiplying and increasing and bearing fruit seventy times seven-fold, as the nation pursues its career,—are questions as full of hope as incapable of calculation. But with all these grounds for hope there are others for despondency, giving rise to a group of melancholy thoughts, of which I can neither repress the importunity nor forbear the expression.

255. For three hundred years, the art of architecture has been the subject of the most curious investigation; its principles have been discussed with all earnestness and acuteness; its models in all countries and of all ages have been examined with scrupulous care, and imitated with unsparing expenditure. And of all this refinement of inquiry,—this lofty search after the ideal,—this subtlety of investigation and sumptuousness of practice,—the great result, the admirable and long-expected conclusion is, that in the center of the 19th century, we suppose ourselves to have invented a new style of architecture, when we have magnified a conservatory!

256. In Mr. Laing's speech, at the opening of the palace, he declares that "*an entirely novel order of architecture*, producing, by means of unrivaled mechanical ingenuity, the most marvelous and beautiful effects, sprang into existence to provide a building."[54] In these words, the speaker is not merely giving utterance to his own feelings. He is expressing the popular view of the facts, [Pg 247] nor that a view merely popular, but one which has been encouraged by nearly all the professors of art of our time.

It is to this, then, that our Doric and Palladian pride is at last reduced! We have vaunted the divinity of the Greek ideal—we have plumed ourselves on the purity of our Italian taste—we have cast our whole souls into the proportions of pillars and the relations of orders—and behold the end! Our taste, thus exalted and disciplined, is dazzled by the luster of a few rows of panes of glass; and the first principles of architectural sublimity, so far sought, are found all the while to have consisted merely in sparkling and in space.

Let it not be thought that I would depreciate (were it possible to depreciate) the mechanical ingenuity which has been displayed in the erection of the Crystal Palace, or that I underrate the effect which its vastness may continue to produce on the popular imagination. But mechanical ingenuity is *not* the essence either of painting or architecture, and largeness of dimension does not necessarily involve nobleness of design. There is assuredly as much ingenuity required to build a screw frigate, or a tubular bridge, as a hall of glass;—all these are works characteristic of the age; and all, in their several ways, deserve our highest admiration, but not admiration of the kind that is rendered to poetry or to art. We may cover the German Ocean with frigates, and bridge the Bristol Channel with iron, and roof the county of Middlesex with crystal, and yet not possess one Milton, or Michael Angelo.

257. Well, it may be replied, we need our bridges, and have pleasure in our palaces; but we do not want Miltons, nor Michael Angelos.

Truly, it seems so; for, in the year in which the first Crystal Palace was built, there died among us a man whose name, in after-ages, will stand with those of the great of all time. Dying, he bequeathed to the nation the whole mass of his most cherished works; and for these three years, while we have been building this colossal receptacle for casts and copies of the art of other [Pg 248] nations, these works of our own greatest painter have been left to decay in a dark room near Cavendish Square, under the custody of an aged servant.

This is quite natural. But it is also memorable.

258. There is another interesting fact connected with the history of the Crystal Palace as it bears on that of the art of Europe, namely, that in the year 1851, when all that glittering roof was built, in order to exhibit the paltry arts of our fashionable luxury—the carved bedsteads of Vienna, and glued toys of Switzerland, and gay jewelry of France—in that very year, I say, the greatest pictures of the Venetian masters were rotting at Venice in the rain, for want of roof to cover them, with holes made by cannon shot through their canvas.

There is another fact, however, more curious than either of these, which will hereafter be connected with the history of the palace now in building; namely, that at the very period when Europe is congratulated on the invention of a new style of architecture, because fourteen acres of ground have been covered with glass, the greatest examples in existence of true and noble Christian architecture are being resolutely destroyed, and destroyed by the effects of the very interest which was beginning to be excited by them.

259. Under the firm and wise government of the third Napoleon, France has entered on a new epoch of prosperity, one of the signs of which is a zealous care for the preservation of her noble public buildings. Under the influence of this healthy impulse, repairs of the most extensive kind are at this moment proceeding, on the cathedrals of Rheims, Amiens, Rouen, Chartres, and Paris; (probably also in many other instances unknown to me). These repairs were, in many cases, necessary up to a certain point; and they have been executed by architects as skillful and learned as at present exist,—executed with noble disregard of expense, and sincere desire on the part of their superintendents that they should be completed in a manner honorable to the country. [Pg 249]

260. They are, nevertheless, more fatal to the monuments they are intended to preserve, than

fire, war, or revolution. For they are undertaken, in the plurality of instances, under an impression, which the efforts of all true antiquaries have as yet been unable to remove, that it is impossible to reproduce the mutilated sculpture of past ages in its original beauty.

"Reproduire avec une exactitude mathematique," are the words used, by one of the most intelligent writers on this subject,[55] of the proposed regeneration of the statue of Ste. Modeste, on the north porch of the Cathedral of Chartres.

Now it is not the question at present whether thirteenth century sculpture be of value, or not. Its value is assumed by the authorities who have devoted sums so large to its so-called restoration, and may therefore be assumed in my argument. The worst state of the sculptures whose restoration is demanded may be fairly represented by that of the celebrated group of the Fates, among the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. With what favor would the guardians of those marbles, or any other persons interested in Greek art, receive a proposal from a living sculptor to "reproduce with mathematical exactitude" the group of the Fates, in a perfect form, and to destroy the original? For with exactly such favor, those who are interested in Gothic art should receive proposals to reproduce the sculpture of Chartres or Rouen.

261. In like manner, the state of the architecture which it is proposed to restore may, at its worst, be fairly represented to the British public by that of the best preserved portions of Melrose Abbey. With what encouragement would those among us who are sincerely interested in history, or in art, receive a proposal to pull down Melrose Abbey, and "reproduce it mathematically"? There can be no doubt of the answer which, in the instances supposed, it would be proper to [Pg 250] return. "By all means, if you can, reproduce mathematically, elsewhere, the group of the Fates, and the Abbey of Melrose. But leave unharmed the original fragment, and the existing ruin."[56] And an answer of the same tenor ought to be given to every proposal to restore a Gothic sculpture or building. Carve or raise a model of it in some other part of the city; but touch not the actual edifice, except only so far as may be necessary to sustain, to protect it. I said above that repairs were in many instances necessary. These necessary operations consist in substituting new stones for decayed ones, where they are absolutely essential to the stability of the fabric; in propping, with wood or metal, the portions likely to give way; in binding or cementing into their places the sculptures which are ready to detach themselves; and in general care to remove luxuriant weeds and obstructions of the channels for the discharge of the rain. But no modern or imitative sculpture ought *ever*, under any circumstances, to be mingled with the ancient work.

262. Unfortunately, repairs thus conscientiously executed are always unsightly, and meet with little approbation from the general public; so that a strong temptation is necessarily felt by the superintendents of public works to execute the required repairs in a manner which, though indeed fatal to the monument, may be, in appearance, seemly. But a far more cruel temptation is held out to the architect. He who should propose to a municipal body to build in the form of a new church, to be erected in some other part of their city, models of such portions of their cathedral as were falling into decay, would be looked upon as merely asking for employment, and his offer would be rejected with disdain. But let an architect declare that the existing fabric stands in need of repairs, and offer to restore it to its original beauty, and he is instantly regarded as a lover of his country, and has a chance of obtaining a commission which will furnish him with a large and ready income, and enormous patronage, for twenty or thirty years to come. [Pg 251]

263. I have great respect for human nature. But I would rather leave it to others than myself to pronounce how far such a temptation is always likely to be resisted, and how far, when repairs are once permitted to be undertaken, a fabric is likely to be spared from mere interest in its beauty, when its destruction, under the name of restoration, has become permanently remunerative to a large body of workmen.

Let us assume, however, that the architect is always conscientious—always willing, the moment he has done what is strictly necessary for the safety and decorous aspect of the building, to abandon his income, and declare his farther services unnecessary. Let us presume, also, that every one of the two or three hundred workmen who must be employed under him is equally conscientious, and, during the course of years of labor, will never destroy in carelessness what it may be inconvenient to save, or in cunning what it is difficult to imitate. Will all this probity of purpose preserve the hand from error, and the heart from weariness? Will it give dexterity to the awkward—sagacity to the dull—and at once invest two or three hundred imperfectly educated men with the feeling, intention, and information of the freemasons of the thirteenth century? Grant that it can do all this, and that the new building is both equal to the old in beauty, and precisely correspondent to it in detail. Is it, therefore, altogether *worth* the old building? Is the stone carved to-day in their masons' yards altogether the same in value to the hearts of the French people as that which the eyes of St. Louis saw lifted to its place? Would a loving daughter, in mere desire for gaudy dress, ask a jeweler for a bright fac-simile of the worn cross which her mother bequeathed to her on her deathbed?—would a thoughtful nation, in mere fondness for splendor of streets, ask its architects to provide for it fac-similes of the temples which for centuries had given joy to its saints, comfort to its mourners, and strength to its chivalry?

264. But it may be replied, that all this is already admitted by the antiquaries of France and England; and that it is impossible that works so important should now be undertaken with due [Pg 252] consideration and faithful superintendence.

I answer, that the men who justly feel these truths are rarely those who have much influence in public affairs. It is the poor abbé, whose little garden is sheltered by the mighty buttresses from

the north wind, who knows the worth of the cathedral. It is the bustling mayor and the prosperous architect who determine its fate.

I answer farther, by the statement of a simple fact. I have given many years, in many cities, to the study of Gothic architecture; and of all that I know, or knew, the entrance to the north transept of Rouen Cathedral was, on the whole, the most beautiful—beautiful, not only as an elaborate and faultless work of the finest time of Gothic art, but yet more beautiful in the partial, though not dangerous, decay which had touched its pinnacles with pensive coloring, and softened its severer lines with unexpected change and delicate fracture, like sweet breaks in a distant music. The upper part of it has been already restored to the white accuracies of novelty; the lower pinnacles, which flanked its approach, far more exquisite in their partial ruin than the loveliest remains of our English abbeys, have been entirely destroyed, and rebuilt in rough blocks, now in process of sculpture. This restoration, so far as it has gone, has been executed by peculiarly skillful workmen; it is an unusually favorable example of restoration, especially in the care which has been taken to preserve intact the exquisite, and hitherto almost uninjured sculptures which fill the quatrefoils of the tracery above the arch. But I happened myself to have made, five years ago, detailed drawings of the buttress decorations on the right and left of this tracery, which are part of the work that has been completely restored. And I found the restorations as inaccurate as they were unnecessary.

265. If this is the case in a most favorable instance, in that of a well-known monument, highly esteemed by every antiquary in France, what, during the progress of the now almost universal repair, is likely to become of architecture which is unwatched and despised? [Pg 253]

Despised! and more than despised—even hated! It is a sad truth, that there is something in the solemn aspect of ancient architecture which, in rebuking frivolity and chastening gayety, has become at this time literally *repulsive* to a large majority of the population of Europe. Examine the direction which is taken by all the influences of fortune and of fancy, wherever they concern themselves with art, and it will be found that the real, earnest effort of the upper classes of European society is to make every place in the world as much like the Champs Elysées of Paris as possible. Wherever the influence of that educated society is felt, the old buildings are relentlessly destroyed; vast hotels, like barracks, and rows of high, square-windowed dwelling-houses, thrust themselves forward to conceal the hated antiquities of the great cities of France and Italy. Gay promenades, with fountains and statues, prolong themselves along the quays once dedicated to commerce; ball-rooms and theaters rise upon the dust of desecrated chapels, and thrust into darkness the humility of domestic life. And when the formal street, in all its pride of perfumery and confectionery, has successfully consumed its way through wrecks of historical monuments, and consummated its symmetry in the ruin of all that once prompted a reflection, or pleaded for regard, the whitened city is praised for its splendor, and the exulting inhabitants for their patriotism—patriotism which consists in insulting their fathers with forgetfulness, and surrounding their children with temptation.

266. I am far from intending my words to involve any disrespectful allusion to the very noble improvements in the city of Paris itself, lately carried out under the encouragement of the Emperor. Paris, in its own peculiar character of bright magnificence, had nothing to fear, and everything to gain, from the gorgeous prolongation of the Rue Rivoli. But I speak of the general influence of the rich travelers and proprietors of Europe on the cities which they pretend to admire, or endeavor to improve. I speak of the changes wrought during my own lifetime on the cities of Venice, Florence, Geneva, Lucerne, and chief of all on Rouen, a city altogether inestimable for its retention of mediæval character in the infinitely varied streets in which one half of the existing and inhabited houses date from the 15th or early 16th century, and the only town left in France in which the effect of old French domestic architecture can yet be seen in its collective groups. But when I was there, this last spring, I heard that these noble old Norman houses are all, as speedily as may be, to be stripped of the dark slates which protected their timbers, and deliberately whitewashed over all their sculptures and ornaments, in order to bring the interior of the town into some conformity with the "handsome fronts" of the hotels and offices on the quay. [Pg 254]

Hotels and offices, and "handsome fronts" in general—they can be built in America or Australia—built at any moment, and in any height of splendor. But who shall give us back, when once destroyed, the habitations of the French chivalry and bourgeoisie in the days of the Field of the Cloth of Gold?

267. It is strange that no one seems to think of this! What do men travel for, in this Europe of ours? Is it only to gamble with French dies—to drink coffee out of French porcelain—to dance to the beat of German drums, and sleep in the soft air of Italy? Are the ball-room, the billiard-room, and the Boulevard, the only attractions that win us into wandering, or tempt us to repose? And when the time is come, as come it will, and that shortly, when the parsimony—or lassitude—which, for the most part, are the only protectors of the remnants of elder time, shall be scattered by the advance of civilization—when all the monuments, preserved only because it was too costly to destroy them, shall have been crushed by the energies of the new world, will the proud nations of the twentieth century, looking round on the plains of Europe, disencumbered of their memorial marbles,—will those nations indeed stand up with no other feeling than one of triumph, freed from the paralysis of precedent and the entanglement of memory, to thank us, the fathers of progress, that no saddening shadows can any more trouble the enjoyments of the future,—no moments of reflection retard its activities; and that the new-born population of a world without a record and without a ruin may, in the fullness of ephemeral felicity, dispose itself to eat, and to [Pg 255]

drink, and to die?

268. Is this verily the end at which we aim, and will the mission of the age have been then only accomplished, when the last castle has fallen from our rocks, the last cloisters faded from our valleys, the last streets, in which the dead have dwelt, been effaced from our cities, and regenerated society is left in luxurious possession of towns composed only of bright saloons, overlooking gay parterres? If this indeed be our end, yet why must it be so laboriously accomplished? Are there no new countries on the earth, as yet uncrowned by thorns of cathedral spires, untenanted by the consciousness of a past? Must this little Europe—this corner of our globe, gilded with the blood of old battles, and gray with the temples of old pieties—this narrow piece of the world's pavement, worn down by so many pilgrims' feet, be utterly swept and garnished for the masque of the Future? Is America not wide enough for the elasticities of our humanity? Asia not rich enough for its pride? or among the quiet meadowlands and solitary hills of the old land, is there not yet room enough for the spreadings of power, or the indulgences of magnificence, without founding all glory upon ruin, and prefacing all progress with obliteration?

269. We must answer these questions speedily, or we answer them in vain. The peculiar character of the evil which is being wrought by this age is its utter irreparableness. Its newly formed schools of art, its extending galleries, and well-ordered museums will assuredly bear some fruit in time, and give once more to the popular mind the power to discern what is great, and the disposition to protect what is precious. But it will be too late. We shall wander through [Pg 256] our palaces of crystal, gazing sadly on copies of pictures torn by cannon-shot, and on casts of sculpture dashed to pieces long ago. We shall gradually learn to distinguish originality and sincerity from the decrepitudes of imitation and palsies of repetition; but it will be only in hopelessness to recognize the truth, that architecture and painting can be "restored" when the dead can be raised,—and not till then.

270. Something might yet be done, if it were but possible thoroughly to awaken and alarm the men whose studies of archæology have enabled them to form an accurate judgment of the importance of the crisis. But it is one of the strange characters of the human mind, necessary indeed to its peace, but infinitely destructive of its power, that we never thoroughly feel the evils which are not actually set before our eyes. If, suddenly, in the midst of the enjoyments of the palate and lightnesses of heart of a London dinner-party, the walls of the chamber were parted, and through their gap, the nearest human beings who were famishing, and in misery, were borne into the midst of the company—feasting and fancy-free—if, pale with sickness, horrible in destitution, broken by despair, body by body, they were laid upon the soft carpet, one beside the chair of every guest, would only the crumbs of the dainties be cast to them—would only a passing glance, a passing thought be vouchsafed to them? Yet the actual facts, the real relations of each Dives and Lazarus, are not altered by the intervention of the house wall between the table and the sick-bed—by the few feet of ground (how few!) which are indeed all that separate the merriment from the misery.

271. It is the same in the matters of which I have hitherto been speaking. If every one of us, who knows what food for the human heart there is in the great works of elder time, could indeed see with his own eyes their progressive ruin; if every earnest antiquarian, happy in his well-ordered library, and in the sense of having been useful in preserving an old stone or two out of his parish church, and an old coin or two out of a furrow in the next plowed field, could indeed behold, each [Pg 257] morning as he awaked, the mightiest works of departed nations moldering to the ground in disregarded heaps; if he could always have in clear phantasm before his eyes the ignorant monk trampling on the manuscript, the village mason striking down the monument, the court painter daubing the despised and priceless masterpiece into freshness of fatuity, he would not always smile so complacently in the thoughts of the little learnings and petty preservations of his own immediate sphere. And if every man, who has the interest of Art and of History at heart, would at once devote himself earnestly—not to enrich his own collection—not even to enlighten his own neighbors or investigate his own parish-territory—but to far-sighted and *fore*-sighted endeavor in the great field of Europe, there is yet time to do much. An association might be formed, thoroughly organized so as to maintain active watchers and agents in every town of importance, who, in the first place, should furnish the society with a *perfect* account of every monument of interest in its neighborhood, and then with a yearly or half-yearly report of the state of such monuments, and of the changes proposed to be made upon them; the society then furnishing funds, either to buy, freehold, such buildings or other works of untransferable art as at any time might be offered for sale, or to assist their proprietors, whether private individuals or public bodies, in the maintenance of such guardianship as was really necessary for their safety; and exerting itself, with all the influence which such an association would rapidly command, to prevent unwise restoration and unnecessary destruction.

272. Such a society would of course be rewarded only by the consciousness of its usefulness. Its funds would have to be supplied, in pure self-denial, by its members, who would be required, so far as they assisted it, to give up the pleasure of purchasing prints or pictures for their own walls, that they might save pictures which in their lifetime they might never behold; they would have to forego the enlargement of their own estates, that they might buy, for a European property, [Pg 258] ground on which their feet might never tread. But is it absurd to believe that men are capable of doing this? Is the love of art altogether a selfish principle in the heart? and are its emotions altogether incompatible with the exertions of self-denial or enjoyments of generosity?

273. I make this appeal at the risk of incurring only contempt for my Utopianism. But I should forever reproach myself if I were prevented from making it by such a risk; and I pray those who

may be disposed in any wise to favor it to remember that it must be answered at once or never. The next five years determine what is to be saved—what destroyed. The restorations have actually begun like cancers on every important piece of Gothic architecture in Christendom; the question is only how much can yet be saved. All projects, all pursuits, having reference to art, are at this moment of less importance than those which are simply protective. There is time enough for everything else. Time enough for teaching—time enough for criticising—time enough for inventing. But time little enough for saving. Hereafter we can create, but it is now only that we can preserve. By the exertion of great national powers, and under the guidance of enlightened monarchs, we may raise magnificent temples and gorgeous cities; we may furnish labor for the idle, and interest for the ignorant. But the power neither of emperors, nor queens, nor kingdoms, can ever print again upon the sands of time the effaced footsteps of departed generations, or gather together from the dust the stones which had been stamped with the spirit of our ancestors. [Pg 259]

THE STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE IN OUR SCHOOLS.[57]

274. I suppose there is no man who, permitted to address, for the first time, the Institute of British Architects, would not feel himself abashed and restrained, doubtful of his claim to be heard by them, even if he attempted only to describe what had come under his personal observation, much more if on the occasion he thought it would be expected of him to touch upon any of the general principles of the art of architecture before its principal English masters.

But if any more than another should feel thus abashed, it is certainly one who has first to ask their pardon for the petulance of boyish expressions of partial thought; for ungraceful advocacy of principles which needed no support from him, and discourteous blame of work of which he had never felt the difficulty.

275. Yet, when I ask this pardon, gentlemen—and I do it sincerely and in shame—it is not as desiring to retract anything in the general tenor and scope of what I have hitherto tried to say. Permit me the pain, and the apparent impertinence, of speaking for a moment of my own past work; for it is necessary that what I am about to submit to you to-night should be spoken in no disadvantageous connection with that; and yet understood as spoken, in no discordance of purpose with that. Indeed there is much in old work of mine which I could wish to put out of mind. Reasonings, perhaps not in themselves false, but founded on insufficient data and [Pg 260] imperfect experience—eager preferences, and dislikes, dependent on chance circumstances of association, and limitations of sphere of labor: but, while I would fain now, if I could, modify the applications, and chasten the extravagance of my writings, let me also say of them that they were the expression of a delight in the art of architecture which was too intense to be vitally deceived, and of an inquiry too honest and eager to be without some useful result; and I only wish I had now time, and strength and power of mind, to carry on, more worthily, the main endeavor of my early work. That main endeavor has been throughout to set forth the life of the individual human spirit as modifying the application of the formal laws of architecture, no less than of all other arts; and to show that the power and advance of this art, even in conditions of formal nobleness, were dependent on its just association with sculpture as a means of expressing the beauty of natural forms: and I the more boldly ask your permission to insist somewhat on this main meaning of my past work, because there are many buildings now rising in the streets of London, as in other cities of England, which appear to be designed in accordance with this principle, and which are, I believe, more offensive to all who thoughtfully concur with me in accepting the principle of Naturalism than they are to the classical architect to whose modes of design they are visibly antagonistic. These buildings, in which the mere cast of a flower, or the realization of a vulgar face, carved without pleasure by a workman who is only endeavoring to attract attention by novelty, and then fastened on, or appearing to be fastened, as chance may dictate, to an arch, or a pillar, or a wall, hold such relation to nobly naturalistic architecture as common sign-painter's furniture landscapes do to painting, or commonest wax-work to Greek sculpture; and the feelings with which true naturalists regard such buildings of this class are, as nearly as might be, what a painter would experience, if, having contended earnestly against conventional schools, and having asserted that Greek vase-painting and Egyptian wall-painting, and Mediæval glass- [Pg 261] painting, though beautiful, all, in their place and way, were yet subordinate arts, and culminated only in perfectly naturalistic work such as Raphael's in fresco, and Titian's on canvas;—if, I say, a painter, fixed in such faith in an entire, intellectual and manly truth, and maintaining that an Egyptian profile of a head, however decoratively applicable, was only noble for such human truth as it contained, and was imperfect and ignoble beside a work of Titian's, were shown, by his antagonist, the colored daguerreotype of a human body in its nakedness, and told that it was art such as that which he really advocated, and to such art that his principles, if carried out, would finally lead.

276. And because this question lies at the very root of the organization of the system of instruction for our youth, I venture boldly to express the surprise and regret with which I see our schools still agitated by assertions of the opposition of Naturalism to Invention, and to the higher conditions of art. Even in this very room I believe there has lately been question whether a sculptor should look at a real living creature of which he had to carve the image. I would answer in one sense,—no; that is to say, he ought to carve no living creature while he still needs to look

at it. If we do not know what a human body is like, we certainly had better look, and look often, at it, before we carve it; but if we already know the human likeness so well that we can carve it by light of memory, we shall not need to ask whether we ought now to look at it or not; and what is true of man is true of all other creatures and organisms—of bird, and beast, and leaf. No assertion is more at variance with the laws of classical as well as of subsequent art than the common one that species should not be distinguished in great design. We might as well say that we ought to carve a man so as not to know him from an ape, as that we should carve a lily so as not to know it from a thistle. It is difficult for me to conceive how this can be asserted in the presence of any remains either of great Greek or Italian art. A Greek looked at a cockle-shell or a [Pg 262] cuttlefish as carefully as he looked at an Olympic conqueror. The eagle of Elis, the lion of Velia, the horse of Syracuse, the bull of Thurii, the dolphin of Tarentum, the crab of Agrigentum, and the crawfish of Catana, are studied as closely, every one of them, as the Juno of Argos, or Apollo of Clazomenæ. Idealism, so far from being contrary to special truth, is the very abstraction of speciality from everything else. It is the earnest statement of the characters which make man man, and cockle cockle, and flesh flesh, and fish fish. Feeble thinkers, indeed, always suppose that distinction of kind involves meanness of style; but the meanness is in the treatment, not in the distinction. There is a noble way of carving a man, and a mean one; and there is a noble way of carving a beetle, and a mean one; and a great sculptor carves his scarabæus grandly, as he carves his king, while a mean sculptor makes vermin of both. And it is a sorrowful truth, yet a sublime one, that this greatness of treatment cannot be taught by talking about it. No, nor even by enforced imitative practice of it. Men treat their subjects nobly only when they themselves become noble; not till then. And that elevation of their own nature is assuredly not to be effected by a course of drawing from models, however well chosen, or of listening to lectures, however well intended.

Art, national or individual, is the result of a long course of previous life and training; a necessary result, if that life has been loyal, and an impossible one, if it has been base. Let a nation be healthful, happy, pure in its enjoyments, brave in its acts, and broad in its affections, and its art will spring round and within it as freely as the foam from a fountain; but let the spring of its life be impure, and its course polluted, and you will not get the bright spray by treatises on the mathematical structure of bubbles.

277. And I am to-night the more restrained in addressing you, because, gentlemen—I tell you honestly—I am weary of all writing and speaking about art, and most of my own. No good is to be reached that way. The last fifty years have, in every civilized country of Europe, produced more [Pg 263] brilliant thought, and more subtle reasoning about art than the five thousand before them, and what has it all come to? Do not let it be thought that I am insensible to the high merits of much of our modern work. It cannot be for a moment supposed that in speaking of the inefficient expression of the doctrines which writers on art have tried to enforce, I was thinking of such Gothic as has been designed and built by Mr. Scott, Mr. Butterfield, Mr. Street, Mr. Waterhouse, Mr. Godwin, or my dead friend, Mr. Woodward. Their work has been original and independent. So far as it is good, it has been founded on principles learned not from books, but by study of the monuments of the great schools, developed by national grandeur, not by philosophical speculation. But I am entirely assured that those who have done best among us are the least satisfied with what they have done, and will admit a sorrowful concurrence in my belief that the spirit, or rather, I should say, the dispirit, of the age, is heavily against them; that all the ingenious writing or thinking which is so rife amongst us has failed to educate a public capable of taking true pleasure in any kind of art, and that the best designers never satisfy their own requirements of themselves, unless by vainly addressing another temper of mind, and providing for another manner of life, than ours. All lovely architecture was designed for cities in cloudless air; for cities in which piazzas and gardens opened in bright populousness and peace; cities built that men might live happily in them, and take delight daily in each other's presence and powers. But our cities, built in black air which, by its accumulated foulness, first renders all ornament invisible in distance, and then chokes its interstices with soot; cities which are mere crowded masses of store, and warehouse, and counter, and are therefore to the rest of the world what the larder and cellar are to a private house; cities in which the object of men is not life, but labor; and in which all chief magnitude of edifice is to inclose machinery; cities in which the streets are not the avenues for the passing and procession of a happy people, but the drains for the [Pg 264] discharge of a tormented mob, in which the only object in reaching any spot is to be transferred to another; in which existence becomes mere transition, and every creature is only one atom in a drift of human dust, and current of interchanging particles, circulating here by tunnels underground, and there by tubes in the air; for a city, or cities, such as this no architecture is possible—nay, no desire of it is possible to their inhabitants.

278. One of the most singular proofs of the vanity of all hope that conditions of art may be combined with the occupations of such a city, has been given lately in the design of the new iron bridge over the Thames at Blackfriars. Distinct attempt has been there made to obtain architectural effect on a grand scale. Nor was there anything in the nature of the work to prevent such an effort being successful. It is not edifices, being of iron, or of glass, or thrown into new forms, demanded by new purposes, which need hinder its being beautiful. But it is the absence of all desire of beauty, of all joy in fancy, and of all freedom in thought. If a Greek, or Egyptian, or Gothic architect had been required to design such a bridge, he would have looked instantly at the main conditions of its structure, and dwelt on them with the delight of imagination. He would have seen that the main thing to be done was to hold a horizontal group of iron rods steadily and straight over stone piers. Then he would have said to himself (or felt without saying), "It is this holding,—this grasp,—this securing tenor of a thing which might be shaken, so that it cannot be

shaken, on which I have to insist." And he would have put some life into those iron tenons. As a Greek put human life into his pillars and produced the caryatid; and an Egyptian lotus life into his pillars and produced the lily capital: so here, either of them would have put some gigantic or some angelic life into those colossal sockets. He would perhaps have put vast winged statues of bronze, folding their wings, and grasping the iron rails with their hands; or monstrous eagles, or serpents holding with claw or coil, or strong four-footed animals couchant, holding with the paw, [Pg 265] or in fierce action, holding with teeth. Thousands of grotesque or of lovely thoughts would have risen before him, and the bronze forms, animal or human, would have signified, either in symbol or in legend, whatever might be gracefully told respecting the purposes of the work and the districts to which it conducted. Whereas, now, the entire invention of the designer seems to have exhausted itself in exaggerating to an enormous size a weak form of iron nut, and in conveying the information upon it, in large letters, that it belongs to the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company. I believe then, gentlemen, that if there were any life in the national mind in such respects, it would be shown in these its most energetic and costly works. But that there is no such life, nothing but a galvanic restlessness and covetousness, with which it is for the present vain to strive; and in the midst of which, tormented at once by its activities and its apathies, having their work continually thrust aside and dishonored, always seen to disadvantage, and overtopped by huge masses, discordant and destructive, even the best architects must be unable to do justice to their own powers.

279. But, gentlemen, while thus the mechanisms of the age prevent even the wisest and best of its artists from producing entirely good work, may we not reflect with consternation what a marvelous ability the luxury of the age, and the very advantages of education, confer on the unwise and ignoble for the production of attractively and infectiously *bad* work? I do not think that this adverse influence, necessarily affecting all conditions of so-called civilization, has been ever enough considered. It is impossible to calculate the power of the false workman in an advanced period of national life, nor the temptation to all workmen, to *become* false.

280. First, there is the irresistible appeal to vanity. There is hardly any temptation of the kind (there cannot be) while the arts are in progress. The best men must then always be ashamed of themselves; they never can be satisfied with their work absolutely, but only as it is progressive. [Pg 266] Take, for instance, any archaic head intended to be beautiful; say, the Attic Athena, or the early Arethusa of Syracuse. In that, and in all archaic work of promise, there is much that is inefficient, much that to us appears ridiculous—but nothing sensual, nothing vain, nothing spurious or imitative. It is a child's work, a childish nation's work, but not a fool's work. You find in children the same tolerance of ugliness, the same eager and innocent delight in their own work for the moment, however feeble; but next day it is thrown aside, and something better is done. Now, in this careless play, a child or a childish nation differs inherently from a foolish educated person, or a nation advanced in pseudo-civilization. The educated person has seen all kinds of beautiful things, of which he would fain do the like—not to add to their number—but for his own vanity, that he also may be called an artist. Here is at once a singular and fatal difference. The childish nation sees nothing in its own past work to satisfy itself. It is pleased at having done this, but wants something better; it is struggling forward always to reach this better, this ideal conception. It wants more beauty to look at, it wants more subject to feel. It calls out to all its artists—stretching its hands to them as a little child does—"Oh, if you would but tell me another story,"—"Oh, if I might but have a doll with bluer eyes." That's the right temper to work in, and to get work done for you in. But the vain, aged, highly-educated nation is satiated with beautiful things—it has myriads more than it can look at; it has fallen into a habit of inattention; it passes weary and jaded through galleries which contain the best fruit of a thousand years of human travail; it gapes and shrugs over them, and pushes its way past them to the door.

281. But there is one feeling that is always distinct; however jaded and languid we may be in all other pleasures, we are never languid in vanity, and we would still paint and carve for fame. What other motive have the nations of Europe to-day? If they wanted art for art's sake they would [Pg 267] take care of what they have already got. But at this instant the two noblest pictures in Venice are lying rolled up in outhouses, and the noblest portrait of Titian in existence is hung forty feet from the ground. We have absolutely no motive but vanity and the love of money—no others, as nations, than these, whatever we may have as individuals. And as the thirst of vanity thus increases, so the temptation to it. There was no fame of artists in these archaic days. Every year, every hour, saw someone rise to surpass what had been done before. And there was always better work to be done, but never any credit to be got by it. The artist lived in an atmosphere of perpetual, wholesome, inevitable eclipse. Do as well as you choose to-day,—make the whole Borgo dance with delight, they would dance to a better man's pipe to-morrow. *Credette Cimabue nella pittura, tener lo campo, et ora ha Giotto il grido.* This was the fate, the necessary fate, even of the strongest. They could only hope to be remembered as links in an endless chain. For the weaker men it was no use even to put their name on their works. They did not. If they could not work for joy and for love, and take their part simply in the choir of human toil, they might throw up their tools. But now it is far otherwise—now, the best having been done—and for a couple of hundred years, the best of us being confessed to have come short of it, everybody thinks that he may be the great man once again, and this is certain, that whatever in art is done for display, is invariably wrong.

282. But, secondly, consider the attractive power of false art, completed, as compared with imperfect art advancing to completion. Archaic work, so far as faultful, is repulsive, but advanced work is, in all its faults, attractive. The moment that art has reached the point at which it becomes sensitively and delicately imitative, it appeals to a new audience. From that instant it

addresses the sensualist and the idler. Its deceptions, its successes, its subtleties, become interesting to every condition of folly, of frivolity, and of vice. And this new audience brings to bear upon the art in which its foolish and wicked interest has been unhappily awakened, the full [Pg 268] power of its riches: the largest bribes of gold as well as of praise are offered to the artist who will betray his art, until at last, from the sculpture of Phidias and fresco of Luini, it sinks into the cabinet ivory and the picture kept under lock and key. Between these highest and lowest types, there is a vast mass of merely imitative and delicately sensual sculpture;—veiled nymphs—chained slaves—soft goddesses seen by roselight through suspended curtains—drawing room portraits and domesticities, and such like, in which the interest is either merely personal and selfish, or dramatic and sensational; in either case, destructive of the power of the public to sympathize with the aims of great architects.

283. Gentlemen,—I am no Puritan, and have never praised or advocated puritanical art. The two pictures which I would last part with out of our National Gallery, if there were question of parting with any, would be Titian's Bacchus and Correggio's Venus. But the noble naturalism of these was the fruit of ages of previous courage, continence, and religion—it was the fullness of passion in the life of a Britomart. But the mid-age and old age of nations is not like the mid-age or old age of noble women. National decrepitude must be criminal. National death can only be by disease, and yet it is almost impossible, out of the history of the art of nations, to elicit the true conditions relating to its decline in any demonstrable manner. The history of Italian art is that of a struggle between superstition and naturalism on one side, between continence and sensuality on another. So far as naturalism prevailed over superstition, there is always progress; so far as sensuality over chastity, death. And the two contests are simultaneous. It is impossible to distinguish one victory from the other. Observe, however, I say victory over superstition, not over religion. Let me carefully define the difference. Superstition, in all times and among all nations, is the fear of a spirit whose passions are those of a man, whose acts are the acts of a man; who is present in [Pg 269] some places, not in others; who makes some places holy and not others; who is kind to one person, unkind to another; who is pleased or angry according to the degree of attention you pay to him, or praise you refuse to him; who is hostile generally to human pleasure, but may be bribed by sacrifice of a part of that pleasure into permitting the rest. This, whatever form of faith it colors, is the essence of superstition. And religion is the belief in a Spirit whose mercies are over all His works—who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil; who is everywhere present, and therefore is in no place to be sought, and in no place to be evaded; to whom all creatures, times, and things are everlastingly holy, and who claims—not tithes of wealth, nor sevenths of days—but all the wealth that we have, and all the days that we live, and all the beings that we are, but who claims that totality because He delights only in the delight of His creatures; and because, therefore, the one duty that they owe to Him, and the only service they can render Him, is to be happy. A Spirit, therefore, whose eternal benevolence cannot be angered, cannot be appeased; whose laws are everlasting and inexorable, so that heaven and earth must indeed pass away if one jot of them failed: laws which attach to every wrong and error a measured, inevitable penalty; to every rightness and prudence, an assured reward; penalty, of which the remittance cannot be purchased; and reward, of which the promise cannot be broken.

284. And thus, in the history of art, we ought continually to endeavor to distinguish (while, except in broadest lights, it is impossible to distinguish) the work of religion from that of superstition, and the work of reason from that of infidelity. Religion devotes the artist, hand and mind, to the service of the gods; superstition makes him the slave of ecclesiastical pride, or forbids his work altogether, in terror or disdain. Religion perfects the form of the divine statue, superstition distorts it into ghastly grotesque. Religion contemplates the gods as the lords of healing and life, surrounds them with glory of affectionate service, and festivity of pure human beauty. [Pg 270] Superstition contemplates its idols as lords of death, appeases them with blood, and vows itself to them in torture and solitude. Religion proselytes by love, superstition by war; religion teaches by example, superstition by persecution. Religion gave granite shrine to the Egyptian, golden temple to the Jew, sculptured corridor to the Greek, pillared aisle and frescoed wall to the Christian. Superstition made idols of the splendors by which Religion had spoken: reverenced pictures and stones, instead of truths; letters and laws, instead of acts, and forever, in various madness of fantastic desolation, kneels in the temple while it crucifies the Christ.

285. On the other hand, to reason resisting superstition, we owe the entire compass of modern energies and sciences; the healthy laws of life, and the possibilities of future progress. But to infidelity resisting religion (or which is often enough the case, taking the mask of it), we owe sensuality, cruelty, and war, insolence and avarice, modern political economy, life by conservation of forces, and salvation by every man's looking after his own interest; and, generally, whatsoever of guilt, and folly, and death, there is abroad among us. And of the two, a thousand-fold rather let us retain some color of superstition, so that we may keep also some strength of religion, than comfort ourselves with color of reason for the desolation of godlessness. I would say to every youth who entered our schools—Be a Mahometan, a Diana-worshiper, a Fire-worshiper, Root-worshiper, if you will; but at least be so much a man as to know what worship means. I had rather, a million-fold rather, see you one of those "quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis numina," than one of those "quibus hæc *non* nascuntur in cordibus lumina"; and who are, by everlasting orphanage, divided from the Father of Spirits, who is also the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.

286. "So much of man," I say, feeling profoundly that all right exercise of any human gift, so descended from the Giver of good, depends on the primary formation of the character of true [Pg 271] manliness in the youth—that is to say, of a majestic, grave, and deliberate strength. How strange

the words sound; how little does it seem possible to conceive of majesty, and gravity, and deliberation in the daily track of modern life. Yet, gentlemen, we need not hope that our work will be majestic if there is no majesty in ourselves. The word "manly" has come to mean practically, among us, a schoolboy's character, not a man's. We are, at our best, thoughtlessly impetuous, fond of adventure and excitement; curious in knowledge for its novelty, not for its system and results; faithful and affectionate to those among whom we are by chance cast, but gently and calmly insolent to strangers: we are stupidly conscientious, and instinctively brave, and always ready to cast away the lives we take no pains to make valuable, in causes of which we have never ascertained the justice. This is our highest type—notable peculiarly among nations for its gentleness, together with its courage; but in lower conditions it is especially liable to degradation by its love of jest and of vulgar sensation. It is against this fatal tendency to vile play that we have chiefly to contend. It is the spirit of Milton's Comus; bestial itself, but having power to arrest and paralyze all who come within its influence, even pure creatures sitting helpless, mocked by it on their marble thrones. It is incompatible, not only with all greatness of character, but with all true gladness of heart, and it develops itself in nations in proportion to their degradation, connected with a peculiar gloom and a singular tendency to play with death, which is a morbid reaction from the morbid excess.

287. A book has lately been published on the Mythology of the Rhine, with illustrations by Gustave Doré. The Rhine god is represented in the vignette title-page with a pipe in one hand and a pot of beer in the other. You cannot have a more complete type of the tendency which is chiefly to be dreaded in this age than in this conception, as opposed to any possibility of representation of a river-god, however playful, in the mind of a Greek painter. The example is the more notable [Pg 272] because Gustave Doré's is not a common mind, and, if born in any other epoch, he would probably have done valuable (though never first rate) work; but by glancing (it will be impossible for you to do more than glance) at his illustrations of Balzac's "Contes Drolatiques," you will see further how this "drolatique," or semi-comic mask is, in the truth of it, the mask of a skull, and how the tendency to burlesque jest is both in France and England only an effervescence from the *cloaca maxima* of the putrid instincts which fasten themselves on national sin, and are in the midst of the luxury of European capitals, what Dante meant when he wrote "quel mi sveglio col puzzo," of the body of the Wealth-Siren; the mocking levity and mocking gloom being equally signs of the death of the soul; just as, contrariwise, a passionate seriousness and passionate joyfulness are signs of its full life in works such as those of Angelico, Luini, Ghiberti, or La Robbia.

It is to recover this stern seriousness, this pure and thrilling joy, together with perpetual sense of spiritual presence, that all true education of youth must now be directed. This seriousness, this passion, this universal human religion, are the first principles, the true roots of all art, as they are of all doing, of all being. Get this *vis viva* first and all great work will follow. Lose it, and your schools of art will stand among other living schools as the frozen corpses stand by the winding stair of the St. Michael's Convent of Mont Cenis, holding their hands stretched out under their shrouds, as if beseeching the passer by to look upon the wasting of their death.

288. And all the higher branches of technical teaching are vain without this; nay are in some sort vain altogether, for they are superseded by this. You may teach imitation, because the meanest man can imitate; but you can neither teach idealism nor composition, because only a great man can choose, conceive, or compose; and he does all these necessarily, and because of his nature. His greatness is in his choice of things, in his analysis of them, and his combining powers involve [Pg 273] the totality of his knowledge in life. His methods of observation and abstraction are essential habits of his thought, conditions of his being. If he looks at a human form he recognizes the signs of nobility in it, and loves them—hates whatever is diseased, frightful, sinful, or *designant* of decay. All ugliness, and abortion, and fading away; all signs of vice and foulness, he turns away from, as inherently diabolic and horrible; all signs of unconquered emotion he regrets, as weaknesses. He looks only for the calm purity of the human creature, in living conquests of its passions and of fate. That is idealism; but you cannot teach anyone else that preference. Take a man who likes to see and paint the gambler's rage; the hedge-ruffian's enjoyment; the debauched soldier's strife; the vicious woman's degradation;—take a man fed on the dusty picturesque of rags and guilt; talk to him of principles of beauty! make him draw what you will, how you will, he will leave the stain of himself on whatever he touches. You had better go lecture to a snail, and tell it to leave no slime behind it. Try to make a mean man compose; you will find nothing in his thoughts consecutive or proportioned—nothing consistent in his sight—nothing in his fancy. He cannot comprehend two things in relation at once—how much less twenty! How much less all! Everything is uppermost with him in its turn, and each as large as the rest; but Titian or Veronese compose as tranquilly as they would speak—inevitably. The thing comes to them so—they see it so—rightly, and in harmony: they will not talk to you of composition, hardly even understanding how lower people see things otherwise, but knowing that if they *do* see otherwise, there is for them the end there, talk as you will.

289. I had intended, in conclusion, gentlemen, to incur such blame of presumption as might be involved in offering some hints for present practical methods in architectural schools, but here again I am checked, as I have been throughout, by a sense of the uselessness of all minor means, and helps, without the establishment of a true and broad educational system. My wish would be [Pg 274] to see the profession of the architect united, not with that of the engineer, but of the sculptor. I think there should be a separate school and university course for engineers, in which the principal branches of study connected with that of practical building should be the physical and exact sciences, and honors should be taken in mathematics; but I think there should be another

school and university course for the sculptor and architect, in which literature and philosophy should be the associated branches of study, and honors should be taken *in literis humanioribus*; and I think a young architect's examination for his degree (for mere pass), should be much stricter than that of youths intending to enter other professions. The quantity of scholarship necessary for the efficiency of a country clergyman is not great. So that he be modest and kindly, the main truths he has to teach may be learned better in his heart than in books, and taught in very simple English. The best physicians I have known spent very little time in their libraries; and though my lawyer sometimes chats with me over a Greek coin, I think he regards the time so spent in the light rather of concession to my idleness than as helpful to his professional labors.

But there is no task undertaken by a true architect of which the honorable fulfillment will not require a range of knowledge and habitual feeling only attainable by advanced scholarship.

290. Since, however, such expansion of system is, at present, beyond hope, the best we can do is to render the studies undertaken in our schools thoughtful, reverent, and refined, according to our power. Especially, it should be our aim to prevent the minds of the students from being distracted by models of an unworthy or mixed character. A museum is one thing—a school another; and I am persuaded that as the efficiency of a school of literature depends on the mastering a few good books, so the efficiency of a school of art will depend on the understanding a few good models. And so strongly do I feel this that I would, for my own part, at once consent to [Pg 275] sacrifice my personal predilections in art, and to vote for the exclusion of all Gothic or Mediæval models whatsoever, if by this sacrifice I could obtain also the exclusion of Byzantine, Indian, Renaissance-French, and other more or less attractive but barbarous work; and thus concentrate the mind of the student wholly upon the study of natural form, and upon its treatment by the sculptors and metal workers of Greece, Ionia, Sicily, and Magna Græcia, between 500 and 350 B.C. But I should hope that exclusiveness need not be carried quite so far. I think Donatello, Mino of Fiesole, the Robbias, Ghiberti, Verrocchio, and Michael Angelo, should be adequately represented in our schools—together with the Greeks—and that a few carefully chosen examples of the floral sculpture of the North in the thirteenth century should be added, with especial view to display the treatment of naturalistic ornament in subtle connection with constructive requirements; and in the course of study pursued with reference to these models, as of admitted perfection, I should endeavor first to make the student thoroughly acquainted with the natural forms and characters of the objects he had to treat, and then to exercise him in the abstraction of these forms, and the suggestion of these characters, under due sculptural limitation. He should first be taught to draw largely and simply; then he should make quick and firm sketches of flowers, animals, drapery, and figures, from nature, in the simplest terms of line, and light and shade; always being taught to look at the organic, actions and masses, not at the textures or accidental effects of shade; meantime his sentiment respecting all these things should be cultivated by close and constant inquiry into their mythological significance and associated traditions; then, knowing the things and creatures thoroughly, and regarding them through an atmosphere of enchanted memory, he should be shown how the facts he has taken so long to learn are summed by a great sculptor in a few touches; how those touches are invariably arranged in musical and decorative relations; how every detail unnecessary for his purpose is [Pg 276] refused; how those necessary for his purpose are insisted upon, or even exaggerated, or represented by singular artifice, when literal representation is impossible; and how all this is done under the instinct and passion of an inner commanding spirit which it is indeed impossible to imitate, but possible, perhaps, to share.

291. Perhaps! Pardon me that I speak despondingly. For my own part, I feel the force of mechanism and the fury of avaricious commerce to be at present so irresistible, that I have seceded from the study not only of architecture, but nearly of all art; and have given myself, as I would in a besieged city, to seek the best modes of getting bread and water for its multitudes, there remaining no question, it seems, to me, of other than such grave business for the time. But there is, at least, this ground for courage, if not for hope: As the evil spirits of avarice and luxury are directly contrary to art, so, also, art is directly contrary to them; and according to its force, expulsive of them and medicinal against them; so that the establishment of such schools as I have ventured to describe—whatever their immediate success or ill success in the teaching of art—would yet be the directest method of resistance to those conditions of evil among which our youth are cast at the most critical period of their lives. We may not be able to produce architecture, but, at the least, we shall resist vice. I do not know if it has been observed that while Dante rightly connects architecture, as the most permanent expression of the pride of humanity, whether just or unjust, with the first cornice of Purgatory, he indicates its noble function by engraving upon it, in perfect sculpture, the stories which rebuke the errors and purify the purposes of noblest souls. In the fulfillment of such function, literally and practically, here among men, is the only real use of pride of noble architecture, and on its acceptance or surrender of that function it depends whether, in future, the cities of England melt into a ruin more confused and ghastly than ever storm wasted or wolf inhabited, or purge and exalt themselves into true habitations of men, whose walls shall be Safety, and whose gates shall be [Pg 277] Praise.

NOTE.—In the course of the discussion which followed this paper the meeting was addressed by Prof. Donaldson, who alluded to the architectural improvements in France under the Third Napoleon, by Mr. George Edmund Street, by Prof. Kerr, Mr. Digby Wyatt, and others. The President then proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Ruskin, who, in acknowledging the high compliment paid him, said he would detain the meeting but a few minutes, but he felt he ought to make some attempt to explain what he had inefficiently stated in his paper; and there was hardly

anything said in the discussion in which he did not concur: the supposed differences of opinion were either because he had ill-expressed himself, or because of things left unsaid. In the first place he was surprised to hear dissent from Professor Donaldson while he expressed his admiration of some of the changes which had been developed in modern architecture. There were two conditions of architecture adapted for different climates; one with narrow streets, calculated for shade; another for broad avenues beneath bright skies; but both conditions had their beautiful effects. He sympathized with the admirers of Italy, and he was delighted with Genoa. He had been delighted also by the view of the long vistas from the Tuileries. Mr. Street had showed that he had not sufficiently dwelt on the distinction between near and distant carving —between carving and sculpture. He (Mr. Ruskin) could allow of no distinction. Sculpture which was to be viewed at a height of 500 feet above the eye might be executed with a few touches of the chisel; opposed to that there was the exquisite finish which was the perfection of sculpture as displayed in the Greek statues, after a full knowledge of the whole nature of the object portrayed; both styles were admirable in their true application—both were "sculpture"—perfect according to their places and requirements. The attack of Professor Kerr he regarded as in play, and in that spirit he would reply to him that he was afraid a practical association with bricks and mortar would hardly produce the effects upon him which had been suggested, for having of late in his residence experienced the transition of large extents of ground into bricks and mortar, it had had no effect in changing his views; and when he said he was tired of writing upon art, it was not that he was ashamed of what he had written, but that he was tired of writing in vain, and of knocking his head, thick as it might be, against a wall. There was another point which he would answer very gravely. It was referred to by Mr. Digby Wyatt, and was the one point he had mainly at heart all through—viz., that religion and high morality were at the root of all great art in all great [Pg 278] times. The instances referred to by Mr. Digby Wyatt did not counteract that proposition. Modern and ancient forms of life might be different, nor could all men be judged by formal canons, but a true human heart was in the breast of every really great artist. He had the greatest detestation of anything approaching to cant in respect of art; but, after long investigation of the historical evidence, as well as of the metaphysical laws bearing on this question, he was absolutely certain that a high moral and religious training was the only way to get good fruits from our youth; make them good men first, and only so, if at all, they would become good artists. With regard to the points mooted respecting the practical and poetical uses of architecture, he thought they did not sufficiently define their terms; they spoke of poetry as rhyme. He thanked the President for his definition to-night, and he was sure he would concur with him that poetry meant as its derivation implied—"the *doing*." What was rightly done was done forever, and that which was only a crude work for the time was not poetry; poetry was only that which would recreate or remake the human soul. In that sense poetical architecture was separated from all utilitarian work. He had said long ago men could not decorate their shops and counters; they could decorate only where they lived in peace and rest—where they existed to be happy. There ornament would find use, and there their "doing" would be permanent. In other cases they wasted their money if they attempted to make utilitarian work ornamental. He might be wrong in that principle, but he had always asserted it, and had seen no reason in recent works for any modification of it. He thanked the meeting sincerely for the honor they had conferred upon him by their invitation to address them that evening, and for the indulgence with which they had heard him.—Ed. [Pg 279]

ART.

IV.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF ART.

(*Pamphlet, 1858.*)

[Pg 280]

INAUGURAL ADDRESS[58] [Pg 281]

DELIVERED AT THE

CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF ART,

OCTOBER 29TH, 1858.

1. I suppose the persons interested in establishing a School of Art for workmen may in the main be divided into two classes, namely, first, those who chiefly desire to make the men themselves happier, wiser, and better; and secondly, those who desire to enable them to produce better and more valuable work. These two objects may, of course, be kept both in view at the same time; nevertheless, there is a wide difference in the spirit with which we shall approach our task,

according to the motive of these two which weighs most with us—a difference great enough to divide, as I have said, the promoters of any such scheme into two distinct classes; one philanthropic in the gist of its aim, and the other commercial in the gist of its aim; one desiring the workman to be better informed chiefly for his own sake, and the other chiefly that he may be enabled to produce for us commodities precious in themselves, and which shall successfully [Pg 282] compete with those of other countries.

2. And this separation in motives must lead also to a distinction in the machinery of the work. The philanthropists address themselves, not to the artisan merely, but to the laborer in general, desiring in any possible way to refine the habits or increase the happiness of our whole working population, by giving them new recreations or new thoughts: and the principles of Art-Education adopted in a school which has this wide but somewhat indeterminate aim, are, or should be, very different from those adopted in a school meant for the special instruction of the artisan in his own business. I do not think this distinction is yet firmly enough fixed in our minds, or calculated upon in our plans of operation. We have hitherto acted, it seems to me, under a vague impression that the arts of drawing and painting might be, up to a certain point, taught in a general way to everyone, and would do everyone equal good; and that each class of operatives might afterwards bring this general knowledge into use in their own trade, according to its requirements. Now, that is not so. A wood-carver needs for his business to learn drawing in quite a different way from a china-painter, and a jeweler from a worker in iron. They must be led to study quite different characters in the natural forms they introduce in their various manufacture. It is no use to teach an iron-worker to observe the down on a peach, and of none to teach laws of atmospheric effect to a carver in wood. So far as their business is concerned, their brains would be vainly occupied by such things, and they would be prevented from pursuing, with enough distinctness or intensity, the qualities of Art which can alone be expressed in the materials with which they each have to do.

3. Now, I believe it to be wholly impossible to teach special application of Art principles to various trades in a single school. That special application can be only learned rightly by the experience of years in the particular work required. The power of each material, and the difficulties connected with its treatment are not so much to be taught as to be felt; it is only by [Pg 283] repeated touch and continued trial beside the forge or the furnace, that the goldsmith can find out how to govern his gold, or the glass-worker his crystal; and it is only by watching and assisting the actual practice of a master in the business, that the apprentice can learn the efficient secrets of manipulation, or perceive the true limits of the involved conditions of design. It seems to me, therefore, that all idea of reference to definite businesses should be abandoned in such schools as that just established: we can have neither the materials, the conveniences, nor the empirical skill in the master, necessary to make such teaching useful. All specific Art-teaching must be given in schools established by each trade for itself: and when our operatives are a little more enlightened on these matters, there will be found, as I have already stated in my lectures on the political economy of Art,[59] absolute necessity for the establishment of guilds of trades in an active and practical form, for the purposes of ascertaining the principles of Art proper to their business, and instructing their apprentices in them, as well as making experiments on materials, and on newly-invented methods of procedure; besides many other functions which I cannot now enter into account of. All this for the present, and in a school such as this, I repeat, we cannot hope for: we shall obtain no satisfactory result, unless we give up such hope, and set ourselves to teaching the operative, however employed—be he farmer's laborer, or manufacturer's; be he mechanic, artificer, shopman, sailor, or plowman—teaching, I say, as far as we can, one and the same thing to all; namely, Sight.

4. Not a slight thing to teach, this: perhaps, on the whole, the most important thing to be taught in the whole range of teaching. To be taught to read—what is the use of that, if you know not whether what you read is false or true? To be taught to write or to speak—but what is the use of speaking, if you have nothing to say? To be taught to think—nay, what is the use of being able to [Pg 284] think, if you have nothing to think of? But to be taught to see is to gain word and thought at once, and both true. There is a vague acknowledgment of this in the way people are continually expressing their longing for light, until all the common language of our prayers and hymns has sunk into little more than one monotonous metaphor, dimly twisted into alternate languages,—asking first in Latin to be illuminated; and then in English to be enlightened; and then in Latin again to be delivered out of obscurity; and then in English to be delivered out of darkness; and then for beams, and rays, and suns, and stars, and lamps, until sometimes one wishes that, at least for religious purposes, there were no such words as light or darkness in existence. Still, the main instinct which makes people endure this perpetuity of repetition is a true one; only the main thing they want and ought to ask for is, not light, but Sight. It doesn't matter how much light you have if you don't know how to use it. It may very possibly put out your eyes, instead of helping them. Besides, we want, in this world of ours, very often to be able to see in the dark—that's the great gift of all;—but at any rate to see no matter by what light, so only we can see things as they are. On my word, we should soon make it a different world, if we could get but a little—ever so little—of the dervish's ointment in the Arabian Nights, not to show us the treasures of the earth, but the facts of it.

5. However, whether these things be generally true or not, at all events it is certain that our immediate business, in such a school as this, will prosper more by attending to eyes than to hands; we shall always do most good by simply endeavoring to enable the student to see natural objects clearly and truly. We ought not even to try too strenuously to give him the power of representing them. That power may be acquired, more or less, by exercises which are no wise

conducive to accuracy of sight: and, *vice versâ*, accuracy of sight may be gained by exercises which in no wise conduce to ease of representation. For instance, it very much assists the power [Pg 285] of drawing to spend many hours in the practice of washing in flat tints; but all this manual practice does not in the least increase the student's power of determining what the tint of a given object actually is. He would be more advanced in the knowledge of the facts by a single hour of well-directed and well-*corrected* effort, rubbing out and putting in again, lightening, and darkening, and scratching, and blotching, in patient endeavors to obtain concordance with fact, issuing perhaps, after all, in total destruction or unpresentability of the drawing; but also in acute perception of the things he has been attempting to copy in it. Of course, there is always a vast temptation, felt both by the master and student, to struggle towards visible results, and obtain something beautiful, creditable, or salable, in way of actual drawing: but the more I see of schools, the more reason I see to look with doubt upon those which produce too many showy and complete works by pupils. A showy work will always be found, on stern examination of it, to have been done by some conventional rule;—some servile compliance with directions which the student does not see the reason for; and representation of truths which he has not himself perceived: the execution of such drawings will be found monotonous and lifeless; their light and shade specious and formal, but false. A drawing which the pupil has learned much in doing, is nearly always full of blunders and mishaps, and it is highly necessary for the formation of a truly public or universal school of Art, that the masters should not try to conceal or anticipate such blunders, but only seek to employ the pupil's time so as to get the most precious results for his understanding and his heart, not for his hand.

6. For, observe, the best that you can do in the production of drawing, or of draughtsmanship, must always be nothing in itself, unless the whole life be given to it. An amateur's drawing, or a workman's drawing—anybody's drawing but an artist's, is always valueless in itself. It may be, as you have just heard Mr. Redgrave tell you, most precious as a memorial, or as a gift, or as a means of noting useful facts; but as *Art*, an amateur's drawing is always wholly worthless; and it [Pg 286] ought to be one of our great objects to make the pupil understand and feel that, and prevent his trying to make his valueless work look, in some superficial, hypocritical, eye-catching, penny-catching way, like work that is really good.

7. If, therefore, we have to do with pupils belonging to the higher ranks of life, our main duty will be to make them good judges of Art, rather than artists; for though I had a month to speak to you, instead of an hour, time would fail me if I tried to trace the various ways in which we suffer, nationally, for want of powers of enlightened judgment of Art in our upper and middle classes. Not that this judgment can ever be obtained without discipline of the hand: no man ever was a thorough judge of painting who could not draw; but the drawing should only be thought of as a means of fixing his attention upon the subtleties of the Art put before him, or of enabling him to record such natural facts as are necessary for comparison with it. I should also attach the greatest importance to severe limitation of choice in the examples submitted to him. To study one good master till you understand him will teach you more than a superficial acquaintance with a thousand: power of criticism does not consist in knowing the names or the manner of many painters, but in discerning the excellence of a few.

If, on the contrary, our teaching is addressed more definitely to the operative, we need not endeavor to render his powers of criticism very acute. About many forms of existing Art, the less he knows the better. His sensibilities are to be cultivated with respect to nature chiefly; and his imagination, if possible, to be developed, even though somewhat to the disadvantage of his judgment. It is better that his work should be bold, than faultless: and better that it should be delightful, than discreet.

8. And this leads me to the second, or commercial, question; namely, how to get from the workman, after we have trained him, the best and most precious work, so as to enable ourselves [Pg 287] to compete with foreign countries, or develop new branches of commerce in our own.

Many of us, perhaps, are under the impression that plenty of schooling will do this; that plenty of lecturing will do it; that sending abroad for patterns will do it; or that patience, time, and money, and good will may do it. And, alas, none of these things, nor all of them put together, will do it. If you want really good work, such as will be acknowledged by all the world, there is but one way of getting it, and that is a difficult one. You may offer any premium you choose for it—but you will find it can't be done for premiums. You may send for patterns to the antipodes—but you will find it can't be done upon patterns. You may lecture on the principles of Art to every school in the kingdom—and you will find it can't be done upon principles. You may wait patiently for the progress of the age—and you will find your Art is unprogressive. Or you may set yourselves impatiently to urge it by the inventions of the age—and you will find your chariot of Art entirely immovable either by screw or paddle. There's no way of getting good Art, I repeat, but one—at once the simplest and most difficult—namely, to enjoy it. Examine the history of nations, and you will find this great fact clear and unmistakable on the front of it—that good Art has only been produced by nations who rejoiced in it; fed themselves with it, as if it were bread; basked in it, as if it were sunshine; shouted at the sight of it; danced with the delight of it; quarreled for it; fought for it; starved for it; did, in fact, precisely the opposite with it of what we want to do with it—they made it to keep, and we to sell.

9. And truly this is a serious difficulty for us as a commercial nation. The very primary motive with which we set about the business, makes the business impossible. The first and absolute condition of the thing's ever becoming salable is, that we shall make it without wanting to sell it; nay, rather with a determination not to sell it at any price, if once we get hold of it. Try to make

your Art popular, cheap—a fair article for your foreign market; and the foreign market will always show something better. But make it only to please yourselves, and even be resolved that you won't let anybody else have any; and forthwith you will find everybody else wants it. And observe, the insuperable difficulty is this making it to please ourselves, while we are incapable of pleasure. Take, for instance, the simplest example, which we can all understand, in the art of dress. We have made a great fuss about the patterns of silk lately; wanting to vie with Lyons, and make a Paris of London. Well, we may try forever: so long as we don't really enjoy silk patterns, we shall never get any. And we don't enjoy them. Of course, all ladies like their dresses to sit well, and be becoming; but of real enjoyment of the beauty of the silk, for the silk's own sake, I find none; for the test of that enjoyment is, that they would like it also to sit well, and look well, on somebody else. The pleasure of being well dressed, or even of seeing well-dressed people—for I will suppose in my fair hearers that degree of unselfishness—be that pleasure great or small, is quite a different thing from delight in the beauty and play of the silken folds and colors themselves, for their own gorgeousness or grace. [Pg 288]

10. I have just had a remarkable proof of the total want of this feeling in the modern mind. I was staying part of this summer in Turin, for the purpose of studying one of the Paul Veroneses there —the presentation of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Well, one of the most notable characters in this picture is the splendor of its silken dresses: and, in particular, there was a piece of white brocade, with designs upon it in gold, which it was one of my chief objects in stopping at Turin to copy. You may, perhaps, be surprised at this; but I must just note in passing, that I share this weakness of enjoying dress patterns with all good students and all good painters. It doesn't matter what school they belong to,—Fra Angelico, Perugino, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoret, Veronese, Leonardo da Vinci—no matter how they differ in other respects, all of them like dress patterns; and what is more, the nobler the painter is, the surer he is to do his patterns well. [Pg 289]

11. I stayed then, as I say, to make a study of this white brocade. It generally happens in public galleries that the best pictures are the worst placed; and this Veronese is not only hung at considerable height above the eye, but over a door, through which, however, as all the visitors to the gallery must pass, they cannot easily overlook the picture, though they would find great difficulty in examining it. Beside this door, I had a stage erected for my work, which being of some height and rather in a corner, enabled me to observe, without being observed myself, the impression made by the picture on the various visitors. It seemed to me that if ever a work of Art caught popular attention, this ought to do so. It was of very large size; of brilliant color, and of agreeable subject. There are about twenty figures in it, the principal ones being life size: that of Solomon, though in the shade, is by far the most perfect conception of the young king in his pride of wisdom and beauty which I know in the range of Italian art; the queen is one of the loveliest of Veronese's female figures; all the accessories are full of grace and imagination; and the finish of the whole so perfect that one day I was upwards of two hours vainly trying to render, with perfect accuracy, the curves of two leaves of the brocaded silk. The English travelers used to walk through the room in considerable numbers; and were invariably directed to the picture by their laquais de place, if they missed seeing it themselves. And to this painting—in which it took me six weeks to examine rightly two figures—I found that on an average, the English traveler who was doing Italy conscientiously, and seeing everything as he thought he ought, gave about half or three-quarters of a minute; but the flying or fashionable traveler, who came to do as much as he could in a given time, never gave more than a single glance, most of such people turning aside instantly to a bad landscape hung on the right, containing a vigorously painted white wall, and an opaque green moat. What especially impressed me, however, was that none of the ladies ever stopped to look at the dresses in the Veronese. Certainly they were far more beautiful than any in the shops in the great square, yet no one ever noticed them. Sometimes when any nice, sharp-looking, bright-eyed girl came into the room, I used to watch her all the way, thinking —"Come, at least *you'll* see what the Queen of Sheba has got on." But no—on she would come carelessly, with a little toss of the head, apparently signifying "nothing in *this* room worth looking at—except myself," and so trip through the door, and away. [Pg 290]

12. The fact is, we don't care for pictures: in very deed we don't. The Academy exhibition is a thing to talk of and to amuse vacant hours; those who are rich amongst us buy a painting or two, for mixed reasons, sometimes to fill the corner of a passage—sometimes to help the drawing-room talk before dinner—sometimes because the painter is fashionable—occasionally because he is poor—not unfrequently that we may have a collection of specimens of painting, as we have specimens of minerals or butterflies—and in the best and rarest case of all, because we have really, as we call it, taken a fancy to the picture; meaning the same sort of fancy which one would take to a pretty arm-chair or a newly-shaped decanter. But as for real love of the picture, and joy of it when we have got it, I do not believe it is felt by one in a thousand.

13. I am afraid this apathy of ours will not be easily conquered; but even supposing it should, and that we should begin to enjoy pictures properly, and that the supply of good ones increased as in that case it *would* increase—then comes another question. Perhaps some of my hearers this evening may occasionally have heard it stated of me that I am rather apt to contradict myself. I hope I am exceedingly apt to do so. I never met with a question yet, of any importance, which did not need, for the right solution of it, at least one positive and one negative answer, like an equation of the second degree. Mostly, matters of any consequence are three-sided, or four-sided, or polygonal; and the trotting round a polygon is severe work for people any way stiff in their opinions. For myself, I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly till I have contradicted myself at least three times: but once must do for this evening. I have just said that [Pg 291]

there is no chance of our getting good Art unless we delight in it: next I say, and just as positively, that there is no chance of our getting good Art unless we resist our delight in it. We must love it first, and restrain our love for it afterwards.

14. This sounds strange; and yet I assure you it is true. In fact, whenever anything does not sound strange, you may generally doubt its being true; for all truth is wonderful. But take an instance in physical matters, of the same kind of contradiction. Suppose you were explaining to a young student in astronomy how the earth was kept steady in its orbit; you would have to state to him—would you not?—that the earth always had a tendency to fall to the sun; and that also it always had a tendency to fly away from the sun. These are two precisely contrary statements for him to digest at his leisure, before he can understand how the earth moves. Now, in like manner, when Art is set in its true and serviceable course, it moves under the luminous attraction of pleasure on the one side, and with a stout moral purpose of going about some useful business on the other. If the artist works without delight, he passes away into space, and perishes of cold: if he works only for delight, he falls into the sun, and extinguishes himself in ashes. On the whole, this last is the fate, I do not say the most to be feared, but which Art has generally hitherto suffered, and which the great nations of the earth have suffered with it.

15. For, while most distinctly you may perceive in past history that Art has never been produced, except by nations who took pleasure in it, just as assuredly, and even more plainly, you may perceive that Art has always destroyed the power and life of those who pursued it for pleasure only. Surely this fact must have struck you as you glanced at the career of the great nations of the earth: surely it must have occurred to you as a point for serious questioning, how far, even in [Pg 292] our days, we were wise in promoting the advancement of pleasures which appeared as yet only to have corrupted the souls and numbed the strength of those who attained to them. I have been complaining of England that she despises the Arts; but I might, with still more appearance of justice, complain that she does not rather dread them than despise. For, what has been the source of the ruin of nations since the world began? Has it been plague, or famine, earthquake-shock or volcano-flame? None of these ever prevailed against a great people, so as to make their name pass from the earth. In every period and place of national decline, you will find other causes than these at work to bring it about, namely, luxury, effeminacy, love of pleasure, fineness in Art, ingenuity in enjoyment. What is the main lesson which, as far as we seek any in our classical reading, we gather for our youth from ancient history? Surely this—that simplicity of life, of language, and of manners gives strength to a nation; and that luxuriousness of life, subtlety of language, and smoothness of manners bring weakness and destruction on a nation. While men possess little and desire less, they remain brave and noble: while they are scornful of all the arts of luxury, and are in the sight of other nations as barbarians, their swords are irresistible and their sway illimitable: but let them become sensitive to the refinements of taste, and quick in the capacities of pleasure, and that instant the fingers that had grasped the iron rod, fail from the golden scepter. You cannot charge me with any exaggeration in this matter; it is impossible to state the truth too strongly, or as too universal. Forever you will see the rude and simple nation at once more virtuous and more victorious than one practiced in the arts. Watch how the Lydian is overthrown by the Persian; the Persian by the Athenian; the Athenian by the Spartan; then the whole of polished Greece by the rougher Roman; the Roman, in his turn refined, only to be crushed by the Goth: and at the turning point of the middle ages, the liberty of Europe first asserted, the virtues of Christianity best practiced, and its doctrines best attested, by [Pg 293] a handful of mountain shepherds, without art, without literature, almost without a language, yet remaining unconquered in the midst of the Teutonic chivalry, and uncorrupted amidst the hierarchies of Rome.[60]

16. I was strangely struck by this great fact during the course of a journey last summer among the northern vales of Switzerland. My mind had been turned to the subject of the ultimate effects of Art on national mind before I left England, and I went straight to the chief fields of Swiss history: first to the center of her feudal power, Hapsburg, the hawk's nest from which the Swiss Rodolph rose to found the Austrian empire; and then to the heart of her republicanism, that little glen of Morgarten, where first in the history of Europe the shepherd's staff prevailed over the soldier's spear. And it was somewhat depressing to me to find, as day by day I found more certainly, that this people which first asserted the liberties of Europe, and first conceived the idea of equitable laws, was in all the—shall I call them the slighter, or the higher?—sensibilities of the human mind, utterly deficient; and not only had remained from its earliest ages till now, without poetry, without Art, and without music, except a mere modulated cry; but as far as I could judge from the rude efforts of their early monuments, would have been, at the time of their greatest national probity and power, incapable of producing good poetry or Art under any circumstances of education.

17. I say, this was a sad thing for me to find. And then, to mend the matter, I went straight over into Italy, and came at once upon a curious instance of the patronage of Art, of the character that [Pg 294] usually inclines most to such patronage, and of the consequences thereof.

From Morgarten and Grutli, I intended to have crossed to the Vaudois Valleys, to examine the shepherd character there; but on the way I had to pass through Turin, where unexpectedly I found the Paul Veroneses, one of which, as I told you just now, stayed me at once for six weeks. Naturally enough, one asked how these beautiful Veroneses came there: and found they had been commissioned by Cardinal Maurice of Savoy. Worthy Cardinal, I thought: that's what Cardinals were made for. However, going a little farther in the gallery, one comes upon four very graceful pictures by Albani—these also commissioned by the Cardinal, and commissioned with special

directions, according to the Cardinal's fancy. Four pictures, to be illustrative of the four elements.

18. One of the most curious things in the mind of the people of that century is their delight in these four elements, and in the four seasons. They had hardly any other idea of decorating a room, or of choosing a subject for a picture, than by some renewed reference to fire and water, or summer and winter; nor were ever tired of hearing that summer came after spring, and that air was not earth, until these interesting pieces of information got finally and poetically expressed in that well-known piece of elegant English conversation about the weather, Thomson's "Seasons." So the Cardinal, not appearing to have any better idea than the popular one, orders the four elements; but thinking that the elements pure would be slightly dull, he orders them, in one way or another, to be mixed up with Cupids; to have, in his own words, "una copiosa quantita di Amorini." Albani supplied the Cardinal accordingly with Cupids in clusters: they hang in the sky like bunches of cherries; and leap out of the sea like flying fish; grow out of the earth in fairy rings; and explode out of the fire like squibs. No work whatsoever is done in any of the four elements, but by the Cardinal's Cupids. They are plowing the earth with their arrows; [Pg 295] fishing in the sea with their bowstrings; driving the clouds with their breath; and fanning the fire with their wings. A few beautiful nymphs are assisting them here and there in pearl-fishing, flower-gathering, and other such branches of graceful industry; the moral of the whole being, that the sea was made for its pearls, the earth for its flowers, and all the world for pleasure.

19. Well, the Cardinal, this great encourager of the arts, having these industrial and social theories, carried them out in practice, as you may perhaps remember, by obtaining a dispensation from the Pope to marry his own niece, and building a villa for her on one of the slopes of the pretty hills which rise to the east of the city. The villa which he built is now one of the principal objects of interest to the traveler as an example of Italian domestic architecture: to me, during my stay in the city, it was much more than an object of interest; for its deserted gardens were by much the pleasantest place I could find for walking or thinking in, in the hot summer afternoons.

I say thinking, for these gardens often gave me a good deal to think about. They are, as I told you, on the slope of the hill above the city, to the east; commanding, therefore, the view over it and beyond it, westward—a view which, perhaps, of all those that can be obtained north of the Apennines, gives the most comprehensive idea of the nature of Italy, considered as one great country. If you glance at the map, you will observe that Turin is placed in the center of the crescent which the Alps form round the basin of Piedmont; it is within ten miles of the foot of the mountains at the nearest point; and from that point the chain extends half round the city in one unbroken Moorish crescent, forming three-fourths of a circle from the Col de Tende to the St. Gothard; that is to say, just two hundred miles of Alps, as the bird flies. I don't speak rhetorically or carelessly; I speak as I ought to speak here—with mathematical precision. Take the scale on your map; measure fifty miles of it accurately; try that measure from the Col de Tende to the St. [Pg 296] Gothard, and you will find that four cords of fifty miles will not quite reach to the two extremities of the curve.

20. You see, then, from this spot, the plain of Piedmont, on the north and south, literally as far as the eye can reach; so that the plain terminates as the sea does, with a level blue line, only tufted with woods instead of waves, and crowded with towers of cities instead of ships. Then in the luminous air beyond and behind this blue horizon-line, stand, as it were, the shadows of mountains, they themselves dark, for the southern slopes of the Alps of the Lago Maggiore and Bellinzona are all without snow; but the light of the unseen snowfields, lying level behind the visible peaks, is sent up with strange reflection upon the clouds; an everlasting light of calm Aurora in the north. Then, higher and higher around the approaching darkness of the plain, rise the central chains, not as on the Switzer's side, a recognizable group and following of successive and separate hills, but a wilderness of jagged peaks, cast in passionate and fierce profusion along the circumference of heaven; precipice behind precipice, and gulf beyond gulf, filled with the flaming of the sunset, and forming mighty channels for the flowings of the clouds, which roll up against them out of the vast Italian plain, forced together by the narrowing crescent, and breaking up at last against the Alpine wall in towers of spectral spray; or sweeping up its ravines with long moans of complaining thunder. Out from between the cloudy pillars, as they pass, emerge forever the great battlements of the memorable and perpetual hills: Viso, with her shepherd-witnesses to ancient faith; Rocca-Melone, the highest place of Alpine pilgrimage;[61] Iseran, who shed her burial sheets of snow about the march of Hannibal; Cenis, who shone with [Pg 297] her glacier light on the descent of Charlemagne; Paradiso, who watched with her opposite crest the stoop of the French eagle to Marengo; and underneath all these, lying in her soft languor, this tender Italy, lapped in dews of sleep, or more than sleep—one knows not if it is trance, from which morning shall yet roll the blinding mists away, or if the fair shadows of her quietude are indeed the shades of purple death. And, lifted a little above this solemn plain, and looking beyond it to its snowy ramparts, vainly guardian, stands this palace dedicate to pleasure, the whole legend of Italy's past history written before it by the finger of God, written as with an iron pen upon the rock forever, on all those fronting walls of reproachful Alp; blazoned in gold of lightning upon the clouds that still open and close their unsealed scrolls in heaven; painted in purple and scarlet upon the mighty missal pages of sunset after sunset, spread vainly before a nation's eyes for a nation's prayer. So stands this palace of pleasure; desolate as it deserves—desolate in smooth corridor and glittering chamber—desolate in pleached walk and planted bower—desolate in that worst and bitterest abandonment which leaves no light of memory. No ruins are here of walls rent by war, and falling above their defenders into mounds of graves: no remnants are here

of chapel-altar, or temple porch, left shattered or silent by the power of some purer worship: no vestiges are here of sacred hearth and sweet homestead, left lonely through vicissitudes of fate, and heaven-sent sorrow. Nothing is here but the vain apparelings of pride sunk into dishonor, and vain appanages of delight now no more delightsome. The hill-waters, that once flowed and [Pg 298] plashed in the garden fountains, now trickle sadly through the weeds that encumber their basins, with a sound as of tears: the creeping, insidious, neglected flowers weave their burning nets about the white marble of the balustrades, and rend them slowly, block from block, and stone from stone: the thin, sweet-scented leaves tremble along the old masonry joints as if with palsy at every breeze; and the dark lichens, golden and gray, make the footfall silent in the path's center.

And day by day as I walked there, the same sentence seemed whispered by every shaking leaf, and every dying echo, of garden and chamber. "Thus end all the arts of life, only in death; and thus issue all the gifts of man, only in his dishonor, when they are pursued or possessed in the service of pleasure only."

21. This then is the great enigma of Art History,—you must not follow Art without pleasure, nor must you follow it for the sake of pleasure. And the solution of that enigma is simply this fact; that wherever Art has been followed *only* for the sake of luxury or delight, it has contributed, and largely contributed, to bring about the destruction of the nation practicing it: but wherever Art has been used *also* to teach any truth, or supposed truth—religious, moral, or natural—there it has elevated the nation practicing it, and itself with the nation.

22. Thus the Art of Greece rose, and did service to the people, so long as it was to them the earnest interpreter of a religion they believed in: the Arts of northern sculpture and architecture rose, as interpreters of Christian legend and doctrine: the Art of painting in Italy, not only as religious, but also mainly as expressive of truths of moral philosophy, and powerful in pure human portraiture. The only great painters in our schools of painting in England have either been of portrait—Reynolds and Gainsborough; of the philosophy of social life—Hogarth; or of the facts of nature in landscape—Wilson and Turner. In all these cases, if I had time, I could show you that the success of the painter depended on his desire to convey a truth, rather than to produce a [Pg 299] merely beautiful picture; that is to say, to get a likeness of a man, or of a place; to get some moral principle rightly stated, or some historical character rightly described, rather than merely to give pleasure to the eyes. Compare the feeling with which a Moorish architect decorated an arch of the Alhambra, with that of Hogarth painting the "Marriage à la Mode," or of Wilkie painting the "Chelsea Pensioners," and you will at once feel the difference between Art pursued for pleasure only, and for the sake of some useful principle or impression.

23. But what you might not so easily discern is, that even when painting does appear to have been pursued for pleasure only, if ever you find it rise to any noble level, you will also find that a stern search after truth has been at the root of its nobleness. You may fancy, perhaps, that Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret were painters for the sake of pleasure only: but in reality they were the only painters who ever sought entirely to master, and who did entirely master, the truths of light and shade as associated with color, in the noblest of all physical created things, the human form. They were the only men who ever painted the human body; all other painters of the great schools are mere anatomical draughtsmen compared to them; rather makers of maps of the body, than painters of it. The Venetians alone, by a toil almost super-human, succeeded at last in obtaining a power almost super-human; and were able finally to paint the highest visible work of God with unexaggerated structure, undegraded color, and unaffected gesture. It seems little to say this; but I assure you it is much to have *done* this—so much, that no other men but the Venetians ever did it: none of them ever painted the human body without in some degree caricaturing the anatomy, forcing the action, or degrading the hue.

24. Now, therefore, the sum of all is, that you who wish to encourage Art in England have to do two things with it: you must delight in it, in the first place; and you must get it to serve some serious work, in the second place. I don't mean by serious, necessarily moral: all that I mean by [Pg 300] serious is in some way or other useful, not merely selfish, careless, or indolent. I had, indeed, intended before closing my address, to have traced out a few of the directions in which, as it seems to me, Art may be seriously and practically serviceable to us in the career of civilization. I had hoped to show you how many of the great phenomena of nature still remained unrecorded by it, for *us* to record; how many of the historical monuments of Europe were perishing without memorial, for the want of but a little honest, simple, laborious, loving draughtsmanship; how many of the most impressive historical events of the day failed of teaching us half of what they were meant to teach, for want of painters to represent them faithfully, instead of fancifully, and with historical truth for their aim, instead of national self-glorification. I had hoped to show you how many of the best impulses of the heart were lost in frivolity or sensuality, for want of purer beauty to contemplate, and of noble thoughts to associate with the fervor of hallowed human passion; how, finally, a great part of the vital power of our religious faith was lost in us, for want of such art as would realize in some rational, probable, believable way, those events of sacred history which, as they visibly and intelligibly occurred, may also be visibly and intelligibly represented. But all this I dare not do yet. I felt, as I thought over these things, that the time was not yet come for their declaration: the time will come for it, and I believe soon; but as yet, the man would only lay himself open to the charge of vanity, of imagination, and of idle fondness of hope, who should venture to trace in words the course of the higher blessings which the Arts may have yet in store for mankind. As yet there is no need to do so: all that we have to plead for is an earnest and straightforward exertion in those courses of study which are opened to us day by day, believing only that they are to be followed gravely and for grave purposes, as by men, and

not by children. I appeal, finally, to all those who are to become the pupils of these schools, to keep clear of the notion of following Art as dilettantism: it ought to delight you, as your reading [Pg 301] delights you—but you never think of your reading as dilettantism. It ought to delight you as your studies of physical science delight you—but you don't call physical science dilettantism. If you are determined only to think of Art as a play or a pleasure, give it up at once: you will do no good to yourselves, and you will degrade the pursuit in the sight of others. Better, infinitely better, that you should never enter a picture gallery, than that you should enter only to saunter and to smile: better, infinitely better, that you should never handle a pencil at all, than handle it only for the sake of complacency in your small dexterity: better, infinitely better, that you should be wholly uninterested in pictures, and uninformed respecting them, than that you should just know enough to detect blemishes in great works,—to give a color of reasonableness to presumption, and an appearance of acuteness to misunderstanding. Above all, I would plead for this so far as the teaching of these schools may be addressed to the junior Members of the University. Men employed in any kind of manual labor, by which they must live, are not likely to take up the notion that they can learn any other art for amusement only; but amateurs are: and it is of the highest importance, nay, it is just the one thing of all importance, to show them what drawing really means; and not so much to teach them to produce a good work themselves, as to know it when they see it done by others. Good work, in the stern sense of the word, as I before said, no mere amateur can do; and good work, in any sense, that is to say, profitable work for himself or for anyone else, he can only do by being made in the beginning to see what is possible for him, and what not;—what is accessible, and what not; and by having the majesty and sternness of the everlasting laws of fact set before him in their infinitude. It is no matter for appalling him: the man is great already who is made well capable of being appalled; nor do we even wisely hope, nor truly understand, till we are humiliated by our hope, and awe-struck by our understanding. Nay, I will go farther than this, and say boldly, that what you have mainly to teach the young men [Pg 302] here is, not so much what they can do, as what they cannot;—to make them see how much there is in nature which cannot be imitated, and how much in man which cannot be emulated. He only can be truly said to be educated in Art to whom all his work is only a feeble sign of glories which he cannot convey, and a feeble means of measuring, with ever-enlarging admiration, the great and untraversable gulf which God has set between the great and the common intelligences of mankind: and all the triumphs of Art which man can commonly achieve are only truly crowned by pure delight in natural scenes themselves, and by the sacred and self-forgetful veneration which can be nobly abashed, and tremblingly exalted, in the presence of a human spirit greater than his own. [Pg 303]

ART.

V.

THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA.

(*Art Journal, January-July 1865; January, February, and April 1866.*)

[Pg 304]

THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA. [Pg 305]

"Ποικίλον ὠ ἐνι πάντα τετεύχαται οὐδέ σε φημί
Απρηκτόν γε νέεσθαι ου τι φρεσί μενοινάς"
(Hom. *Il.* xiv. 220-21.)

PREFATORY.[62]

25. Not many months ago, a friend, whose familiarity with both living and past schools of Art rendered his opinion of great authority, said casually to me in the course of talk, "I believe we have now as able painters as ever lived; but they never paint as good pictures as were once painted." That was the substance of his saying; I forget the exact words, but their tenor surprised me, and I have thought much of them since. Without pressing the statement too far, or examining it with an unintended strictness, this I believe to be at all events true, that we have men among us, now in Europe, who might have been noble painters, and are not; men whose doings are altogether as wonderful in skill, as inexhaustible in fancy, as the work of the really great painters; and yet these doings of theirs are not great. Shall I write the commonplace that rings in sequence in my ear, and draws on my hand—"are not Great, for they are not (in the broad human and ethical sense) Good"? I write it, and ask forgiveness for the truism, with its implied uncharitableness of blame; for this trite thing is ill understood and little thought upon by any of us, and the implied blame is divided among us all; only let me at once partly modify it, and partly define.

26. In one sense, modern Art has more goodness in it than ever Art had before. Its kindly spirit, its quick sympathy with pure domestic and social feeling, the occasional seriousness of its [Pg 306]

instructive purpose, and its honest effort to grasp the reality of conceived scenes, are all eminently "good," as compared with the insane picturesqueness and conventional piety of many among the old masters. Such domestic painting, for instance, as Richter's in Germany, Edward Frere's in France, and Hook's in England, together with such historical and ideal work as——perhaps the reader would be offended with me were I to set down the several names that occur to me here, so I will set down one only, and say—as that of Paul de la Roche; such work, I repeat, as these men have done, or are doing, is entirely good in its influence on the public mind; and may, in thankful exultation, be compared with the renderings of besotted, vicious, and vulgar human life perpetrated by Dutch painters, or with the deathful formalism and fallacy of what was once called "Historical Art." Also, this gentleness and veracity of theirs, being in part communicable, are gradually learned, though in a somewhat servile manner, yet not without a sincere sympathy, by many inferior painters, so that our exhibitions and currently popular books are full of very lovely and pathetic ideas, expressed with a care, and appealing to an interest, quite unknown in past times. I will take two instances of merely average power, as more illustrative of what I mean than any more singular and distinguished work could be. Last year, in the British Institution, there were two pictures by the same painter, one of a domestic, the other of a sacred subject. I will say nothing of the way in which they were painted; it may have been bad, or good, or neither: it is not to my point. I wish to direct attention only to the conception of them. One, "Cradled in his Calling," was of a fisherman and his wife, and helpful grown-up son, and helpless new-born little one; the two men carrying the young child up from the shore, rocking it between them in the wet net for a hammock, the mother looking on joyously, and the baby laughing. The thought was pretty and good, and one might go on dreaming over it long—not unprofitably. But the second picture was more interesting. I describe it only in the circumstances [Pg 307] of the invented scene—sunset after the crucifixion. The bodies have been taken away, and the crosses are left lying on the broken earth; a group of children have strayed up the hill, and stopped beside them in such shadowy awe as is possible to childhood, and they have picked up one or two of the drawn nails to feel how sharp they are. Meantime a girl with her little brother—goat-herds both—have been watering their flock at Kidron, and are driving it home. The girl, strong in grace and honor of youth, carrying her pitcher of water on her erect head, has gone on past the place steadily, minding her flock; but her little curly-headed brother, with cheeks of burning Eastern brown, has lingered behind to look, and is feeling the point of one of the nails, held in another child's hand. A lovely little kid of the goats has stayed behind to keep him company, and is amusing itself by jumping backwards and forwards over an arm of the cross. The sister looks back, and, wondering what he can have stopped in that dreadful place for, waves her hand for the little boy to come away.

I have no hesitation in saying that, as compared with the ancient and stereotyped conceptions of the "Taking down from the Cross," there is a living feeling in that picture which is of great price. It may perhaps be weak, nay, even superficial, or untenable—that will depend on the other conditions of character out of which it springs—but, so far as it reaches, it is pure and good; and we may gain more by looking thoughtfully at such a picture than at any even of the least formal types of the work of older schools. It would be unfair to compare it with first-rate, or even approximately first-rate designs; but even accepting such unjust terms, put it beside Rembrandt's ghastly white sheet, laid over the two poles at the Cross-foot, and see which has most good in it for you of any communicable kind.

27. I trust, then, that I fully admit whatever may, on due deliberation, be alleged in favor of modern Art. Nay, I have heretofore asserted more for some modern Art than others were disposed to admit, nor do I withdraw one word from such assertion. But when all has been said [Pg 308] and granted that may be, there remains this painful fact to be dealt with,—the consciousness, namely, both in living artists themselves and in us their admirers, that something, and that not a little, is wrong with us; that they, relentlessly examined, could not say they thoroughly knew how to paint, and that we, relentlessly examined, could not say we thoroughly know how to judge. The best of our painters will look a little to us, the beholders, for confirmation of his having done well. We, appealed to, look to each other to see what we ought to say. If we venture to find fault, however submissively, the artist will probably feel a little uncomfortable: he will by no means venture to meet us with a serenely crushing "Sir, it cannot be better done," in the manner of Albert Dürer. And yet, if it could not be better done, he, of all men, should know that best, nor fear to say so; it is good for himself, and for us, that he should assert that, if he knows that. The last time my dear old friend William Hunt came to see me, I took down one of his early drawings for him to see (three blue plums and one amber one, and two nuts). So he looked at it, happily, for a minute or two and then said, "Well, it's very nice, isn't it? I did not think I could have done so well." The saying was entirely right, exquisitely modest and true; only I fear he would not have had the courage to maintain that his drawing was good, if anybody had been there to say otherwise. Still, having done well, he knew it; and what is more no man ever does do well without knowing it: he may not know *how* well, nor be conscious of the best of his own qualities; nor measure, or care to measure, the relation of his power to that of other men, but he will know that what he has done is, in an intended, accomplished, and ascertainable degree, good. Every able and honest workman, as he wins a right to rest, so he wins a right to approval,—his own if no one's beside; nay, his only true rest *is* in the calm consciousness that the thing has been honorably done—συνείδησις οτι καλόν. I do not use the Greek words in pedantry, I want them for future service and interpretation; no English words, nor any of any other language, would do [Pg 309] as well. For I mean to try to show, and believe I *can* show, that a simple and sure conviction of our having done rightly is not only an attainable, but a necessary seal and sign of our having so done; and that the doing well or rightly, and ill or wrongly, are both conditions of the whole being

of each person, coming of a nature in him which affects all things that he may do, from the least to the greatest, according to the noble old phrase for the conquering rightness, of "integrity," "wholeness," or "wholesomeness." So that when we do external things (that are our business) ill, it is a sign that internal, and, in fact, that all things, are ill with us; and when we do external things well, it is a sign that internal and all things are well with us. And I believe there are two principal adversities to this wholesomeness of work, and to all else that issues out of wholeness of inner character, with which we have in these days specially to contend. The first is the variety of Art round us, tempting us to thoughtless imitation; the second our own want of belief in the existence of a rule of right.

28. I. I say the first is the variety of Art around us. No man can pursue his own track in peace, nor obtain consistent guidance, if doubtful of his track. All places are full of inconsistent example, all mouths of contradictory advice, all prospects of opposite temptations. The young artist sees myriads of things he would like to do, but cannot learn from their authors how they were done, nor choose decisively any method which he may follow with the accuracy and confidence necessary to success. He is not even sure if his thoughts are his own; for the whole atmosphere round him is full of floating suggestion: those which are his own he cannot keep pure, for he breathes a dust of decayed ideas, wreck of the souls of dead nations, driven by contrary winds. He may stiffen himself (and all the worse for him) into an iron self-will, but if the iron has any magnetism in it, he cannot pass a day without finding himself, at the end of it, instead of sharpened or tempered, covered with a ragged fringe of iron filings. If there be anything better than iron—living wood fiber—in him, he cannot be allowed any natural growth, but gets hacked [Pg 310] in every extremity, and bossed over with lumps of frozen clay;—grafts of incongruous blossom that will never set; while some even recognize no need of knife or clay (though both are good in a gardener's hand), but deck themselves out with incongruous glittering, like a Christmas-tree. Even were the style chosen true to his own nature, and persisted in, there is harm in the very eminence of the models set before him at the beginning of his career. If he feels their power, they make him restless and impatient, it may be despondent, it may be madly and fruitlessly ambitious. If he does not feel it, he is sure to be struck by what is weakest or slightest of their peculiar qualities; fancies that *this* is what they are praised for; tries to catch the trick of it; and whatever easy vice or mechanical habit the master may have been betrayed or warped into, the unhappy pupil watches and adopts, triumphant in its ease:—has not sense to steal the peacock's feather, but imitates its voice. Better for him, far better, never to have seen what had been accomplished by others, but to have gained gradually his own quiet way, or at least with his guide only a step in advance of him, and the lantern low on the difficult path. Better even, it has lately seemed, to be guideless and lightless; fortunate those who, by desolate effort, trying hither and thither, have groped their way to some independent power. So, from Cornish rock, from St. Giles's Lane, from Thames mudshore, you get your Prout, your Hunt, your Turner; not, indeed, any of them well able to spell English, nor taught so much of their own business as to lay a color safely; but yet at last, or first, doing somehow something, wholly ineffective on the national mind, yet real, and valued at last after they are dead, in money;—valued otherwise not even at so much as the space of dead brick wall it would cover; their work being left for years packed in parcels at the National Gallery, or hung conclusively out of sight under the shadowy iron vaults of Kensington. The men themselves, quite inarticulate, determine nothing of their Art, interpret nothing of their own minds; teach perhaps a trick or two of their stage business in early life—as, [Pg 311] for instance, that it is good where there is much black to break it with white, and where there is much white to break it with black, etc., etc.; in later life remain silent altogether, or speak only in despair (fretful or patient according to their character); one who might have been among the best of them,[63] the last we heard of, finding refuge for an entirely honest heart from a world which declares honesty to be impossible, only in a madness nearly as sorrowful as its own;—the religious madness which makes a beautiful soul ludicrous and ineffectual; and so passes away, bequeathing for our inheritance from its true and strong life, a pretty song about a tiger, another about a bird-cage, two or three golden couplets, which no one will ever take the trouble to understand,—the spiritual portrait of the ghost of a flea,—and the critical opinion that "the unorganized blots of Rubens and Titian are not Art." Which opinion the public mind perhaps not boldly indorsing, is yet incapable of pronouncing adversely to it, that the said blots of Titian and Rubens *are* Art, perceiving for itself little good in them, and hanging *them* also well out of its way, at tops of walls (Titian's portrait of Charles V. at Munich, for example; Tintoret's Susannah, and Veronese's Magdalen, in the Louvre), that it may have room and readiness for what may be generally termed "railroad work," bearing on matters more immediately in hand; said public looking to the present pleasure of its fancy, and the portraiture of itself in official and otherwise imposing or entertaining circumstances, as the only "Right" cognizable by it.

29. II. And this is a deeper source of evil, by far, than the former one, for though it is ill for us to strain towards a right for which we have never ripened it is worse for us to believe in no right at all. "Anything," we say, "that a clever man can do to amuse us is good; what does not amuse us we do not want. Taste is assuredly a frivolous, apparently a dangerous gift; vicious persons and vicious nations have it; we are a practical people, content to know what we like, wise in not liking [Pg 312] it too much, and when tired of it, wise in getting something we like better. Painting is of course an agreeable ornamental Art, maintaining a number of persons respectably, deserving therefore encouragement, and getting it pecuniarily, to a hitherto unheard-of extent. What would you have more?" This is, I believe, very nearly our Art-creed. The fact being (very ascertainably by anyone who will take the trouble to examine the matter), that there is a cultivated Art among all great nations, inevitably necessary to them as the fulfillment of one part of their human nature. None but savage nations are without Art, and civilized nations who do their Art ill, do it because there

is something deeply wrong at their hearts. They paint badly as a paralyzed man stammers, because his life is touched somewhere within; when the deeper life is full in a people, they speak clearly and rightly; paint clearly and rightly; think clearly and rightly. There is some reverse effect, but very little. Good pictures do not teach a nation; they are the signs of its having been taught. Good thoughts do not form a nation; it must be formed before it can think them. Let it once decay at the heart, and its good work and good thoughts will become subtle luxury and aimless sophism; and it and they will perish together.

30. It is my purpose, therefore, in some subsequent papers, with such help as I may anywise receive, to try if there may not be determined some of the simplest laws which are indeed binding on Art practice and judgment. Beginning with elementary principle, and proceeding upwards as far as guiding laws are discernible, I hope to show, that if we do not yet know them, there are at least such laws to be known, and that it is of a deep and intimate importance to any people, especially to the English at this time, that their children should be sincerely taught whatever arts they learn, and in riper age become capable of a just choice and wise pleasure in the accomplished works of the artist. But I earnestly ask for help in this task. It is one which can only come to good issue by the consent and aid of many thinkers; and I would, with the permission of [Pg 313] the Editor of this Journal, invite debate on the subject of each paper, together with brief and clear statements of consent or objection, with name of consenter or objector; so that after courteous discussion had, and due correction of the original statement, we may get something at last set down, as harmoniously believed by such and such known artists. If nothing can thus be determined, at least the manner and variety of dissent will show whether it is owing to the nature of the subject, or to the impossibility, under present circumstances, that different persons should approach it from similar points of view; and the inquiry, whatever its immediate issue, cannot be ultimately fruitless. [Pg 314]

THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA.

Chapter I.[64]

31. Our knowledge of human labor, if intimate enough, will, I think, mass it for the most part into two kinds—mining and molding; the labor that seeks for things, and the labor that shapes them. Of these the last should be always orderly, for we ought to have some conception of the whole of what we have to make before we try to make any part of it; but the labor of seeking must be often methodless, following the veins of the mine as they branch, or trying for them where they are broken. And the mine, which we would now open into the souls of men, as they govern the mysteries of their handicrafts, being rent into many dark and divided ways, it is not possible to map our work beforehand, or resolve on its directions. We will not attempt to bind ourselves to any methodical treatment of our subject, but will get at the truths of it here and there, as they seem extricable; only, though we cannot know to what depth we may have to dig, let us know clearly what we are digging for. We desire to find by what rule some Art is called good, and other Art bad: we desire to find the conditions of character in the artist which are essentially connected with the goodness of his work: we desire to find what are the methods of practice which form this character or corrupt it; and finally, how the formation or corruption of this character is connected with the general prosperity of nations. [Pg 315]

32. And all this we want to learn practically: not for mere pleasant speculation on things that have been; but for instant direction of those that are yet to be. My first object is to get at some fixed principles for the teaching of Art to our youth; and I am about to ask, of all who may be able to give me a serviceable answer, and with and for all who are anxious for such answer, what arts should be generally taught to the English boy and girl,—by what methods,—and to what ends? How well, or how imperfectly, our youth of the higher classes should be disciplined in the practice of music and painting?—how far, among the lower classes, exercise in certain mechanical arts might become a part of their school life?—how far, in the adult life of this nation, the Fine Arts may advisably supersede or regulate the mechanical Arts? Plain questions these, enough; clearly also important ones; and, as clearly, boundless ones—mountainous—infinite in contents—only to be mined into in a scrambling manner by poor inquirers, as their present tools and sight may serve.

33. I have often been accused of dogmatism, and confess to the holding strong opinions on some matters; but I tell the reader in sincerity, and entreat him in sincerity to believe, that I do not think myself able to dictate anything positive respecting questions of this magnitude. The one thing I am sure of is, the need of some form of dictation; or, where that is as yet impossible, at least of consistent experiment, for the just solution of doubts which present themselves every day in more significant and more impatient temper of interrogation.

Here is one, for instance, lying at the base of all the rest—namely, what may be the real dignity of mechanical Art itself? I cannot express the amazed awe, the crushed humility, with which I sometimes watch a locomotive take its breath at a railway station, and think what work there is in its bars and wheels, and what manner of men they must be who dig brown iron-stone out of the ground, and forge it into THAT! What assemblage of accurate and mighty faculties in them; more than fleshly power over melting crag and coiling fire, fettered, and finessed at last into the precision of watchmaking; Titanian hammer-strokes beating, out of lava, these glittering [Pg 316] cylinders and timely-respondent valves, and fine ribbed rods, which touch each other as a serpent writhes, in noiseless gliding, and omnipotence of grasp; infinitely complex anatomy of active steel, compared with which the skeleton of a living creature would seem, to a careless observer, clumsy and vile—a mere morbid secretion and phosphatous prop of flesh! What would the men who thought out this—who beat it out, who touched it into its polished calm of power, who set it to its appointed task, and triumphantly saw it fulfill this task to the utmost of their will—feel or think about this weak hand of mine, timidly leading a little stain of water-color, which I cannot manage, into an imperfect shadow of something else—mere failure in every motion, and endless disappointment; what, I repeat, would these Iron-dominant Genii think of me? and what ought I to think of them?

34. But as I reach this point of reverence, the unreasonable thing is sure to give a shriek as of a thousand unanimous vultures, which leaves me shuddering in real physical pain for some half minute following; and assures me, during slow recovery, that a people which can endure such fluting and piping among them is not likely soon to have its modest ear pleased by aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song. Perhaps I am then led on into meditation respecting the spiritual nature of the Tenth Muse, who invented this gracious instrument, and guides its modulation by stokers' fingers; meditation, also, as to the influence of her invention amidst the other parts of the Parnassian melody of English education. Then it cannot but occur to me to inquire how far this modern "pneuma," Steam, may be connected with other pneumatic powers talked of in that old religious literature, of which we fight so fiercely to keep the letters bright, and the working valves, so to speak, in good order (while we let the steam of it all carefully off into the cold condenser), what connection, I say, this modern "spiritus," in its valve-directed inspiration, has with that more ancient spiritus, or warm breath, which people used to think they might be "born of." Whether, in fine, there be any such thing as an entirely human Art, with spiritual motive [Pg 317] power, and signal as of human voice, distinct inherently from this mechanical Art, with its mechanical motive force, and signal of vulture voice. For after all, this shrieking thing, whatever the fine make of it may be, can but pull or push, and do oxen's work in an impetuous manner. That proud king of Assyria, who lost his reason, and ate oxen's food, would he have much more cause for pride, if he had been allowed to spend his reason in doing oxen's work?

35. These things, then, I would fain consult about, and plead with the reader for his patience in council, even while we begin with the simplest practical matters; for raveled briers of thought entangle our feet, even at our first step. We would teach a boy to draw. Well, what shall he draw? —Gods, or men, or beasts, or clouds, or leaves, or iron cylinders? Are there any gods to be drawn? any men or women worth drawing, or only worth caricaturing? What are the æsthetic laws respecting iron cylinders; and would Titian have liked them rusty, or fresh cleaned with oil and rag, to fill the place once lightened by St. George's armor? How can we begin the smallest practical business, unless we get first some whisper of answer to such questions? We may tell a boy to draw a straight line straight, and a crooked one crooked; but what else?

And it renders the dilemma, or multilemma, more embarrassing, that whatever teaching is to be had from the founders and masters of art is quite unpractical. The first source from which we should naturally seek for guidance would, of course, be the sayings of great workmen; but a sorrowful perception presently dawns on us that the great workmen have nothing to say. They are silent, absolutely in proportion to their creative power. The contributions to our practical knowledge of the principles of Art, furnished by the true captains of its hosts, may, I think, be arithmetically summed by the O of Giotto: the inferior teachers become didactic in the degree of their inferiority; and those who can do nothing have always much to advise. [Pg 318]

36. This however, observe, is only true of advice direct. You never, I grieve to say, get from the great men a plain answer to a plain question; still less can you entangle them in any agreeable gossip, out of which something might unawares be picked up. But of enigmatical teaching, broken signs and sullen mutterings, of which you can understand nothing, and may make anything;—of confused discourse in the work itself, about the work, as in Dürer's Melancolia;—and of discourse not merely confused, but apparently unreasonable and ridiculous, about all manner of things *except* the work,—the great Egyptian and Greek artists give us much: from which, however, all that by utmost industry may be gathered, comes briefly to this,—that they have no conception of what modern men of science call the "Conservation of forces," but deduce all the force they feel in themselves, and hope for in others, from certain fountains or centers of perpetually supplied strength, to which they give various names: as, for instance, these seven following, more specially:—

1. The Spirit of Light, moral and physical, by name the "Physician-Destroyer," bearing arrows in his hand, and a lyre; pre-eminently the destroyer of human pride, and the guide of human harmony. Physically, Lord of the Sun; and a mountain Spirit, because the sun seems first to rise and set upon hills.

2. The Spirit of helpful Darkness—of shade and rest. Night the Restorer.

3. The Spirit of Wisdom in *Conduct*, bearing, in sign of conquest over troublous and disturbing evil, the skin of the wild goat, and the head of the slain Spirit of physical storm. In her hand, a weaver's shuttle, or a spear.

4. The Spirit of Wisdom in *Arrangement*; called the Lord or Father of Truth: throned on a four-square cubit, with a measuring-rod in his hand, or a potter's wheel.

5. The Spirit of Wisdom in *Adaptation*; or of serviceable labor: the Master of human effort in its glow; and Lord of useful fire, moral and physical. [Pg 319]

6. The Spirit, first of young or nascent grace, and then of fulfilled beauty: the wife of the Lord of Labor. I have taken the two lines in which Homer describes her girdle, for the motto of these essays: partly in memory of these outcast fancies of the great masters: and partly for the sake of a meaning which we shall find as we go on.

7. The Spirit of pure human life and gladness. Master of wholesome vital passion; and physically, Lord of the Vine.

37. From these ludicrous notions of motive force, inconsistent as they are with modern physiology and organic chemistry, we may, nevertheless, hereafter gather, in the details of their various expressions, something useful to us. But I grieve to say that when our provoking teachers descend from dreams about the doings of Gods to assertions respecting the deeds of Men, little beyond the blankest discouragement is to be had from them. Thus, they represent the ingenuity, and deceptive or imitative Arts of men, under the type of a Master who builds labyrinths, and makes images of living creatures, for evil purposes, or for none; and pleases himself and the people with idle jointing of toys, and filling of them with quicksilver motion; and brings his child to foolish, remediless catastrophe, in fancying his father's work as good, and strong, and fit to bear sunlight, as if it had been God's work. So, again, they represent the foresight and kindly zeal of men by a most rueful figure of one chained down to a rock by the brute force and bias and methodical hammer-stroke of the merely practical Arts, and by the merciless Necessities or Fates of present time; and so having his very heart torn piece by piece out of him by a vulturous hunger and sorrow, respecting things he cannot reach, nor prevent, nor achieve. So, again, they describe the sentiment and pure soul-power of Man, as moving the very rocks and trees, and giving them [Pg 320] life, by its sympathy with them; but losing its own best-beloved thing by mere venomous accident: and afterwards going down to hell for it, in vain; being impatient and unwise, though full of gentleness; and, in the issue, after as vainly trying to teach this gentleness to others, and to guide them out of their lower passions to sunlight of true healing Life, it drives the sensual heart of them, and the gods that govern it, into mere and pure frenzy of resolved rage, and gets torn to pieces by them, and ended; only the nightingale staying by its grave to sing. All which appearing to be anything rather than helpful or encouraging instruction for beginners, we shall, for the present, I think, do well to desire these enigmatical teachers to put up their pipes and be gone; and betaking ourselves in the humblest manner to intelligible business, at least set down some definite matter for decision, to be made a first stepping-stone at the shore of this brook of despond and difficulty.

38. Most masters agree (and I believe they are right) that the first thing to be taught to any pupil, is how to draw an outline of such things as can be outlined.

Now, there are two kinds of outline—the soft and hard. One must be executed with a soft instrument, as a piece of chalk or lead; and the other with some instrument producing for ultimate result a firm line of equal darkness; as a pen with ink, or the engraving tool on wood or metal.

And these two kinds of outline have both of them their particular objects and uses, as well as their proper scale of size in work. Thus Raphael will sketch a miniature head with his pen, but always takes chalk if he draws of the size of life. So also Holbein, and generally the other strong masters.

But the black outline seems to be peculiarly that which we ought to begin to reason upon, because it is simple and open-hearted, and does not endeavor to escape into mist. A pencil line may be obscurely and undemonstrably wrong; false in a cowardly manner, and without confession: but the ink line, if it goes wrong at all, goes wrong with a will, and may be convicted at our leisure, and put to such shame as its black complexion is capable of. May we, therefore, [Pg 321] begin with the hard line? It will lead us far, if we can come to conclusions about it.

39. Presuming, then, that our schoolboys are such as Coleridge would have them—*i.e.* that they are

> "Innocent, steady, and wise,
> And delight in the things of earth, water, and skies,"

and, above all, in a moral state in which they may be trusted with ink—we put a pen into their hands (shall it be steel?) and a piece of smooth white paper, and something before them to draw. But what? "Nay," the reader answers, "you had surely better give them pencil first, for that may be rubbed out." Perhaps so; but I am not sure that the power of rubbing out is an advantage; at all events, we shall best discover what the pencil outline ought to be, by investigating the power of the black one, and the kind of things we can draw with it.

40. Suppose, for instance, my first scholar has a turn for entomology, and asks me to draw for him a wasp's leg, or its sting; having first humanely provided me with a model by pulling one off or out. My pen must clearly be fine at the point, and my execution none of the boldest, if I comply with his request. If I decline, and he thereupon challenges me at least to draw the wasp's body, with its pretty bands of black crinoline—behold us involved instantly in the profound question of local color! Am I to tell him he is not to draw outlines of bands or spots? How, then, shall he know a wasp's body from a bee's? I escape, for the present, by telling him the story of Dædalus and the honeycomb; set him to draw a pattern of hexagons, and lay the question of black bands up in my mind.

41. The next boy, we may suppose, is a conchologist, and asks me to draw a white snail-shell for him! Veiling my consternation at the idea of having to give a lesson on the perspective of geometrical spirals, with an "austere regard of control" I pass on to the next student:—Who, bringing after him, with acclamation, all the rest of the form, requires of me contemptuously, to "draw a horse." [Pg 322]

And I retreat in final discomfiture; for not only I cannot myself execute, but I have never seen, an outline, quite simply and rightly done, either of a shell or a pony; nay, not so much as of a pony's nose. At a girls' school we might perhaps take refuge in rosebuds: but these boys, with their impatient battle-cry, "my kingdom for a horse," what is to be done for them?

42. Well, this is what I should like to be able to do for them. To show them an enlarged black outline, nobly done, of the two sides of a coin of Tarentum, with that fiery rider kneeling, careless, on his horse's neck, and reclined on his surging dolphin, with the curled sea lapping round them; and then to convince my boys that no one (unless it were Taras's father himself, with the middle prong of his trident) could draw a horse like that, without learning;—that for poor mortals like us there must be sorrowful preparatory stages; and, having convinced them of this, set them to draw (if I had a good copy to give them) a horse's hoof, or his rib, or a vertebra of his thunder-clothed neck, or any other constructive piece of him.

43. Meanwhile, all this being far out of present reach, I am fain to shrink back into my snail-shell, both for shelter and calm of peace; and ask of artists in general how the said shell, or any other simple object involving varied contour, *should* be outlined in ink?—how thick the lines should be, and how varied? My own idea of an elementary outline is that it should be unvaried; distinctly visible; not thickened towards the shaded sides of the object; not express any exaggerations of aërial perspective, nor fade at the further side of a cup as if it were the further side of a crater of a volcano; and therefore, in objects of ordinary size, show no gradation at all, unless where the real outline disappears, as in soft contours and folds. Nay, I think it may even be a question whether we ought not to resolve that the line should never gradate itself at all, but terminate quite bluntly! Albert Dürer's "Cannon" furnishes a very peculiar and curious example of this entirely equal line, even to the extreme distance; being in that respect opposed to nearly all his other work, which is wrought mostly by tapering lines; and his work in general, and Holbein's, which appear to me entirely typical of rightness in use of the graver and pen, are to be considered carefully in their relation to Rembrandt's loose etching, as in the "Spotted Shell." [Pg 323]

44. But I do not want to press my own opinions now, even when I have been able to form them distinctly. I want to get at some unanimous expression of opinion and method; and would propose, therefore, in all modesty, this question for discussion, by such artists as will favor me with answer,[65] giving their names:—*How ought the pen to be used to outline a form of varied contour; and ought outline to be entirely pure, or, even in its most elementary types, to pass into some suggestion of shade in the inner masses?* For there are no examples whatever of pure outlines by the great masters. They are always touched or modified by inner lines, more or less suggestive of solid form, and they are lost or accentuated in certain places, not so much in conformity with any explicable law, as in expression of the master's future purpose, or of what he wishes immediately to note in the character of the object. Most of them are irregular memoranda, not systematic elementary work: of those which are systematized, the greater part are carried far beyond the initiative stage; and Holbein's are nearly all washed with color: the exact degree in which he depends upon the softening and extending his touch of ink by subsequent solution of it, being indeterminable, though exquisitely successful. His stupendous drawings in the British Museum (I can justly use no other term than "stupendous," of their consummately decisive power) furnish finer instances of this treatment than any at Basle; but it would be very difficult to reduce them to a definable law. Venetian outlines are rare, except preparations on canvas, often shaded before coloring;—while Raphael's, if not shaded, are quite loose, and useless as examples to a beginner: so that we are left wholly without guide as to the preparatory steps on which we should decisively insist; and I am myself haunted by the notion that the students were forced to shade firmly from the very beginning, in all the greatest schools; only we never can get hold of any beginnings, or any weak work of those schools: whatever is bad in them comes of decadence, not infancy. [Pg 324]

45. I purpose in the next essay[66] to enter upon quite another part of the inquiry, so as to leave time for the reception of communications bearing upon the present paper: and, according to their importance, I shall ask leave still to defer our return to the subject until I have had time to reflect upon them, and to collect for public service the concurrent opinions they may contain. [Pg 325]

Transcriber's note:

Chapter II is missing in the original.

Chapter III.[67]

"Dame Paciencë sitting there I fonde,
With facë pale, upon an hill of sonde."

46. As I try to summon this vision of Chaucer's into definiteness, and as it fades before me, and reappears, like the image of Piccarda in the moon, there mingles with it another;—the image of an Italian child, lying, she also, upon a hill of sand, by Eridanus' side; a vision which has never quite left me since I saw it. A girl of ten or twelve, it might be; one of the children to whom there has never been any other lesson taught than that of patience:—patience of famine and thirst; patience of heat and cold; patience of fierce word and sullen blow; patience of changeless fate and giftless time. She was lying with her arms thrown back over her head, all languid and lax, on an earth-heap by the river side (the softness of the dust being the only softness she had ever known), in the southern suburb of Turin, one golden afternoon in August, years ago. She had been at play, after her fashion, with other patient children, and had thrown herself down to rest, full in the sun, like a lizard. The sand was mixed with the draggled locks of her black hair, and some of it sprinkled over her face and body, in an "ashes to ashes" kind of way; a few black rags about her loins, but her limbs nearly bare, and her little breasts, scarce dimpled yet,—white,—marble-like—but, as wasted marble, thin with the scorching and the rains of Time. So she lay, motionless; black and white by the shore in the sun; the yellow light flickering back upon her [Pg 326] from the passing eddies of the river, and burning down on her from the west. So she lay, like a dead Niobid: it seemed as if the Sun-God, as he sank towards gray Viso (who stood pale in the southwest, and pyramidal as a tomb), had been wroth with Italy for numbering her children too carefully, and slain this little one. Black and white she lay, all breathless, in a sufficiently pictorial manner: the gardens of the Villa Regina gleamed beyond, graceful with laurel-grove and labyrinthine terrace; and folds of purple mountain were drawn afar, for curtains round her little dusty bed.

47. Pictorial enough, I repeat; and yet I might not now have remembered her, so as to find her figure mingling, against my will, with other images, but for her manner of "revival." For one of her playmates coming near, cast some word at her which angered her; and she rose—"en ego, victa situ"—she rose with a single spring, like a snake; one hardly saw the motion; and with a shriek so shrill that I put my hands upon my ears; and so uttered herself, indignant and vengeful, with words of justice,—Alecto standing by, satisfied, teaching her acute, articulate syllables, and adding her own voice to carry them thrilling through the blue laurel shadows. And having spoken, she went her way, wearily: and I passed by on the other side, meditating, with such Levitical propriety as a respectable person should, on the asplike Passion, following the sorrowful Patience; and on the way in which the saying, "Dust shalt thou eat all thy days" has been confusedly fulfilled, first by much provision of human dust for the meat of what Keats calls "human serpentry;" and last, by gathering the Consumed and Consumer into dust together, for the meat of the death spirit, or serpent Apap. Neither could I, for long, get rid of the thought of this strange dust-manufacture under the mill-stones, as it were, of Death; and of the two colors of the grain, discriminate beneath, though indiscriminately cast into the hopper. For indeed some of it seems only to be made whiter for its patience, and becomes kneadable into spiced bread, where they sell in Babylonian shops "slaves, and souls of men;" but other some runs dark from [Pg 327] under the mill-stones; a little sulphurous and nitrous foam being mingled in the conception of it; and is ominously stored up in magazines near river-embankments; patient enough—for the present.

48. But it is provoking to me that the image of this child mingles itself now with Chaucer's; for I should like truly to know what Chaucer means by his sand-hill. Not but that this is just one of those enigmatical pieces of teaching which we have made up our minds not to be troubled with, since it may evidently mean just what we like. Sometimes I would fain have it to mean the ghostly sand of the horologe of the world: and I think that the pale figure is seated on the recording heap, which rises slowly, and ebbs in giddiness, and flows again, and rises, tottering; and still she sees, falling beside her, the never-ending stream of phantom sand. Sometimes I like to think that she is seated on the sand because she is herself the Spirit of Staying, and victor over all things that pass and change;—quicksand of the desert in moving pillar; quicksand of the sea in moving floor; roofless all, and unabiding, but she abiding;—to herself, her home. And sometimes I think, though I do not like to think (neither did Chaucer mean this, for he always meant the lovely thing first, not the low one), that she is seated on her sand-heap as the only treasure to be gained by human toil; and that the little ant-hill, where the best of us creep to and fro, bears to angelic eyes, in the patientest gathering of its galleries, only the aspect of a little heap of dust; while for the worst of us, the heap, still lower by the leveling of those winged surveyors, is high enough, nevertheless, to overhang, and at last to close in judgment, on the seventh day, over the journeyers to the fortunate Islands; while to their dying eyes, through the mirage, "the city sparkles like a grain of salt."

49. But of course it does not in the least matter what it means. All that matters specially to us in Chaucer's vision, is that, next to Patience (as the reader will find by looking at the context in the "Assembly of Foules"), were "Beheste" and "Art;"—Promise, that is, and Art: and that, although [Pg 328] these visionary powers are here waiting only in one of the outer courts of Love, and the intended patience is here only the long-suffering of love; and the intended beheste, its promise; and the intended art, its cunning,—the same powers companion each other necessarily in the courts and antechamber of every triumphal home of man. I say triumphal home, for, indeed, triumphal *arches* which you pass under, are but foolish things, and may be nailed together any day, out of pasteboard and filched laurel; but triumphal *doors*, which you can enter in at, with living laurel crowning the Lares, are not so easy of access: and outside of them waits always this sad portress, Patience; that is to say, the submission to the eternal laws of Pain and Time, and acceptance of them as inevitable, smiling at the grief. So much pains you shall take—so much time you shall wait: that is the Law. Understand it, honor it; with peace of heart accept the pain, and attend the hours; and as the husbandman in his waiting, you shall see, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the laughing of the valleys. But refuse the Law, and seek to do your work in your own time, or by any serpentine way to evade the pain, and you shall have no harvest—nothing but apples of Sodom: dust shall be your meat, and dust in your throat—there is no singing in such harvest time.

50. And this is true for all things, little and great. There is a time and a way in which they can be done: none shorter—none smoother. For all noble things, the time is long and the way rude. You may fret and fume as you will; for every start and struggle of impatience there shall be so much attendant failure; if impatience become a habit, nothing but failure: until on the path you have chosen for your better swiftness, rather than the honest flinty one, there shall follow you, fast at hand, instead of Beheste and Art for companions, those two wicked hags,

> "With hoary locks all loose, and visage grim;
> Their feet unshod, their bodies wrapt in rags,
> And both as swift on foot as chased stags; [Pg 329]
> And yet the one her other legge had lame,
> Which with a staff all full of little snags
> She did support, and Impotence her name:
> But th' other was Impatience, armed with raging flame."

"*Raging* flame," note; unserviceable;—flame of the black grain. But the fire which Patience carries in her hand is that truly stolen from Heaven, in the *pith* of the rod—fire of the slow match; persistent Fire like it also in her own body,—fire in the marrow; unquenchable incense of life: though it may seem to the bystanders that there is no breath in her, and she holds herself like a statue, as Hermione, "the statue lady," or Griselda, "the stone lady;" unless indeed one looks close for the glance *forward*, in the eyes, which distinguishes such pillars from the pillars, not of flesh, but of salt, whose eyes are set backwards.

51. I cannot get to my work in this paper, somehow; the web of these old enigmas entangles me again and again. That rough syllable which begins the name of Griselda, "Gries," "the stone;" the roar of the long fall of the Toccia seems to mix with the sound of it, bringing thoughts of the great Alpine patience; mute snow wreathed by gray rock, till avalanche time comes—patience of mute tormented races till the time of the Gray league came; at last impatient. (Not that, hitherto, it has hewn its way to much: the Rhine-foam of the Via Mala seeming to have done its work better.) But it is a noble color that Grison Gray;—dawn color—graceful for a faded silk to ride in, and wonderful, in paper, for getting a glow upon, if you begin wisely, as you may some day perhaps see by those Turner sketches at Kensington, if ever anybody can see them.

52. But we *will* get to work now; the work being to understand, if we may, what tender creatures are indeed riding with us, the British public, in faded silk, and handing our plates for us with tender little thumbs, and never wearing, or doing, anything else (not always having much to put on their own plates). The loveliest arts, the arts of noblest descent, have been long doing this for us, and are still, and we have no idea of their being Princesses, but keep them ill-entreated and [Pg 330] enslaved: vociferous as we are against Black slavery, while we are gladly acceptant of Gray; and fain to keep Aglaia and her sisters—Urania and hers,—serving us in faded silk, and taken for kitchen-wenches. We are mad Sanchos, not mad Quixotes: our eyes enchant *Down*wards.

53. For one instance only: has the reader ever reflected on the patience, and deliberate subtlety, and unostentatious will, involved in the ordinary process of steel engraving; that process of which engravers themselves now with doleful voices deplore the decline, and with sorrowful hearts expect the extinction, after their own days?

By the way—my friends of the field of steel,—you need fear nothing of the kind. What there is of mechanical in your work; of habitual and thoughtless, of vulgar or servile—for that, indeed, the time has come; the sun will burn it up for you, very ruthlessly; but what there is of human liberty, and of sanguine life, in finger and fancy, is kindred of the sun, and quite inextinguishable by him. He is the very last of divinities who would wish to extinguish it. With his red right hand, though full of lightning coruscation, he will faithfully and tenderly clasp yours, warm blooded; you will see the vermilion in the flesh-shadows all the clearer; but your hand will not be withered. I tell you—(dogmatically, if you like to call it so, knowing it well)—a square inch of man's engraving is worth all the photographs that ever were dipped in acid (or left half-washed afterwards, which is saying much)—only it must be man's engraving; not machine's engraving. You have founded a school on patience and labor—only. That school must soon be extinct. You will have to found one on thought, which is Phœnician in immortality and fears no fire. Believe me, photography can do

against line engraving just what Madame Tussaud's wax-work can do against sculpture. That, and no more. You are too timid in this matter; you are like Isaac in that picture of Mr. Schnorr's in the last number of this Journal, and with Teutonically metaphysical precaution, shade your eyes from the sun with your back to it. Take courage; turn your eyes to it in an aquiline manner; put more [Pg 331] sunshine on your steel, and less burr; and leave the photographers to their Phœbus of Magnesium wire.

54. Not that I mean to speak disrespectfully of magnesium. I honor it to its utmost fiery particle (though I think the soul a fierier one); and I wish the said magnesium all comfort and triumph; nightly-lodging in lighthouses, and utter victory over coal gas. Could Titian but have known what the gnomes who built his dolomite crags above Cadore had mixed in the make of them,—and that one day—one night, I mean—his blue distances would still be seen pure blue, by light got out of his own mountains!

Light out of limestone—color out of coal—and white wings out of hot water! It is a great age this of ours, for traction and extraction, if it only knew what to extract from itself, or where to drag itself to!

55. But in the meantime I want the public to admire this patience of yours, while they have it, and to understand what it has cost to give them even this, which has to pass away. We will not take instance in figure engraving, of which the complex skill and textural gradation by dot and checker must be wholly incomprehensible to amateurs; but we will take a piece of average landscape engraving, such as is sent out of any good workshop—the master who puts his name at the bottom of the plate being of course responsible only for the general method, for the sufficient skill of subordinate hands, and for the few finishing touches if necessary. We will take, for example, the plate of Turner's "Mercury and Argus," engraved in this Journal.[68]

56. I suppose most people, looking at such a plate, fancy it is produced by some simple mechanical artifice, which is to drawing only what printing is to writing. They conclude, at all events, that there is something complacent, sympathetic, and helpful in the nature of steel; so [Pg 332] that while a pen-and-ink sketch may always be considered an achievement proving cleverness in the sketcher, a sketch on steel comes out by mere favor of the indulgent metal: or perhaps they think the plate is woven like a piece of pattern silk, and the pattern is developed by pasteboard cards punched full of holes. Not so. Look close at that engraving—imagine it to be a drawing in pen and ink, and yourself required similarly to produce its parallel! True, the steel point has the one advantage of not blotting, but it has tenfold or twentyfold disadvantage, in that you cannot slur, nor efface, except in a very resolute and laborious way, nor play with it, nor even see what you are doing with it at the moment, far less the effect that is to be. You must *feel* what you are doing with it, and know precisely what you have got to do; how deep—how broad—how far apart—your lines must be, etc. and etc. (a couple of lines of etc.'s would not be enough to imply all you must know). But suppose the plate *were* only a pen drawing: take your pen—your finest—and just try to copy the leaves that entangle the nearest cow's head and the head itself; remembering always that the kind of work required here is mere child's play compared to that of fine figure engraving. Nevertheless, take a strong magnifying glass to this—count the dots and lines that gradate the nostrils and the edges of the facial bone; notice how the light is left on the top of the head by the stopping at its outline of the coarse touches which form the shadows under the leaves; examine it well, and then—I humbly ask of you—try to do a piece of it yourself! You clever sketcher—you young lady or gentleman of genius—you eye-glassed dilettante—you current writer of criticism royally plural,—I beseech you—do it yourself; do the merely etched outline yourself, if no more. Look you,—you hold your etching needle this way, as you would a pencil, nearly; and then,—you scratch with it! it is as easy as lying. Or if you think that too difficult, take an easier piece;—take either of the light sprays of foliage that rise against the fortress on the right, put your glass over them—look how their fine outline is first drawn, leaf by leaf; then how the distant [Pg 333] rock is put in between, with broken lines, mostly stopping before they touch the leaf outline, and—again, I pray you, do it yourself; if not on that scale, on a larger. Go on into the hollows of the distant rock—traverse its thickets—number its towers—count how many lines there are in a laurel bush—in an arch—in a casement: some hundred and fifty, or two hundred, deliberately drawn lines, you will find, in every square quarter of an inch;—say three thousand to the inch,—each with skillful intent put in its place! and then consider what the ordinary sketcher's work must appear to the men who have been trained to this!

57. "But might not more have been done by three thousand lines to a square inch?" you will perhaps ask. Well, possibly. It may be with lines as with soldiers: three hundred, knowing their work thoroughly, may be stronger than three thousand less sure of their game. We shall have to press close home this question about numbers and purpose presently;—it is not the question now. Supposing certain results required,—atmospheric effects, surface textures, transparencies of shade, confusions of light,—more could *not* be done with less. There are engravings of this modern school, of which, with respect to their particular aim, it may be said, most truly, they "*cannot* be better done."

58. Whether an engraving should aim at effects of atmosphere, may be disputable (just as also whether a sculptor should aim at effects of perspective); but I do not raise these points to-day. Admit the aim—let us note the patience; nor this in engraving only. I have taken an engraving for my instance, but I might have taken any form of Art. I call upon all good artists, painters, sculptors, metal-workers, to bear witness with me in what I now tell the public in their name,—that the same Fortitude, the same deliberation, the same perseverance in resolute act—is needed to do *anything* in Art that is worthy. And why is it, you workmen, that you are silent always

concerning your toil; and mock at us in your hearts, within that shrine at Eleusis, to the gate of which you have hewn your way through so deadly thickets of thorn; and leave us, foolish [Pg 334] children, outside, in our conceited thinking either that we can enter it in play, or that we are grander for not entering? Far more earnestly is it to be asked, why do you *stoop* to us as you mock us? If your secrecy were a noble one,—if, in that incommunicant contempt, you wrought your own work with majesty, whether we would receive it or not, it were kindly, though ungraciously, done; but now you make yourselves our toys, and do our childish will in servile silence. If engraving were to come to an end this day, and no guided point should press metal more, do you think it would be in a blaze of glory that your art would expire?—that those plates in the annuals, and black proofs in broad shop windows, are of a nobly monumental character, —"chalybe perennius"? I am afraid your patience has been too much like yonder poor Italian child's; and over that genius of yours, low laid by the Matin shore, if it expired so, the lament for Archytas would have to be sung again;—"pulveris exigui—munera." Suppose you were to shake off the dust again! cleanse your wings, like the morning bees on that Matin promontory; rise, in noble *im*patience, for there is such a thing: the Impatience of the Fourth Cornice.

"Cui buon voler, e giusto amor cavalca."

Shall we try, together, to think over the meaning of that Haste, when the May mornings come? [Pg 335]

Chapter IV.[69]

59. It is a wild March day,—the 20th; and very probably due course of English Spring will bring as wild a May-day by the time this writing meets anyone's eyes; but at all events, as yet the days are rough, and as I look out of my fitfully lighted window into the garden, everything seems in a singular hurry. The dead leaves; and yonder two living ones, on the same stalk, tumbling over and over each other on the lawn, like a quaint mechanical toy; and the fallen sticks from the rooks' nests, and the twisted straws out of the stable-yard—all going one way, in the hastiest manner! The puffs of steam, moreover, which pass under the wooded hills where what used to be my sweetest field-walk ends now, prematurely, in an abyss of blue clay; and which signify, in their silvery expiring between the successive trunks of wintry trees, that some human beings, thereabouts, are in a hurry as well as the sticks and straws, and, having fastened themselves to the tail of a manageable breeze, are being blown down to Folkestone.

60. In the general effect of these various passages and passengers, as seen from my quiet room, they look all very much alike. One begins seriously to question with one's self whether those passengers by the Folkestone train are in truth one whit more in a hurry than the dead leaves. The difference consists, of course, in the said passengers knowing where they are going to, and why; and having resolved to go there—which, indeed, as far as Folkestone, may, perhaps, properly distinguish them from the leaves: but will it distinguish them any farther? Do many of them know what they are going to Folkestone for?—what they are going anywhere for? and where, at last, by sum of all the days' journeys, of which this glittering transit is one, they are [Pg 336] going for peace? For if they know not this, certainly they are no more making haste than the straws are. Perhaps swiftly going the wrong way; more likely going no way—any way, as the winds and their own wills, wilder than the winds, dictate; to find themselves at last at the end which would have come to them quickly enough without their seeking.

61. And, indeed, this is a very preliminary question to all measurement of the rate of going, this "where to?" or, even before that, "are we going on at all?"—"getting on" (as the world says) on any road whatever? Most men's eyes are so fixed on the mere swirl of the wheel of their fortunes, and their souls so vexed at the reversed cadences of it when they come, that they forget to ask if the curve they have been carried through on its circumference was circular or cycloidal; whether they have been bound to the ups and downs of a mill-wheel or of a chariot-wheel.

That phrase, of "getting on," so perpetually on our lips (as indeed it should be), do any of us take it to our hearts, and seriously ask where we can get on *to*? That instinct of hurry has surely good grounds. It is all very well for lazy and nervous people (like myself for instance) to retreat into tubs, and holes, and corners, anywhere out of the dust, and wonder within ourselves, "what all the fuss can be about?" The fussy people might have the best of it, if they know their end. Suppose they were to answer this March or May morning thus:—"Not bestir ourselves, indeed! and the spring sun up these four hours!—and this first of May, 1865, never to come back again; and of Firsts of May in perspective, supposing ourselves to be 'nel mezzo del cammin,' perhaps some twenty or twenty-five to be, not without presumption, hoped for, and by no means calculated upon. Say, twenty of them, with their following groups of summer days; and though they may be long, one cannot make much more than sixteen hours apiece out of them, poor sleepy wretches that we are; for even if we get up at four, we must go to bed while the red yet stays from the sunset: and half the time we are awake, we must be lying among haycocks, or [Pg 337] playing at something, if we are wise; not to speak of eating, and previously earning whereof to eat, which takes time: and then, how much of us and of our day will be left for getting on? Shall we have a seventh, or even a tithe, of our twenty-four hours?—two hours and twenty-four minutes clear, a day, or, roughly, a thousand hours a year, and (violently presuming on fortune, as we said) twenty years of working life: twenty thousand hours to get on in, altogether? Many men would think it hard to be limited to an utmost twenty thousand pounds for their fortunes, but here is a sterner limitation; the Pactolus of time, sand, and gold together, would, with such a

fortune, count us a pound an hour, through our real and serviceable life. If this time capital would reproduce itself! and for our twenty thousand hours we could get some rate of interest, if well spent? At all events, we will do something with them; not lie moping out of the way of the dust, as you do."

62. A sufficient answer, indeed; yet, friends, if you would *make* a little less dust, perhaps we should all see our way better. But I am ready to take the road with you, if you mean it so seriously—only let us at least consider where we are now, at starting.

Here, on a little spinning, askew-axised thing we call a planet—(impertinently enough, since we are far more planetary ourselves). A round, rusty, rough little metallic ball—very hard to live upon; most of it much too hot or too cold: a couple of narrow habitable belts about it, which, to wandering spirits, must look like the places where it has got damp, and green-moldy, with accompanying small activities of animal life in the midst of the lichen. Explosive gases, seemingly, inside it, and possibilities of very sudden dispersion.

63. This is where we are; and roundabout us, there seem to be more of such balls, variously heated and chilled, ringed and mooned, moved and comforted; the whole giddy group of us forming an atom in a milky mist, itself another atom in a shoreless phosphorescent sea of such Volvoces and Medusæ. [Pg 338]

Whereupon, I presume, one would first ask, have we any chance of getting off this ball of ours, and getting on to one of those finer ones? Wise people say we have, and that it is very wicked to think otherwise. So we will think no otherwise; but, with their permission, think nothing about the matter now, since it is certain that the more we make of our little rusty world, such as it is, the more chance we have of being one day promoted into a merrier one.

64. And even on this rusty and moldy Earth, there appear to be things which may be seen with pleasure, and things which might be done with advantage. The stones of it have strange shapes; the plants and the beasts of it strange ways. Its air is coinable into wonderful sounds; its light into manifold colors: the trees of it bring forth pippins, and the fields cheese (though both of these may be, in a finer sense, "to come"). There are bright eyes upon it which reflect the light of other eyes quite singularly; and foolish feelings to be cherished upon it; and gladdenings of dust by neighbor dust, not easily explained, but pleasant, and which take time to win. One would like to know something of all this, I suppose?—to divide one's score of thousand hours as shrewdly as might be. Ten minutes to every herb of the field is not much; yet we shall not know them all, so, before the time comes to be made grass of ourselves! Half an hour for every crystalline form of clay and flint, and we shall be near the need of shaping the gray flint stone that is to weigh upon our feet. And we would fain dance a measure or two before that cumber is laid upon them: there having been hitherto much piping to which we have not danced. And we must leave time for loving, if we are to take Marmontel's wise peasant's word for it, "*Il n'y a de bon que c'a!*" And if there should be fighting to do also? and weeping? and much burying? truly, we had better make haste.

65. Which means, simply, that we must lose neither strength nor moment. Hurry is not haste; but economy is, and rightness is. Whatever is rightly done stays with us, to support another right beyond, or higher up: whatever is wrongly done, vanishes; and by the blank, betrays what we would have built above. [Pg 339] Wasting no word, no thought, no doing, we shall have speed enough; but then there is that farther question, what shall we do?—what we are fittest (worthiest, that is) to do, and what is best worth doing? Note that word "worthy," both of the man and the thing, for the two dignities go together. Is *it* worth the pains? Are we worth the task? The dignity of a man depends wholly upon this harmony. If his task is above him, he will be undignified in failure; if he is above it, he will be undignified in success. His own composure and nobleness must be according to the composure of his thought to his toil.

66. As I was dreaming over this, my eyes fell by chance on a page of my favorite thirteenth century psalter, just where two dragons, one with red legs, and another with green,—one with a blue tail on a purple ground, and the other with a rosy tail on a golden ground, follow the verse "*Quis ascendet in montem Domini*," and begin the solemn "*Qui non accepit in vano animam suam*." Who hath not lift up his soul unto vanity, we have it; and ελαβεν επὶ ματαίω, the Greeks (not that I know what that means accurately): broadly, they all mean, "who has not received nor given his soul in vain," this is the man who can make haste, even uphill, the only haste worth making; and it must be up the right hill, too: not that Corinthian Acropolis, of which, I suppose, the white specter stood eighteen hundred feet high, in Hades, for Sisyphus to roll his fantastic stone up—image, himself, forever of the greater part of our wise mortal work.

67. Now all this time, whatever the reader may think, I have never for a moment lost sight of that original black line with which is our own special business. The patience, the speed, the dignity, we can give to that, the choice to be made of subject for it, are the matters I want to get at. You think, perhaps, that an engraver's function is one of no very high dignity;—does not involve a serious choice of work. Consider a little of it. Here is a steel point, and 'tis like Job's "iron pen"—and you are going to cut into steel with it, in a most deliberate way, as into the rock forever. [Pg 340] And this scratch or inscription of yours will be seen of a multitude of eyes. It is not like a single picture or a single wall painting; this multipliable work will pass through thousand thousand hands, strengthen and inform innumerable souls, if it be worthy; vivify the folly of thousands if unworthy. Remember, also, it will mix in the very closest manner in domestic life. This engraving will not be gossiped over and fluttered past at private views of academies; listlessly sauntered by in corners of great galleries. Ah, no! This will hang over parlor chimney-pieces—shed down its

hourly influence on children's forenoon work. This will hang in little luminous corners by sick beds; mix with flickering dreams by candlelight, and catch the first rays from the window's "glimmering square." You had better put something good into it! I do not know a more solemn field of labor than that *champ d'acier*. From a pulpit, perhaps a man can only reach one or two people, for that time,—even your book, once carelessly read, probably goes into a bookcase catacomb, and is thought of no more. But this; taking the eye unawares again and again, and always again: persisting and inevitable! where will you look for a chance of saying something nobly, if it is not here?

68. And the choice is peculiarly free; to you of all men most free. An artist, at first invention, cannot always choose what shall come into his mind, nor know what it will eventually turn into. But you, professed copyists, unless you have mistaken your profession, have the power of governing your own thoughts, and of following and interpreting the thoughts of others. Also, you see the work to be done put plainly before you; you can deliberately choose what seems to you best, out of myriads of examples of perfect Art. You can count the cost accurately; saying, "It will take me a year—two years—five—a fourth or fifth, probably, of my remaining life, to do this." Is the thing worth it? There is no excuse for choosing wrongly; no other men whatever have data so full, and position so firm, for forecast of their labor.

69. I put my psalter aside (not, observe, vouching for its red and green dragons:—men lifted up their souls to vanity sometimes in the thirteenth as in the nineteenth century), and I take up, instead, a book of English verses, published—there is no occasion to say when. It is full of costliest engravings—large, skillful, appallingly laborious; dotted into textures like the dust on a lily leaf,—smoothed through gradations like clouds,—graved to surfaces like mother-of-pearl; and by all this toil there is set forth for the delight of Englishwomen, a series of the basest dreams that ungoverned feminine imagination can coin in sickliest indolence,—ball-room amours, combats of curled knights, pilgrimages of disguised girl-pages, romantic pieties, charities in costume,—a mass of disguised sensualism and feverish vanity—impotent, pestilent, prurient, scented with a venomous elixir, and rouged with a deadly dust of outward good; and all this done, as such things only can be done, in a boundless ignorance of all natural veracity; the faces falsely drawn—the lights falsely cast—the forms effaced or distorted, and all common human wit and sense extinguished in the vicious scum of lying sensation. [Pg 341]

And this, I grieve to say, is only a characteristic type of a large mass of popular English work. This is what we spend our Teutonic lives in; engraving with an iron pen in the rock forever; this, the passion of the Teutonic woman (as opposed to Virgilia), just as foxhunting is the passion of the Teutonic man, as opposed to Valerius.

70. And while we deliberately spend all our strength, and all our tenderness, all our skill, and all our money, in doing, relishing, buying, this absolute Wrongness, of which nothing can ever come but disease in heart and brain, remember that all the mighty works of the great painters of the world, full of life, truth, and blessing, remain to this present hour of the year 1865 unengraved! There literally exists no earnestly studied and fully accomplished engraving of any very great work, except Leonardo's Cena. No large Venetian picture has ever been thoroughly engraved. Of Titian's Peter Martyr, there is even no worthy memorial transcript but Le Febre's. The Cartoons have been multiplied in false readings; never in faithful ones till lately by photography. Of the Disputa and the Parnassus, what can the English public know? of the thoughtful Florentines and Milanese, of Ghirlandajo, and Luini, and their accompanying hosts—what do they yet so much as care to know? [Pg 342]

"The English public will not pay," you reply, "for engravings from the great masters. The English public will only pay for pictures of itself; of its races, its rifle-meetings, its rail stations, its parlor-passions, and kitchen interests; you must make your bread as you may, by holding the mirror to it."

71. Friends, there have been hard fighting and heavy sleeping, this many a day, on the other side of the Atlantic, in the cause, as you suppose, of Freedom against slavery; and you are all, open-mouthed, expecting the glories of Black Emancipation. Perhaps a little White Emancipation on this side of the water might be still more desirable, and more easily and guiltlessly won.

Do you know what slavery means? Suppose a gentleman taken by a Barbary corsair—set to field-work; chained and flogged to it from dawn to eve. Need he be a slave therefore? By no means; he is but a hardly-treated prisoner. There is some work which the Barbary corsair will not be able to make him do; such work as a Christian gentleman may not do, that he will not, though he die for it. Bound and scourged he may be, but he has heard of a Person's being bound and scourged before now, who was not therefore a slave. He is not a whit more slave for that. But suppose he take the pirate's pay, and stretch his back at piratical oars, for due salary, how then? Suppose for fitting price he betray his fellow prisoners, and take up the scourge instead of enduring it—become the smiter instead of the smitten, at the African's bidding—how then? Of all the sheepish notions in our English public "mind," I think the simplest is that slavery is neutralized when you are well paid for it! Whereas it is precisely that fact of its being paid for which makes it complete. A man who has been sold by another, may be but half a slave or none; but the man who has sold himself! He is the accurately Finished Bondsman. [Pg 343]

72. And gravely I say that I know *no* captivity so sorrowful as that of an artist doing, consciously, bad work for pay. It is the serfdom of the finest gifts—of all that should lead and master men, offering itself to be spit upon, and that for a bribe. There is much serfdom, in Europe, of speakers and writers, but they only sell words; and their talk, even honestly uttered, might not have been

worth much; it will not be thought of ten years hence; still less a hundred years hence. No one will buy our parliamentary speeches to keep in portfolios this time next century; and if people are weak enough now to pay for any special and flattering cadence of syllable, it is little matter. But *you*, with your painfully acquired power, your unwearied patience, your admirable and manifold gifts, your eloquence in black and white, which people will buy, if it is good (and has a broad margin), for fifty guineas a copy—in the year 2000; to sell it all, ás Ananias his land, "yea, for so much," and hold yourselves at every fool's beck, with your ready points, polished and sharp, hasting to scratch what *he* wills! To bite permanent mischief in with acid; to spread an inked infection of evil all your days, and pass away at last from a life of the skillfulest industry—having done whatsoever your hand found (remuneratively) to do, with your might, and a great might, but with cause to thank God only for this—that the end of it all has at last come, and that "there is no device nor work in the Grave." One would get quit of *this* servitude, I think, though we reached the place of Rest a little sooner, and reached it fasting.

73. My English fellow-workmen, you have the name of liberty often on your lips; get the fact of it oftener into your business! talk of it less, and try to understand it better. You have given students many copy-books of free-hand outlines—give them a few of free *heart* outlines.

It appears, however, that you do not intend to help me with any utterance respecting these same outlines.[70] Be it so: I must make out what I can by myself. And under the influence of the Solstitial sign of June I will go backwards, or askance, to the practical part of the business, where I left it three months ago, and take up that question first, touching Liberty, and the relation of the loose swift line to the resolute slow one and of the etched line to the engraved one. It is a worthy question, for the open field afforded by illustrated works is tempting even to our best painters, and many an earnest hour and active fancy spend and speak themselves in the black line, vigorously enough, and dramatically, at all events: if wisely, may be considered. The French also are throwing great passion into their *eaux fortes*—working with a vivid haste and dark, brilliant freedom, which looked as if they etched with very energetic waters indeed—quite waters of life (it does not look so well, written in French). So we will take, with the reader's permission, for text next month, "Rembrandt, and strong waters." [Pg 344] [Pg 345]

Chapter V.[71]

74. The work I have to do in this paper ought, rightly, to have been thrown into the form of an appendix to the last chapter; for it is no link of the cestus of Aglaia we have to examine, but one of the crests of canine passion in the cestus of Scylla. Nevertheless, the girdle of the Grace cannot be discerned in the full brightness of it, but by comparing it with the dark torment of that other; and (in what place or form matters little) the work has to be done.

"Rembrandt Van Rhyn"—it is said, in the last edition of a very valuable work[72] (for which, nevertheless, I could wish that greater lightness in the hand should be obtained by the publication of its information in one volume, and its criticism in another)—was "the most attractive and original of painters." It may be so; but there are attractions, and attractions. The sun attracts the planets—and a candle, night-moths; the one with perhaps somewhat of benefit to the planets;—but with what benefit the other to the moths, one would be glad to learn from those desert flies, of whom, one company having extinguished Mr. Kinglake's candle with their bodies, the remainder, "who had failed in obtaining this martyrdom, became suddenly serious, and clung despondingly to the canvas." [Pg 346]

75. Also, there are originalities, and originalities. To invent a new thing, which is also a precious thing; to be struck by a divinely-guided Rod, and become a sudden fountain of life to thirsty multitudes—this is enviable. But to be distinct of men in an original Sin; elect for the initial letter of a Lie; the first apparent spot of an unknown plague; a Root of bitterness, and the first-born worm of a company, studying an original De-Composition,—this is perhaps not so enviable. And if we think of it, most human originality is apt to be of that kind. Goodness is one, and immortal; it may be received and communicated—not originated: but Evil is various and recurrent, and may be misbegotten in endlessly surprising ways.

76. But, that we may know better in what this originality consists, we find that our author, after expatiating on the vast area of the Pantheon, "illuminated solely by the small circular opening in the dome above," and on other similar conditions of luminous contraction, tells us that "to Rembrandt belongs the glory of having first embodied in Art, and perpetuated, these rare and beautiful effects of nature." Such effects are indeed rare in nature; but they are not rare, absolutely. The sky, with the sun in it, does not usually give the impression of being dimly lighted through a circular hole; but you may observe a very similar effect any day in your coal-cellar. The light is not Rembrandtesque on the current, or banks, of a river; but it is on those of a drain. Color is not Rembrandtesque, usually, in a clean house; but is presently obtainable of that quality in a dirty one. And without denying the pleasantness of the mode of progression which Mr. Hazlitt, perhaps too enthusiastically, describes as attainable in a background of Rembrandt's —"You stagger from one abyss of obscurity to another"—I cannot feel it an entirely glorious speciality to be distinguished, as Rembrandt was, from other great painters, chiefly by the liveliness of his darkness, and the dullness of his light. Glorious, or inglorious, the speciality itself is easily and accurately definable. It is the aim of the best painters to paint the noblest things

they can see by sunlight. It was the aim of Rembrandt to paint the foulest things he could see—by rushlight. [Pg 347]

77. By rushlight, observe: material and spiritual. As the sun for the outer world; so in the inner world of man, that which "ερευνά ταμεία κοιλίας"[73]—"the candle of God, searching the inmost parts." If that light within become but a more active kind of darkness;—if, abdicating the measuring reed of modesty for scepter, and ceasing to measure with it, we dip it in such unctuous and inflammable refuse as we can find, and make our soul's light into a *tallow* candle, and thenceforward take our guttering, sputtering, ill-smelling illumination about with us, holding it out in fetid fingers—encumbered with its lurid warmth of fungous wick, and drip of stalactitic grease—that we may see, when another man would have seen, or dreamed he saw, the flight of a divine Virgin—only the lamplight upon the hair of a costermonger's ass;—that, having to paint the good Samaritan, we may see only in distance the back of the good Samaritan, and in nearness the back of the good Samaritan's dog;—that having to paint the Annunciation to the Shepherds, we may turn the announcement of peace to men, into an announcement of mere panic to beasts; and, in an unsightly firework of unsightlier angels, see, as we see always, the feet instead of the head, and the shame instead of the honor;—and finally concentrate and rest the sum of our fame, as Titian on the Assumption of a spirit, so we on the dissection of a carcass,—perhaps by such fatuous fire, the less we walk, and by such phosphoric glow, the less we shine, the better it may be for us, and for all who would follow us.

78. Do not think I deny the greatness of Rembrandt. In mere technical power (none of his eulogists know that power better than I, nor declare it in more distinct terms) he might, if he had been educated in a true school, have taken rank with the Venetians themselves. But that type of distinction between Titian's Assumption, and Rembrandt's Dissection, will represent for you with sufficient significance the manner of choice in all their work; only it should be associated with [Pg 348] another characteristic example of the same opposition (which I have dwelt upon elsewhere) between Veronese and Rembrandt, in their conception of domestic life. Rembrandt's picture, at Dresden, of himself, with his wife sitting on his knee, a roasted peacock on the table, and a glass of champagne in his hand, is the best work I know of all he has left; and it marks his speciality with entire decision. It is, of course, a dim candlelight; and the choice of the sensual passions as the things specially and forever to be described and immortalized out of his own private life and love, is exactly that "painting the foulest thing by rushlight" which I have stated to be the enduring purpose of his mind. And you will find this hold in all minor treatment; and that to the uttermost: for as by your broken rushlight you see little, and only corners and points of things, and those very corners and points ill and distortedly; so, although Rembrandt knows the human face and hand, and never fails in these, when they are ugly, and he chooses to take pains with them, he knows nothing else: the more pains he takes with even familiar animals, the worse they are (witness the horse in that plate of the Good Samaritan), and any attempts to finish the first scribbled energy of his imaginary lions and tigers, end always only in the loss of the fiendish power and rage which were all he could conceive in an animal.

79. His landscape, and foreground vegetation, I mean afterwards to examine in comparison with Dürer's; but the real caliber and nature of the man are best to be understood by comparing the puny, ill-drawn, terrorless, helpless, beggarly skeleton in his "Youth Surprised by Death," with the figure behind the tree in Dürer's plate (though it is quite one of Dürer's feeblest) of the same subject. Absolutely ignorant of all natural phenomena and law; absolutely careless of all lovely living form, or growth, or structure; able only to render with some approach to veracity, what alone he had looked at with some approach to attention,—the pawnbroker's festering heaps of old clothes, and caps, and shoes—Rembrandt's execution is one grand evasion, and his temper the grim contempt of a strong and sullen animal in its defiled den, for the humanity with which it is [Pg 349] at war, for the flowers which it tramples, and the light which it fears.

80. Again, do not let it be thought that when I call his execution evasive, I ignore the difference between his touch, on brow or lip, and a common workman's; but the whole school of etching which he founded, (and of painting, so far as it differs from Venetian work) is inherently loose and experimental. Etching is the very refuge and mask of sentimental uncertainty, and of vigorous ignorance. If you know anything clearly, and have a firm hand, depend upon it, you will draw it clearly; you will not care to hide it among scratches and burrs. And herein is the first grand distinction between etching and engraving—that in the etching needle you have an almost irresistible temptation to a wanton speed. There is, however, no real necessity for such a distinction; an etched line may have been just as steadily drawn, and seriously meant, as an engraved one; and for the moment, waiving consideration of this distinction, and opposing Rembrandt's work, considered merely as work of the black line, to Holbein's and Dürer's, as work of the black line, I assert Rembrandt's to be inherently *evasive*. You cannot unite his manner with theirs; choice between them is sternly put to you, when first you touch the steel. Suppose, for instance, you have to engrave, or etch, or draw with pen and ink, a single head, and that the head is to be approximately half an inch in height more or less (there is a reason for assigning this condition respecting size, which we will examine in due time): you have it in your power to do it in one of two ways. You may lay down some twenty or thirty entirely firm and visible lines, of which every one shall be absolutely right, and do the utmost a line can do. By their curvature they shall render contour; by their thickness, shade; by their place and form, every truth of expression, and every condition of design. The head of the soldier drawing his sword, in Dürer's "Cannon," is about half an inch high, supposing the brow to be seen. The chin is drawn with three lines, the lower lip with two, the upper, including the shadow from the nose, with five. Three [Pg 350] separate the cheek from the chin, giving the principal points of character. Six lines draw the

cheek, and its incised traces of care; four are given to each of the eyes; one, with the outline, to the nose; three to the frown of the forehead. None of these touches could anywhere be altered—none removed, without instantly visible harm; and their result is a head as perfect in character as a portrait by Reynolds.

81. You may either do this—which, if you can, it will generally be very advisable to do—or, on the other hand, you may cover the face with innumerable scratches, and let your hand play with wanton freedom, until the graceful scrabble concentrates itself into shade. You may soften—efface—retouch—rebite—dot, and hatch, and redefine. If you are a great master, you will soon get your character, and probably keep it (Rembrandt often gets it at first, nearly as securely as Dürer); but the design of it will be necessarily seen through loose work, and modified by accident (as you think) fortunate. The accidents which occur to a practiced hand are always at first pleasing—the details which can be hinted, however falsely, through the gathering mystery, are always seducing. You will find yourself gradually dwelling more and more on little meannesses of form and texture, and lusters of surface: on cracks of skin, and films of fur and plume. You will lose your way, and then see two ways, and then many ways, and try to walk a little distance on all of them in turn, and so, back again. You will find yourself thinking of colors, and vexed because you cannot imitate them; next, struggling to render distances by indecision, which you cannot by tone. Presently you will be contending with finished pictures; laboring at the etching, as if it were a painting. You will leave off, after a whole day's work (after many days' work if you choose to give them), still unsatisfied. For final result—if you are as great as Rembrandt—you will have most likely a heavy, black, cloudy stain, with less character in it than the first ten lines had. If you are not as great as Rembrandt, you will have a stain by no means cloudy; but sandy and broken,— [Pg 351] instead of a face, a speckled phantom of a face, patched, blotched, discomfited in every texture and form—ugly, assuredly; dull, probably; an unmanageable and manifold failure ill concealed by momentary, accidental, undelightful, ignoble success.

Undelightful; note this especially, for it is the peculiar character of etching that it cannot render beauty. You may hatch and scratch your way to picturesqueness or to deformity—never to beauty. You can etch an old woman, or an ill-conditioned fellow. But you cannot etch a girl—nor, unless in his old age, or with very partial rendering of him, a gentleman.

82. And thus, as farther belonging to, and partly causative of, their choice of means, there is always a tendency in etchers to fasten on unlovely objects; and the whole scheme of modern rapid work of this kind is connected with a peculiar gloom which results from the confinement of men, partially informed, and wholly untrained, in the midst of foul and vicious cities. A sensitive and imaginative youth, early driven to get his living by his art, has to lodge, we will say, somewhere in the by-streets of Paris, and is left there, tutorless, to his own devices. Suppose him also vicious or reckless, and there need be no talk of his work farther; he will certainly do nothing in a Düreresque manner. But suppose him self-denying, virtuous, full of gift and power—what are the elements of living study within his reach? All supreme beauty is confined to the higher salons. There are pretty faces in the streets, but no stateliness nor splendor of humanity; all pathos and grandeur is in suffering; no purity of nature is accessible, but only a terrible picturesqueness, mixed with ghastly, with ludicrous, with base concomitants. Huge walls and roofs, dark on the sunset sky, but plastered with advertisement bills, monstrous-figured, seen farther than ever Parthenon shaft, or spire of Sainte Chapelle. Interminable lines of massy streets, wearisome with repetition of commonest design, and degraded by their gilded shops, wide-fuming, flaunting, glittering, with apparatus of eating or of dress. Splendor of palace-flank and goodly quay, [Pg 352] insulted by floating cumber of barge and bath, trivial, grotesque, indecent, as cleansing vessels in a royal reception room. Solemn avenues of blossomed trees, shading puppet-show and baby-play; glades of wild-wood, long withdrawn, purple with faded shadows of blood; sweet windings and reaches of river far among the brown vines and white orchards, checked here by the Ile Notre Dame, to receive their nightly sacrifice, and after playing with it among their eddies, to give it up again, in those quiet shapes that lie on the sloped slate tables of the square-built Temple of the Death-Sibyl, who presides here over spray of Seine, as yonder at Tiber over spray of Anio. Sibylline, indeed, in her secrecy, and her sealing of destinies, by the baptism of the quick water-drops which fall on each fading face, unrecognized, nameless in *this* Baptism forever. Wreathed thus throughout, that Paris town, with beauty, and with unseemly sin, unseemlier death, as a fiend-city with fair eyes; forever letting fall her silken raiment so far as that one may "behold her bosom and half her side." Under whose whispered teaching, and substitution of "Contes Drolatiques" for the tales of the wood fairy, her children of Imagination will do, what Gérôme and Gustave Doré are doing, and her whole world of lesser Art will sink into shadows of the street and of the boudoir-curtain, wherein the etching point may disport itself with freedom enough.[74] [Pg 353]

83. Nor are we slack in our companionship in these courses. Our imagination is slower and clumsier than the French—rarer also, by far, in the average English mind. The only man of power equal to Doré's whom we have had lately among us, was William Blake, whose temper fortunately took another turn. But in the calamity and vulgarity of daily circumstance, in the horror of our streets, in the discordance of our thoughts, in the laborious looseness and ostentatious cleverness of our work, we are alike. And to French faults we add a stupidity of our own; for which, so far as I may in modesty take blame for anything, as resulting from my own teaching, I am more [Pg 354] answerable than most men. Having spoken earnestly against painting without thinking, I now find our exhibitions decorated with works of students who think without painting; and our books illustrated by scratched wood-cuts, representing very ordinary people, who are presumed to be interesting in the picture, because the text tells a story about them. Of this least lively form of modern sensational work, however, I shall have to speak on other grounds; meantime, I am

concerned only with its manner; its incontinence of line and method, associated with the slightness of its real thought, and morbid acuteness of irregular sensation; ungoverned all, and one of the external and slight phases of that beautiful Liberty which we are proclaiming as essence of gospel to all the earth, and shall presently, I suppose, when we have had enough of it here, proclaim also to the stars, with invitation to them *out* of their courses. [Pg 355]

84. "But you asked us for 'free-heart' outlines, and told us not to be slaves, only thirty days ago." [75]

Inconsistent that I am! so I did. But as there are attractions, and attractions; originalities, and originalities, there are liberties, and liberties. Yonder torrent, crystal-clear, and arrow-swift, with its spray leaping into the air like white troops of fawns, is free, I think. Lost, yonder, amidst bankless, boundless marsh—soaking in slow shallowness, as it will, hither and thither, listless, among the poisonous reeds and unresisting slime—it is free also. You may choose which liberty you will, and restraint of voiceful rock, or the dumb and edgeless shore of darkened sand. Of that evil liberty, which men are now glorifying,—and of its opposite continence—which is the clasp and χρυσέη περόνι of Aglaia's cestus—we will try to find out something in next chapter.[76] [Pg 356]

Transcriber's note:

Chapter VI is missing in the original.

Chapter VII.[77]

85. In recommencing this series of papers, I may perhaps take permission briefly to remind the reader of the special purpose which my desultory way of writing, (of so vast a subject I find it impossible to write otherwise than desultorily), may cause him sometimes to lose sight of; the ascertainment, namely, of some laws for present practice of Art in our schools, which may be admitted, if not with absolute, at least with a sufficient consent, by leading artists.

There are indeed many principles on which different men must ever be at variance; others, respecting which it may be impossible to obtain any practical consent in certain phases of particular schools. But there are a few, which, I think, in all times of meritorious Art, the leading painters would admit; and others which, by discussion, might be arrived at, as, at all events, the best discoverable for the time.

86. One of those which I suppose great workmen would always admit, is, that, whatever material we use, the virtues of that material are to be exhibited, and its defects frankly admitted; no effort being made to conquer those defects by such skill as may make the material resemble another. For instance, in the dispute so frequently revived by the public, touching the relative merits of oil color and water color; I do not think a great painter would ever consider it a merit in a water color to have the "force of oil." He would like it to have the peculiar delicacy, paleness, and transparency belonging specially to its own material. On the other hand, I think he would not like an oil painting to have the deadness or paleness of a water color. He would like it to have the deep shadows, and the rich glow, and crumbling and bossy touches which are alone attainable in oil color. And if he painted in fresco, he would neither aim at the transparency of water color, nor the richness of oil; but at luminous bloom of surface, and dignity of clearly visible form. I do not think that this principle would be disputed by artists of great power at any time, or in any country; though, if by mischance they had been compelled to work in one material, while desiring the qualities only attainable in another, they might strive, and meritoriously strive, for those better results, with what they had under their hand. The change of manner in William Hunt's work, in the later part of his life, was an example of this. As his art became more developed, he perceived in his subjects qualities which it was impossible to express in a transparent medium; and employed opaque white to draw with, when the finer forms of relieved light could not be otherwise followed. It was out of his power to do more than this, since in later life any attempt to learn the manipulation of oil color would have been unadvisable; and he obtained results of singular beauty; though their preciousness and completion would never, in a well-founded school of Art, have been trusted to the frail substance of water color. [Pg 357]

87. But although I do not suppose that the abstract principle of doing with each material what it is best fitted to do, would be, in terms, anywhere denied; the practical question is always, not what should be done with this, or that, if everything were in our power; but what can be, or ought to be, accomplished with the means at our disposal, and in the circumstances under which we must necessarily work. Thus, in the question immediately before us, of the proper use of the black line—it is easy to establish the proper virtue of Line work, as essentially "De-Lineation," the expressing by outline the true limits of forms, which distinguish and part them from other forms; just as the virtue of brush work is essentially breadth, softness, and blending of forms. And, in the abstract, the point ought not to be used where the aim is not that of definition, nor the brush to

be used where the aim is not that of breadth. Every painting in which the aim is primarily that of drawing, and every drawing in which the aim is primarily that of painting, must alike be in a measure erroneous. But it is one thing to determine what should be done with the black line, in a period of highly disciplined and widely practiced art, and quite another thing to say what should be done with it, at this present time, in England. Especially, the increasing interest and usefulness of our illustrated books render this an inquiry of very great social and educational importance. On the one side, the skill and felicity of the work spent upon them, and the advantage which young readers, if not those of all ages, *might* derive from having examples of good drawing put familiarly before their eyes, cannot be overrated; yet, on the other side, neither the admirable skill nor free felicity of the work can ultimately be held a counterpoise for the want —if there be a want—of sterling excellence: while, farther, this increased power of obtaining examples of art for private possession, at an almost nominal price, has two accompanying evils: it prevents the proper use of what we have, by dividing the attention, and continually leading us restlessly to demand new subjects of interest, while the old are as yet not half exhausted; and it prevents us—satisfied with the multiplication of minor art in our own possession—from looking for a better satisfaction in great public works. [Pg 358]

88. Observe, first, it prevents the proper use of what we have. I often endeavor, though with little success, to conceive what would have been the effect on my mind, when I was a boy, of having such a book given me as Watson's "Illustrated Robinson Crusoe."[78] The edition I had was a small octavo one, in two volumes, printed at the *Chiswick Press* in 1812. It has, in each volume, eight or ten very rude vignettes, about a couple of inches wide; cut in the simple, but legitimate, manner of Bewick, and, though wholly commonplace and devoid of beauty, yet, as far as they go, rightly done; and here and there sufficiently suggestive of plain facts. I am quite unable to say how far I wasted,—how far I spent to advantage,—the unaccountable hours during which I pored over these wood-cuts; receiving more real sensation of sympathetic terror from the drifting hair and fear-stricken face of Crusoe dashed against the rock, in the rude attempt at the representation of his escape from the wreck, than I can now from the highest art; though the rocks and water are alike cut only with a few twisted or curved lines, and there is not the slightest attempt at light and shade, or imitative resemblance. For one thing, I am quite sure that being forced to make all I could out of very little things, and to remain long contented with them, not only in great part formed the power of close analysis in my mind, and the habit of steady contemplation; but rendered the power of greater art over me, when I first saw it, as intense as that of magic; so that it appealed to me like a vision out of another world. [Pg 359]

89. On the other hand this long contentment with inferior work, and the consequent acute enjoyment of whatever was the least suggestive of truth in a higher degree, rendered me long careless of the highest virtues of execution, and retarded by many years the maturing and balancing of the general power of judgment. And I am now, as I said, quite unable to imagine what would have been the result upon me, of being enabled to study, instead of these coarse vignettes, such lovely and expressive work as that of Watson; suppose, for instance, the vignette at p. 87, which would have been sure to have caught my fancy, because of the dog, with its head on Crusoe's knee, looking up and trying to understand what is the matter with his master. It remains to be seen, and can only be known by experience, what will actually be the effect of these treasures on the minds of children that possess them. The result must be in some sort different from anything yet known; no such art was ever yet attainable by the youth of any nation. Yet of this there can, as I have just said, be no reasonable doubt;—that it is not well to make the imagination indolent, or take its work out of its hands by supplying continual pictures of what might be sufficiently conceived without pictures. [Pg 360]

90. Take, for instance, the preceding vignette, in the same book, "Crusoe looking at the first shoots of barley." Nothing can be more natural or successful as a representation; but, after all, whatever the importance of the moment in Crusoe's history, the picture can show us nothing more than a man in a white shirt and dark pantaloons, in an attitude of surprise; and the imagination ought to be able to compass so much as this without help. And if so laborious aid be given, much more ought to be given. The virtue of Art, as of life, is that no line shall be in vain. Now the number of lines in this vignette, applied with full intention of thought in every touch, as they would have been by Holbein or Dürer, are quite enough to have produced,—not a merely deceptive dash of local color, with evanescent background,—but an entirely perfect piece of chiaroscuro, with its lights all truly limited and gradated, and with every form of leaf and rock in the background entirely right, complete,—and full not of mere suggestion, but of accurate information, exactly such as the fancy by itself cannot furnish. A work so treated by any man of power and sentiment such as the designer of this vignette possesses, would be an eternal thing; ten in the volume, for real enduring and educational power, were worth two hundred in imperfect development, and would have been a perpetual possession to the reader; whereas one certain result of the multiplication of these lovely but imperfect drawings, is to increase the feverish thirst for excitement, and to weaken the power of attention by endless diversion and division. This volume, beautiful as it is, will be forgotten; the strength in it is, in final outcome, spent for naught; and others, and still others, following it, will "come like shadows, so depart."

91. There is, however, a quite different disadvantage, but no less grave, to be apprehended from this rich multiplication of private possession. The more we have of books, and cabinet pictures, and cabinet ornaments, and other such domestic objects of art, the less capable we shall become of understanding or enjoying the lofty character of work noble in scale, and intended for public service. The most practical and immediate distinction between the orders of "mean" and "high" Art, is that the first is private,—the second public; the first for the individual, the second for all. It [Pg 361]

may be that domestic Art is the only kind which is likely to flourish in a country of cold climate, and in the hands of a nation tempered as the English are; but it is necessary that we should at least understand the disadvantage under which we thus labor; and the duty of not allowing the untowardness of our circumstances, or the selfishness of our dispositions, to have unresisted and unchecked influence over the adopted style of our art. But this part of the subject requires to be examined at length, and I must therefore reserve it for the following paper. [Pg 362]

Chapter VIII.[79]

92. In pursuing the question put at the close of the last paper, it must be observed that there are essentially two conditions under which we have to examine the difference between the effects of public and private Art on national prosperity. The first in immediate influence is their Economical function, the second their Ethical. We have first to consider what class of persons they in each case support; and, secondly, what classes they teach or please.

Looking over the list of the gift-books of this year, perhaps the first circumstance which would naturally strike us would be the number of persons living by this industry; and, in any consideration of the probable effects of a transference of the public attention to other kinds of work, we ought first to contemplate the result on the interests of the workman. The guinea spent on one of our ordinary illustrated gift-books is divided among—

1. A number of second-rate or third-rate artists, producing designs as fast as they can, and realizing them up to the standard required by the public of that year. Men of consummate power may sometimes put their hands to the business; but exceptionally.

2. Engravers, trained to mechanical imitation of this second or third-rate work; of these engravers the inferior classes are usually much overworked.

3. Printers, paper-makers, ornamental binders, and other craftsmen.

4. Publishers and booksellers.

93. Let us suppose the book can be remuneratively produced if there is a sale of five thousand copies. Then £5000, contributed for it by the public, are divided among the different workers; it does not matter what actual rate of division we assume, for the mere object of comparison with other modes of employing the money; but let us say these £5000 are divided among five hundred persons, giving on an average £10 to each. And let us suppose these £10 to be a fortnight's maintenance to each. Then, to maintain them through the year, twenty-five such books must be published; or to keep certainly within the mark of the probable cost of our autumnal gift-books, suppose £100,000 are spent by the public, with resultant supply of 100,000 households with one illustrated book, of second or third-rate quality each (there being twenty different books thus supplied), and resultant maintenance of five hundred persons for the year, at severe work of a second or third-rate order, mostly mechanical. [Pg 363]

94. Now, if the mind of the nation, instead of private, be set on public work, there is of course no expense incurred for multiplication, or mechanical copying of any kind, or for retail dealing. The £5000, instead of being given for five thousand *copies* of the work, and divided among five hundred persons, are given for one original work, and given to one person. This one person will of course employ assistants; but these will be chosen by himself, and will form a superior class of men, out of whom the future leading artists of the time will rise in succession. The broad difference will therefore be, that, in the one case, £5000 are divided among five hundred persons of different classes, doing second-rate or wholly mechanical work; and in the other case, the same sum is divided among a few chosen persons of the best material of mind producible by the state at the given epoch. It may seem an unfair assumption that work for the public will be more honestly and earnestly done than that for private possession. But every motive that can touch either conscience or ambition is brought to bear upon the artist who is employed on a public service, and only a few such motives in other modes of occupation. The greater permanence, scale, dignity of office, and fuller display of Art in a National building, combine to call forth the [Pg 364] energies of the artist; and if a man will not do his best under such circumstances, there is no "best" in him.

95. It might also at first seem an unwarrantable assumption that fewer persons would be employed in the private than in the national work, since, at least in architecture, quite as many subordinate craftsmen are employed as in the production of a book. It is, however, necessary, for the purpose of clearly seeing the effect of the two forms of occupation, that we should oppose them where their contrast is most complete; and that we should compare, not merely bookbinding with bricklaying, but the presentation of Art in books, necessarily involving much subordinate employment, with its presentation in statues or wall-pictures, involving only the labor of the artist and of his immediate assistants. In the one case, then, I repeat, the sum set aside by the public for Art-purposes is divided among many persons, very indiscriminately

chosen; in the other among few carefully chosen. But it does not, for that reason, support fewer persons. The few artists live on their larger incomes,[80] by expenditure among various tradesmen, who in no wise produce Art, but the means of pleasant life; so that the real economical question is, not how many men shall we maintain, but at what work shall they be kept?—shall they every one be set to produce Art for us, in which case they must all live poorly, and produce bad Art; or out of the whole number shall ten be chosen who can and will produce noble Art; and shall the others be employed in providing the means of pleasant life for these chosen ten? Will you have, that is to say, four hundred and ninety tradesmen, butchers, carpet-weavers, carpenters, and the like, and ten fine artists, or will you, under the vain hope of finding, for each of them within your realm, "five hundred good as he," have your full complement of bad draughtsmen, and retail distributors of their bad work? [Pg 365]

96. It will be seen in a moment that this is no question of economy merely; but, as all economical questions become, when set on their true foundation, a dilemma relating to modes of discipline and education. It is only one instance of the perpetually recurring offer to our choice—shall we have one man educated perfectly, and others trained only to serve him, or shall we have all educated equally ill?—Which, when the outcries of mere tyranny and pride-defiant on one side, and of mere envy and pride-concupiscent on the other, excited by the peril and promise of a changeful time, shall be a little abated, will be found to be, in brief terms, the one social question of the day.

Without attempting an answer which would lead us far from the business in hand, I pass to the Ethical part of the inquiry; to examine, namely, the effect of this cheaply diffused Art on the public mind.

97. The first great principle we have to hold by in dealing with the matter is, that the end of Art is NOT to *amuse*; and that all Art which proposes amusement as its end, or which is sought for that end, must be of an inferior, and is probably of a harmful, class.

The end of Art is as serious as that of all other beautiful things—of the blue sky and the green grass, and the clouds and the dew. They are either useless, or they are of much deeper function than giving amusement. Whatever delight we take in them, be it less or more, is not the delight we take in play, or receive from momentary surprise. It might be a matter of some metaphysical difficulty to define the two kinds of pleasure, but it is perfectly easy for any of us to feel that there *is* generic difference between the delight we have in seeing a comedy and in watching a sunrise. Not but that there is a kind of Divina Commedia,—a dramatic change and power,—in all beautiful things: the joy of surprise and incident mingles in music, painting, architecture, and natural beauty itself, in an ennobled and enduring manner, with the perfectness of eternal hue and form. But whenever the desire of change becomes principal; whenever we care only for new tunes, and new pictures, and new scenes, all power of enjoying Nature or Art is so far perished from us: and a child's love of toys has taken its place. The continual advertisement of new music (as if novelty were its virtue) signifies, in the inner fact of it, that no one now cares for music. The continual desire for new exhibitions means that we do not care for pictures; the continual demand for new books means that nobody cares to read. [Pg 366]

98. Not that it would necessarily, and at all times, mean this; for in a living school of Art there will always be an exceeding thirst for, and eager watching of freshly-developed thought. But it specially and sternly means this, when the interest is merely in the novelty; and great work in our possession is forgotten, while mean work, because strange and of some personal interest, is annually made the subject of eager observation and discussion. As long as (for one of many instances of such neglect) two great pictures of Tintoret's lie rolled up in an outhouse at Venice, all the exhibitions and schools in Europe mean nothing but promotion of costly commerce. Through that, we might indeed arrive at better things; but there is no proof, in the eager talk of the public about Art, that we *are* arriving at them. Portraiture of the said public's many faces, and tickling of its twice as many eyes, by changeful phantasm, are all that the patron-multitudes of the present day in reality seek; and this may be supplied to them in multiplying excess forever, yet no steps made to the formation of a school of Art now, or to the understanding of any that have hitherto existed.

99. It is the carrying of this annual Exhibition into the recesses of home which is especially to be dreaded in the multiplication of inferior Art for private possession. Public amusement or excitement may often be quite wholesomely sought, in gay spectacles, or enthusiastic festivals; but we must be careful to the uttermost how we allow the desire for any kind of excitement to mingle among the peaceful continuities of home happiness. The one stern condition of that happiness is that our possessions should be no more than we can thoroughly use; and that to this use they should be practically and continually put. Calculate the hours which, during the possible duration of life, can, under the most favorable circumstances, be employed in reading, and the number of books which it is possible to read in that utmost space of time;—it will be soon seen what a limited library is all that we need, and how careful we ought to be in choosing its volumes. Similarly, the time which most people have at their command for any observation of Art is not more than would be required for the just understanding of the works of one great master. How are we to estimate the futility of wasting this fragment of time on works from which nothing can be learned? For the only real pleasure, and the richest of all amusements, to be derived from either reading or looking, are in the steady progress of the mind and heart, which day by day are more deeply satisfied, and yet more divinely athirst. [Pg 367]

100. As far as I know the homes of England of the present day, they show a grievous tendency to

fall, in these important respects, into the two great classes of over-furnished and unfurnished:—of those in which the Greek marble in its niche, and the precious shelf-loads of the luxurious library, leave the inmates nevertheless dependent for all their true pastime on horse, gun, and croquet-ground;—and those in which Art, honored only by the presence of a couple of engravings from Landseer, and literature, represented by a few magazines and annuals arranged in a star on the drawing-room table, are felt to be entirely foreign to the daily business of life, and entirely unnecessary to its domestic pleasures.

101. The introduction of furniture of Art into households of this latter class is now taking place rapidly; and, of course, by the usual system of the ingenious English practical mind, will take place under the general law of supply and demand; that is to say, that whatever a class of consumers, entirely unacquainted with the different qualities of the article they are buying, [Pg 368] choose to ask for, will be duly supplied to them by the trade. I observe that this beautiful system is gradually extending lower and lower in education; and that children, like grown-up persons, are more and more able to obtain their toys without any reference to what is useful or useless, or right or wrong; but on the great horseleech's law of "demand and supply." And, indeed, I write these papers, knowing well how effectless all speculations on abstract proprieties or possibilities must be in the present ravening state of national desire for excitement; but the tracing of moral or of mathematical law brings its own quiet reward; though it may be, for the time, impossible to apply either to use.

The power of the new influences which have been brought to bear on the middle-class mind, with respect to Art, may be sufficiently seen in the great rise in the price of pictures which has taken place (principally during the last twenty years) owing to the interest occasioned by national exhibitions, coupled with facilities of carriage, stimulating the activity of dealers, and the collateral discovery by mercantile men that pictures are not a bad investment.

102. The following copy of a document in my own possession will give us a sufficiently accurate standard of Art-price at the date of it:—

"London, June 11th, 1814.

"Received of Mr. Cooke the sum of twenty-two pounds ten shillings for three drawings, viz., Lyme, Land's End, and Poole.

"£22, 10s.

"J. M. W. Turner."

It would be a very pleasant surprise to me if any *one* of these three (southern coast) drawings, for which the artist received seven guineas each (the odd nine shillings being, I suppose, for the great resource of tale-tellers about Turner—"coach-hire") were now offered to me by any dealer for a hundred. The rise is somewhat greater in the instance of Turner than of any other [Pg 369] unpopular[81] artist; but it is at least three hundred per cent. on all work by artists of established reputation, whether the public can themselves see anything in it, or not. A certain quantity of intelligent interest mixes, of course, with the mere fever of desire for novelty; and the excellent book illustrations, which are the special subjects of our inquiry, are peculiarly adapted to meet this; for there are at least twenty people who know a good engraving or wood-cut, for one who knows a good picture. The best book illustrations fall into three main classes: fine line engravings (always grave in purpose), typically represented by Goodall's illustrations to Rogers's poems;—fine wood-cuts, or etchings, grave in purpose, such as those by Dalziel, from Thomson and Gilbert;—and fine wood-cuts, or etchings, for purpose of caricature, such as Leech's and Tenniel's in *Punch*. Each of these have a possibly instructive power special to them, which we will endeavor severally to examine in the next chapter. [Pg 370]

Chapter ix.[82]

103. I purpose in this chapter, as intimated in the last, to sketch briefly what I believe to be the real uses and powers of the three kinds of engraving, by black line; either for book illustration, or general public instruction by distribution of multiplied copies. After thus stating what seems to me the proper purpose of each kind of work, I may, perhaps, be able to trace some advisable limitations of its technical methods.

I. And first, of pure line engraving.

This is the only means by which entire refinement of intellectual representation can be given to the public. Photographs have an inimitable mechanical refinement, and their legal evidence is of great use if you know how to cross-examine them. They are popularly supposed to be "true," and, at the worst, they are so, in the sense in which an echo is true to a conversation of which it omits the most important syllables and reduplicates the rest. But this truth of mere transcript has nothing to do with Art properly so called; and will never supersede it. Delicate art of design, or of selected truth, can only be presented to the general public by true line engraving. It will be enough for my purpose to instance three books in which its power has been sincerely used. I am more in fields than libraries, and have never cared to look much into book illustrations; there are, therefore, of course, numbers of well-illustrated works of which I know nothing: but the three I

should myself name as typical of good use of the method, are I. Rogers's Poems, II. the Leipsic edition of Heyne's Virgil (1800), and III. the great "Description de l'Egypte."

104. The vignettes in the first named volumes (considering the Italy and Poems as one book) I [Pg 371] believe to be as skillful and tender as any hand work, of the kind, ever done; they are also wholly free from affectation of overwrought fineness, on the one side, and from hasty or cheap expediencies on the other; and they were produced, under the direction and influence of a gentleman and a scholar. Multitudes of works, imitative of these, and far more attractive, have been produced since; but none of any sterling quality: the good books were (I was told) a loss to their publisher, and the money spent since in the same manner has been wholly thrown away. Yet these volumes are enough to show what lovely service line engraving might be put upon, if the general taste were advanced enough to desire it. Their vignettes from Stothard, however conventional, show in the grace and tenderness of their living subjects how types of innocent beauty, as pure as Angelico's, and far lovelier, might indeed be given from modern English life, to exalt the conception of youthful dignity and sweetness in every household. I know nothing among the phenomena of the present age more sorrowful than that the beauty of our youth should remain wholly unrepresented in Fine Art, because unfelt by ourselves; and that the only vestiges of a likeness to it should be in some of the more subtle passages of caricatures, popular (and justly popular) as much because they were the only attainable reflection of the prettiness, as because they were the only sympathizing records of the humors, of English girls and boys. Of our oil portraits of them, in which their beauty is always conceived as consisting in a fixed simper—feet not more than two inches long, and accessory grounds, pony, and groom—our sentence need not be "*guarda e passa*," but "*passa*" only. Yet one oil picture has been painted, and so far as I know, one only, representing the deeper loveliness of English youth—the portraits of the three children of the Dean of Christ Church, by the son of the great portrait painter, who has recorded whatever is tender and beautiful in the faces of the aged men of England, bequeathing, as it seems, the beauty of their children to the genius of his child. [Pg 372]

105. The second book which I named, Heyne's Virgil, shows, though unequally and insufficiently, what might be done by line engraving to give vital image of classical design, and symbol of classical thought. It is profoundly to be regretted that none of these old and well-illustrated classics can be put frankly into the hands of youth; while all books lately published for general service, pretending to classical illustration, are, in point of Art, absolutely dead and harmful rubbish. I cannot but think that the production of well-illustrated classics would at least leave free of money-scathe, and in great honor, any publisher who undertook it; and although schoolboys in general might not care for any such help, to one, here and there, it would make all the difference between loving his work and hating it. For myself, I am quite certain that a single vignette, like that of the fountain of Arethusa in Heyne, would have set me on an eager quest, which would have saved me years of sluggish and fruitless labor.

106. It is the more strange, and the more to be regretted, that no such worthy applications of line engraving are now made, because, merely to gratify a fantastic pride, works are often undertaken in which, for want of well-educated draughtsmen, the mechanical skill of the engraver has been wholly wasted, and nothing produced useful, except for common reference. In the great work published by the Dilettanti Society, for instance, the engravers have been set to imitate, at endless cost of sickly fineness in dotted and hatched execution, drawings in which the light and shade is always forced and vulgar, if not utterly false. Constantly (as in the 37th plate of the first volume), waving hair casts a straight shadow, not only on the forehead, but even on the ripples of other curls emerging beneath it: while the publication of plate 41, as a representation of the most beautiful statue in the British Museum, may well arouse any artist's wonder what kind of "diletto" in antiquity it might be, from which the Society assumed its name.

107. The third book above named as a typical example of right work in line, the "Description de l'Egypte," is one of the greatest monuments of calm human industry, honestly and delicately [Pg 373] applied, which exist in the world. The front of Rouen Cathedral, or the most richly-wrought illuminated missal, as pieces of resolute industry, are mere child's play compared to any group of the plates of natural history in this book. Of unemotional, but devotedly earnest and rigidly faithful labor, I know no other such example. The lithographs to Agassiz's "poissons fossiles" are good in their kind, but it is a far lower and easier kind, and the popularly visible result is in larger proportion to the skill; whereas none but workmen can know the magnificent devotion of unpretending and observant toil, involved in even a single figure of an insect or a starfish on these unapproachable plates. Apply such skill to the simple presentation of the natural history of every English county, and make the books portable in size, and I cannot conceive any other book-gift to our youth so precious.

108. II. Wood-cutting and etching for serious purpose.

The tendency of wood-cutting in England has been to imitate the fineness and manner of engraving. This is a false tendency; and so far as the productions obtained under its influence have been successful, they are to be considered only as an inferior kind of engraving, under the last head. But the real power of wood-cutting is, with little labor, to express in clear delineation the most impressive essential qualities of form and light and shade, in objects which owe their interest not to grace, but to power and character. It can never express beauty of the subtlest kind, and is not in any way available on a large scale; but used rightly, on its own ground, it is the *most purely intellectual* of all Art; sculpture, even of the highest order, being slightly sensual and imitative; while fine wood-cutting is entirely abstract, thoughtful, and passionate. The best wood-cuts that I know in the whole range of Art are those of Dürer's "Life of the Virgin;" after these

come the other works of Dürer, slightly inferior from a more complex and wiry treatment of line. I have never seen any other work in wood deserving to be named with his; but the best vignettes of Bewick approach Dürer in execution of plumage, as nearly as a clown's work can approach a gentleman's. [Pg 374]

109. Some very brilliant execution on an inferior system—less false, however, than the modern English one—has been exhibited by the French; and if we accept its false conditions, nothing can surpass the cleverness of our own school of Dalziel, or even of the average wood-cutting in our daily journals, which however, as aforesaid, is only to be reckoned an inferior method of engraving. These meet the demand of the imperfectly-educated public in every kind; and it would be absurd to urge any change in the method, as long as the public remain in the same state of knowledge or temper. But, allowing for the time during which these illustrated papers have now been bringing whatever information and example of Art they could to the million, it seems likely that the said million will remain in the same stage of knowledge yet for some time. Perhaps the horse is an animal as antagonistic to Art in England, as he was in harmony with it in Greece; still, allowing for the general intelligence of the London bred lower classes, I was surprised by a paragraph in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, quoting the *Star* of November 6th of last year, in its report upon the use made of illustrated papers by the omnibus stablemen,—to the following effect:—

"They are frequently employed in the omnibus yards from five o'clock in the morning till twelve at night, so that a fair day's work for a 'horse-keeper' is about eighteen hours. For this enormous labor they receive a guinea per week, which for them means seven, not six, days; though they do contrive to make Sunday an 'off-day' now and then. The ignorance of aught in the world save ''orses and 'buses' which prevails amongst these stablemen is almost incredible. A veteran horse-keeper, who had passed his days in an omnibus-yard, was once overheard praising the 'Lus-trated London News with much enthusiasm, as the best periodical in London, 'leastways at the coffee-shop.' When pressed for the reason of his partiality, he confessed it was the 'pickshers' which delighted him. He amused himself during his meal-times by 'counting the images!'" [Pg 375]

110. But for the classes among whom there is a real demand for educational art, it is highly singular that no systematic use has yet been made of wood-cutting on its own terms; and only here and there, even in the best books, is there an example of what might be done by it. The frontispieces to the two volumes of Mr. Birch's "Ancient Pottery and Porcelain," and such simpler cuts as that at p. 273 of the first volume, show what might be cheaply done for illustration of archaic classical work; two or three volumes of such cuts chosen from the best vases of European collections and illustrated by a short and trustworthy commentary, would be to any earnest schoolboy worth a whole library of common books. But his father can give him nothing of the kind—and if the father himself wish to study Greek Art, he must spend something like a hundred pounds to put himself in possession of any sufficiently illustrative books of reference. As to any use of such means for representing objects in the round, the plate of the head of Pallas facing p. 168 in the same volume sufficiently shows the hopelessness of setting the modern engraver to such service. Again, in a book like Smith's dictionary of geography, the wood-cuts of coins are at present useful only for comparison and reference. They are absolutely valueless as representations of the art of the coin.

111. Now, supposing that an educated scholar and draughtsman had drawn each of these blocks, and that they had been cut with as much average skill as that employed in the wood-cuts of *Punch*, each of these vignettes of coins might have been an exquisite lesson, both of high Art treatment in the coin, and of beautiful black and white drawing in the representation; and this just as cheaply—nay, more cheaply—than the present common and useless drawing. The things necessary are indeed not small,—nothing less than well educated intellect and feeling in the draughtsmen; but intellect and feeling, as I have often said before now, are always to be had cheap if you go the right way about it—and they cannot otherwise be had for any price. There are quite brains enough, and there is quite sentiment enough, among the gentlemen of England to answer all the purposes of England: but if you so train your youths of the richer classes that they shall think it more gentlemanly to scrawl a figure on a bit of note paper, to be presently rolled up to light a cigar with, than to draw one nobly and rightly for the seeing of all men;—and if you practically show your youths, of all classes, that they will be held gentlemen, for babbling with a simper in Sunday pulpits; or grinning through, not a horse's, but a hound's, collar, in Saturday journals; or dirtily living on the public money in government non-offices:—but that they shall be held less than gentlemen for doing a man's work honestly with a man's right hand—you will of course find that intellect and feeling cannot be had when you want them. But if you like to train some of your best youth into scholarly artists,—men of the temper of Leonardo, of Holbein, of Dürer, or of Velasquez, instead of decomposing them into the early efflorescences and putrescences of idle clerks, sharp lawyers, soft curates, and rotten journalists,—you will find that you can always get a good line drawn when you need it, without paying large subscriptions to schools of Art. [Pg 376]

112. III. This relation of social character to the possible supply of good Art is still more direct when we include in our survey the mass of illustration coming under the general head of dramatic caricature—caricature, that is to say, involving right understanding of the true grotesque in human life; caricature of which the worth or harmfulness cannot be estimated, unless we can first somewhat answer the wide question, What is the meaning and worth of English laughter? I say, "of English laughter," because if you can well determine the value of that, you determine the value of the true laughter of all men—the English laugh being the purest and truest in the metal that can be minted. And indeed only Heaven can know what the country

[Pg 377]

owes to it, on the lips of such men as Sydney Smith and Thomas Hood. For indeed the true wit of all countries, but especially English wit (because the openest), must always be essentially on the side of truth—for the nature of wit is one with truth. Sentiment may be false—reasoning false—reverence false—-love false,—everything false except wit; that *must* be true—and even if it is ever harmful, it is as divided against itself—a small truth undermining a mightier.

On the other hand, the spirit of levity, and habit of mockery, are among the chief instruments of final ruin both to individual and nations. I believe no business will ever be rightly done by a laughing Parliament: and that the public perception of vice or of folly which only finds expression in caricature, neither reforms the one, nor instructs the other. No man is fit for much, we know, "who has not a good laugh in him"—but a sad wise valor is the only complexion for a leader; and if there was ever a time for laughing in this dark and hollow world, I do not think it is now. This is a wide subject, and I must follow it in another place; for our present purpose, all that needs to be noted is that, for the expression of true humor, few and imperfect lines are often sufficient, and that in this direction lies the only opening for the serviceable presentation of amateur work to public notice.

113. I have said nothing of lithography, because, with the exception of Samuel Prout's sketches, no work of standard Art-value has ever been produced by it, nor can be: its opaque and gritty texture being wholly offensive to the eye of any well trained artist. Its use in connection with color is, of course, foreign to our present subject. Nor do I take any note of the various current patents for cheap modes of drawing, though they are sometimes to be thanked for rendering possible the publication of sketches like those of the pretty little "Voyage en Zigzag" ("how we spent the summer") published by Longmans—which are full of charming humor, character, and freshness of expression; and might have lost more by the reduction to the severe terms of wood-cutting than they do by the ragged interruptions of line which are an inevitable defect in nearly all these cheap processes. It will be enough, therefore, for all serious purpose, that we confine [Pg 378] ourselves to the study of the black line, as produced in steel and wood; and I will endeavor in the next paper[83] to set down some of the technical laws belonging to each mode of its employment.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] This paper was written as a preface to a series of "Reminiscences" from the pen of the late Mr. W. H. Harrison, commenced in the *University Magazine* of May 1878. It was separately printed in that magazine in the preceding month, but owing to Mr. Ruskin's illness at the time, he was unable to see it through the press. A letter from Mr. Ruskin to Mr. Harrison, printed in "Arrows of the Chace," may be found of interest in connection with the opening statements of this paper. —[Ed.]

[2] "Friendship's Offering" of 1835 included two poems, signed "J. R.," and entitled "Saltzburg" and "Fragments from a Metrical Journal; Andernacht and St. Goar."—[Ed.]

[3] In the "Life and Times of Sydney Smith," by Stuart J. Reid (London, 1884, p. 374), appears a letter addressed to the author by Mr. Ruskin, to whom the book is dedicated:—

"Oxford, *Nov. 15th, 1883*.

"My Dear Sir,—I wanted to tell you what deep respect I had for Sydney Smith; but my time has been cut to pieces ever since your note reached me. He was the first in the literary circles of London to assert the value of 'Modern Painters,' and he has always seemed to me equally keen-sighted and generous in his estimate of literary efforts. His 'Moral Philosophy' is the only book on the subject which I care that my pupils should read, and there is no man (whom I have not personally known) whose image is so vivid in my constant affection.—Ever your faithful servant,

"John Ruskin."—[Ed.]

[4] This essay is a review of two books by Lord Lindsay, viz., "Progression by Antagonism," published in 1846, and the "Sketches of the History of Christian Art," which appeared in the following year. It is, with the paper on Sir C. Eastlake's "History of Oil Painting," one of the very few anonymous writings of its author. "I never felt at ease" (says Mr. Ruskin, in speaking of anonymous criticism) "in my graduate incognito, and although I consented, some nine years ago, to review Lord Lindsay's 'Christian Art,' and Sir Charles Eastlake's 'Essay on Oil Painting,' in the *Quarterly*, I have ever since steadily refused to write even for that once respectable periodical" ("Academy Notes," No. II., 1856). For Mr. Ruskin's estimate of Lord Lindsay's work, see the "Eagle's Nest," § 46, and "Val d'Arno," § 264, where he speaks of him as his "first master in Italian art."—[Ed.]

[5] With one exception (see **p. 25**) the quotations from Lord Lindsay are always from the "Christian Art."—Ed.

[6] The reader must remember that this arcade was originally quite open, the inner wall having been built after the fire, in 1574.

[7] "An Historical Essay on Architecture" by the late Thomas Hope. (Murray, 1835) chap, iv., pp. 23-31.

[8] At the feet of his Madonna, in the Gallery of Bologna.

[9] In many pictures of Angelico, the Infant Christ appears self-supported—the Virgin not touching the child.

[10] The upper inscription Lord Lindsay has misquoted—it runs thus:—

"Salve Mater Pietatis
Et Totius Trinitatis
Nobile Triclinium."

[11] We have been much surprised by the author's frequent reference to Lasinio's engravings of various frescoes, unaccompanied by any warning of their inaccuracy. No work of Lasinio's can be trusted for *anything* except the number and relative position of the figures. All masters are by him translated into one monotony of commonplace:—he dilutes eloquence, educates naïveté, prompts ignorance, stultifies intelligence, and paralyzes power; takes the chill off horror, the edge off wit, and the bloom off beauty. In all artistical points he is utterly valueless, neither drawing nor expression being ever preserved by him. Giotto, Benozzo, or Ghirlandajo are all alike to him; and we hardly know whether he injures most when he robs or when he redresses.

[12] We do not perhaps enough estimate the assistance which was once given both to purpose and perception, by the feeling of wonder which with us is destroyed partly by the ceaseless calls upon it, partly by our habit of either discovering or anticipating a reason for everything. Of the simplicity and ready surprise of heart which supported the spirit of the older painters, an interesting example is seen in the diary of Albert Dürer, lately published in a work every way valuable, but especially so in the carefulness and richness of its illustrations, "Divers Works of Early Masters in Christian Decoration," edited by John Weale, London, 2 vols. folio, 1846.

[13] A review of the following-books:—

1. "Materials for a History of Oil-Painting." By Charles Lock Eastlake, R.A., F.R.S., F.S.A., Secretary to the Royal Commission for promoting the Fine Arts in Connection with the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, etc., etc. London, 1847.

2. "Theophili, qui et Rugerus, Presbyteri et Monachi, Libri III. de Diversis Artibus; seu Diversarum Artium Schedula. (An Essay upon Various Arts, in Three Books, by Theophilus, called also Rugerus, Priest and Monk, forming an Encyclopædia of Christian Art of the Eleventh Century." Translated, with Notes, by Robert Hendrie.) London, 1847.

[14] "A Critical Essay on Oil-Painting," London, 1781.

[15] "The mediæval painters were so accustomed to this appearance in varnishes, and considered it so indispensable, that they even supplied the tint when it did not exist. Thus Cardanus observes that when white of eggs was used as a varnish, it was customary to tinge it with red lead."—*Eastlake*, p. 270.

[16] "Si je dis tant de mal de la peinture flamande, ce n'est pas qu'elle soit entièrement mauvaise, mais elle veut *rendre avec perfection* tant de choses, dont une seule suffirait par son importance, qu'elle n'en fait aucune d'une manière satisfaisante." This opinion of M. Angelo's is preserved by Francisco de Ollanda, quoted by Comte Raczynski, "Les Arts en Portugal," Paris, 1846.

[17] "Arte de Pintura." Sevilla, 1649.

[18] The preparations of Hemling, at Bruges, we imagine to have been in water-color, and perhaps the picture was carried to some degree of completion in this material. Van Mander observes that Van Eyck's dead colorings "were cleaner and sharper than the finished works of other painters."

[19] [See *Stones of Venice*, vol. iii. Venetian Index, *s.* Rocco, Scuola di San, § 20, *Temptation*.—Ed. 1899.]

[20] *Art Journal*, March 1849.—Ed.

[21] We do not mean under this term to include the drawings of professed oil-painters, as of Stothard or Turner.

[22] *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1860.—Ed.

[23] As showing gigantic power of hand, joined with utmost accuracy and rapidity, the folds of drapery under the breast of the Virgin are, perhaps, as marvelous a piece of work as could be found in any picture, of whatever time or master.

[24] The reader must observe that I use the word here in a limited sense, as meaning only the effect of careful education, good society, and refined habits of life, on average temper and character. Of deep and true gentlemanliness—based as it is on intense sensibility and sincerity, perfected by courage, and other qualities of race; as well as of that union of insensibility with cunning, which is the essence of vulgarity, I shall have to speak at length in another place.

[25] Museum of Berlin.

[26] Of 1,200 Swiss, who fought by that brookside, ten only returned. The battle checked the attack of the French, led by Louis XI. (then Dauphin) in 1444; and was the first of the great series of efforts and victories which were closed at Nancy by the death of Charles of Burgundy.

[27] Pinacothek of Munich.

[28] This essay was first published in 1851 as a separate pamphlet entitled "Pre-Raphaelitism," by the author of "Modern Painters." (8vo, pp. 68. London: Smith, Elder, & Co.) It was afterwards reprinted in 1862, without alteration, except that the later issue bore the author's name, and omitted a dedication which in the first edition ran as follows:—"To Francis Hawkesworth Fawkes, Esq., of Farnley, These pages, Which owe their present form to advantages granted By his kindness, Are affectionately inscribed, By his obliged friend, John Ruskin."—Ed.

[29] Compare "Sesame and Lilies," § 2.—Ed.

[30] See "Arrows of the Chace," vol. i., which gives several letters there collected under the head of

Pre-Raphaelitism.—Ed.

[31] It was not a little curious, that in the very number of the Art Union which repeated this direct falsehood about the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of "linear perspective" (by-the-bye, the next time J. B. takes upon him to speak of anyone connected with the Universities, he may as well first ascertain the difference between a Graduate and an Under-Graduate), the second plate given should have been of a picture of Bonington's—a professional landscape painter, observe—for the want of *aërial* perspective in which the Art Union itself was obliged to apologize, and in which, the artist has committed nearly as many blunders in *linear* perspective as there are lines in the picture.

[32] These false statements may be reduced to three principal heads, and directly contradicted in succession.

The first, the current fallacy of society as well as of the press, was, that the Pre-Raphaelites imitated the *errors* of early painters.

A falsehood of this kind could not have obtained credence anywhere but in England, few English people, comparatively, having ever seen a picture of early Italian Masters. If they had they would have known that the Pre-Raphaelite pictures are just as superior to the early Italian in skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and knowledge of effect, as inferior to them in grace of design; and that in a word, there is not a shadow of resemblance between the two styles. The Pre-Raphaelites imitate no pictures: they paint from nature only. But they have opposed themselves as a body, to that kind of teaching above described, which only began after Raphael's time: and they have opposed themselves as sternly to the entire feeling of the Renaissance schools; a feeling compounded of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and shallow pride. Therefore they have called themselves Pre-Raphaelite. If they adhere to their principles, and paint nature as it is around them, with the help of modern science, with the earnestness of the men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they will, as I said, found a new and noble school in England. If their sympathies with the early artists lead them into mediævalism or Romanism, they will of course come to nothing. But I believe there is no danger of this, at least for the strongest among them. There may be some weak ones, whom the Tractarian heresies may touch; but if so, they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. I hope all things from the school.

The second falsehood was, that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well. This was asserted, and could have been asserted only by persons who had never looked at the pictures.

The third falsehood was, that they had no system of light and shade. To which it may be simply replied that their system of light and shade is exactly the same as the Sun's; which is, I believe, likely to outlast that of the Renaissance, however brilliant.

[33] See ante, pp. 148-157.—Ed.

[34] He did not use his full signature, "J. M. W.," until about the year 1800.

[35] I shall give a *catalogue raisonnée* of all this in the third volume of *Modern Painters*.

[36] See *post*, § 217.

[37] The plate was, however, never published.

[38] And the more probably because Turner was never fond of staying long at any place, and was least of all likely to make a pause of two or three days at the beginning of his journey.

[39] *Vide Modern Painters*, Part II. Sect. III. Chap. IV. § 13.

[40] See *ante*, § 200.

[41] This state of mind appears to have been the only one which Wordsworth had been able to discern in men of science; and in disdain of which, he wrote that short-sighted passage in the Excursion, Book III, P. 165-190, which is, I think, the only one in the whole range of his works which his true friends would have desired to see blotted out. What else has been found fault with as feeble or superfluous, is not so in the intense distinctive relief which it gives to his character. But these lines are written in mere ignorance of the matter they treat; in mere want of sympathy with the men they describe: for, observe, though the passage is put into the mouth of the Solitary, it is fully confirmed, and even rendered more scornful, by the speech which follows.

[42] *Nineteenth Century*, Nov.-Dec. 1878.—Ed.

[43] May I in the meantime recommend any reader interested in these matters to obtain for himself such photographic representation as may be easily acquirable of the tomb of Ilaria? It is in the north transept of the Cathedral of Lucca; and is certainly the most beautiful work existing by the master who wrought it,—Jacopo della Quercia.

[44] "Vulgarly"; the use of the word "scientia," as if it differed from "knowledge," being a modern barbarism; enhanced usually by the assumption that the knowledge of the difference between acids and alkalies is a more respectable one than that of the difference between vice and virtue.

[45] *Modern Painters*, volume iii. I proceed in my old words, of which I cannot better the substance, though—with all deference to the taste of those who call that book my best—I could, the expression.

[46] The *third* edition was published in 1846, while the Pre-Raphaelite School was still in swaddling clothes.

[47] These essays were, "Recent Attacks on Political Economy," by Robert Lowe, and "Virchow and Evolution," by Prof. Tyndall,—Ed.

[48] James of Quercia: see the rank assigned to this master in *Ariadne Florentina*. The best photographs of the monument are, I believe, those published by the Arundel Society; of whom I

would very earnestly request that if ever they quote *Modern Painters*, they would not interpolate its text with unmarked parentheses of modern information such as "emblem of conjugal fidelity." I must not be made to answer for either the rhythm or the contents of sentences thus manipulated.

[49] I foolishly, in *Modern Painters*, used the generic word "hound" to make my sentence prettier. He is a flat-nosed bulldog.

[50] It would be utterly vain to attempt any general account of the works of this painter, unless I were able also to give abstract of the subtlest mythologies of Greek worship and Christian romance. Besides, many of his best designs are pale pencil drawings like Florentine engravings, of which the delicacy is literally invisible, and the manner irksome, to a public trained among the black scrabblings of modern wood-cutter's and etcher's prints. I will only say that the single series of these pencil-drawings, from the story of Psyche, which I have been able to place in the schools of Oxford, together with the two colored beginnings from the stories of Jason and Alcestis, are, in my estimate, quite the most precious gift, not excepting even the Loire series of Turners, in the ratified acceptance of which my University has honored with some fixed memorial the aims of her first Art-Teacher.

[51] *Lectures on Art*, §§ 95-6.—Ed.

[52] pamphlet, the full title of which was "The Opening of the Crystal Palace Considered in some of its Relations to the Progress of Art," by John Ruskin, M.A. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1854. —Ed.

[53] But see now *Aratra Pentelici*, § 53.—Ed.

[54] See the *Times* of Monday, June 12th.

[55] M. l'Abbé Bulteau, Description de la Cathédral de Chartres (8vo, Paris, Sagnier et Bray, 1850), p. 98, *note*.

[56] See *Arrows of the Chace*.

[57] This paper was read by Mr. Ruskin at the ordinary meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects, May 15, 1865, and was afterwards published in the Sessional Papers of the Institute, 1864-5, Part III., No. 2, pp. 139-147. Its full title (as there appears) was "An Inquiry into some of the conditions at present affecting the Study of Architecture in our Schools."—Ed.

[58] This Address has been already printed in three forms,—(*a*) in a pamphlet printed at Cambridge "for the committee of the School of Art," by Naylor & Co., *Chronicle* office, 1858; (*b*) in a second pamphlet, Cambridge, Deighton & Bell; London, Bell & Daldy, 1858; and (*c*) a new edition, published for Mr. Ruskin by Mr. George Allen in 1879. The first of these pamphlets contains, in addition to the address, a full account of the "inaugural soirée" at which it was read, and a report of speeches then made by Mr. Redgrave, R.A., and Mr. George Cruikshank; and both the first and second pamphlet also contain a few introductory words spoken, by Mr. Ruskin, before proceeding to deliver his address.—Ed.

[59] See "A Joy For Ever," § 113, and "Time and Tide," § 78.—Ed.

[60] I ought perhaps to remind the reader that this statement refers to two different societies among the Alps; the Waldenses in the 13th, and the people of the Forest Cantons in the 14th and following centuries. Protestants are perhaps apt sometimes to forget that the virtues of these mountaineers were shown in connection with vital forms of opposing religions; and that the patriots of Schwytz and Uri were as zealous Roman Catholics as they were good soldiers. We have to lay to their charge the death of Zuinglius as well as of Gessler.

[61] The summit of Rocca-Melone is the sharp peak seen from Turin on the right hand of the gorge of the Cenis, dominant over the low projecting pyramid of the hill called by De Saussure Montagne de Musinet. Rocca-Melone rises to a height of 11,000 feet above the sea, and its peak is a place of pilgrimage to this day, though it seems temporarily to have ceased to be so in the time of De Saussure, who thus speaks of it:

"Il y a eu pendant longtemps sur cette cime, une petite chapelle avec une image de Notre Dame qui étoit en grande vénération dans le pays, et où un grand nombre de gens alloient au mois d'août en procession, de Suze et des environs; mais le sentier qui conduit à cette chapelle est si étroit et si scabreux qu'il n'y avoit presque pas d'années qu'il n'y périt du monde; la fatigue et la rareté de l'air saisissoient ceux qui avoient plutôt consulté leur dévotion que leurs forces; ils tombérent en défalliance, et de là dans le précipice."

[62] *Art Journal*, New Series, vol. iv., pp. 5-6. January 1865.—Ed.

[63] See p. 353, § 83, for a further mention of William Blake.—Ed.

[64] *Art Journal*, vol. iv., pp. 33-5. February 1865. The first word being printed in plain capitals instead of with an ornamental initial letter generally used by the *Art Journal*, the following note was added by the author:—"I beg the Editor's and reader's pardon for an informality in the type; but I shrink from ornamental letters, and have begged for a legible capital instead."—Ed.

[65] I need not say that this inquiry can only be pursued by the help of those who will take it up good-humoredly and graciously: such help I will receive in the spirit in which it is given; entering into no controversy, but questioning further where there is doubt: gathering all I can into focus, and passing silently by what seems at last irreconcilable.

[66] This essay, Chapter II. in the *Art Journal*, is here omitted as having been already reprinted with only a few verbal alterations in *The Queen of the Air*, §§ 135 to 142 inclusive, which see. The *Art Journal*, however, contained a final paragraph, introductory of Chapter III., which is omitted in *The Queen of the Air*, and was as follows:—"To the discernment of this law" (*i.e.*, that to which the arts are subject, see *Queen of the Air*, § 142) "we will now address ourselves slowly, beginning with the consideration of little things, and of easily definable virtues. And since Patience is the pioneer of all the others, I shall endeavor in the next paper to show how that

modest virtue has been either held of no account, or else set to vilest work in our modern Art-schools; and what harm has resulted from such disdain, or such employment of her."—Ed.

[67] A small portion of this chapter was read by Mr. Ruskin, at Oxford, in November 1884, as a by-lecture, during the delivery of the course on the "Pleasures of England."—Ed.

[68] The rest of this and the whole of the succeeding paragraph is also reprinted in *Ariadne Florentina*, § 115, and para. i. of 116.—Ed.

[69] *Art Journal*, vol. iv., pp. 129-30. May 1865.—Ed.

[70] I have received some interesting private letters, but cannot make use of them at present, because they enter into general discussion instead of answering the specific question I asked, respecting the power of the black line; and I must observe to correspondents that in future their letters should be addressed to the Editor of this Journal, not to me; as I do not wish to incur the responsibility of selection.

[71] *Art Journal*, vol. iv., pp. 177-8. June 1865.—Ed.

[72] Wórnum's "Epochs of Painting." I have continual occasion to quarrel with my friend on these matters of critical question; but I have deep respect for his earnest and patient research, and we remain friends—on the condition that I am to learn much from him, and he (though it may be questionable whose fault that is) nothing from me.

[73] Prov. xx, 27.

[74] As I was preparing these sheets for press, I chanced on a passage in a novel of Champfleury's, in which one young student is encouraging another in his contest with these and other such evils;—the evils are in this passage accepted as necessities; the inevitable deadliness of the element is not seen, as it can hardly be except by those who live out of it. The encouragement, on such view, is good and right; the connection of the young etcher's power with his poverty is curiously illustrative of the statements in the text, and the whole passage, though long, is well worth such space as it will ask here, in our small print.

> "Cependant," dit Thomas, "on a vu des peintres de talent qui étaient partis de Paris après avoir exposé de bons tableaux et qui s'en revenaient classiquement ennuyeux. C'est done la faute de l'enseignement de l'Académie."
>
> "Bah!" dit Gérard, "rien n'arrête le développement d'un homme puisqu'il comprend l'art, pourquoi ne fait-il pas d'art?"
>
> "Parce qu'il gagne à peu près sa vie en faisant du commerce."
>
> "On dirait que tu ne veux pas me comprendre, toi qui as justement passé par là. Comment faisais-tu quand tu étais compositeur d'une imprimerie?"
>
> "Le soir," dit Thomas, "et le matin en hiver, à partir de quatre heures, je faisais des études à la lampe pendant deux heures, jusqu'au moment où j'allais à l'atelier."
>
> "Et tu ne vivais pas de la peinture?"
>
> "Je ne gagnais pas un sou."
>
> "Bon!" dit Gérard; "tu vois bien que tu faisais du commerce en dehors de l'art et que cependant tu étudiais. Quand tu es sorti de l'imprimerie comment as-tu vécu?"
>
> "Je faisais cinq ou six petites aquarelles par jour, que je vendais, sous les arcades de l'Institut, six sous pièce."
>
> "Et tu en vivais; c'est encore du commerce. Tu vois done que ni l'imprimerie, ni les petits dessins, à cinq sous, ni la privation, ni la misère ne t'ont empêché d'arriver."
>
> "Je ne suis pas arrivé."
>
> "N'importe, tu arriveras certainement. . . . Si tu veux d'autres exemples qui prouvent que la misère et les autres piéges tendus sous nos pas ne doivent rien arrêter, tu te rappelles bien ce pauvre garçon dont vous admiriez les eaux-fortes, que vous mettiez aussi haut que Rembrandt, et qui aurait été lion, disiez-vous, s'il n'avait tant souffert de la faim. Qu'a-t-il fait le jour où il lui est tombé un petit héritage du ciel?"
>
> "Il est vrai," dit Thomas, embarrassé; "qu'il a perdu tout son sentiment."
>
> "Ce n'etait pas cependant une de ces grosses fortunes qui tuent un homme, qui le rendent lourd, fier et insolent: il avait juste de quoi vivre, six cents francs de rentes, une fortune pour lui, qui vivait avec cinq francs par mois. Il a continué à travailler; mais ses eaux-fortes n'étaient plus supportables; tandis qu'avant, il vivait avec un morceau de pain et des légumes; alors il avait du talent. Cela, Thomas, doit te prouver que ni les mauvais enseignements, ni les influences, ni la misère, ni la faim, ni la maladie, ne peuvent corrompre une nature bien douée. Elle souffre; mais trouve moi un grand artiste qui n'ait pas souffert. Il n'y a pas un seul homme de dénie heureux depuis que l'humanité existe."
>
> "J'ai envie," dit Thomas, "de te faire cadeau d'une jolie cravate."
>
> "Pourquoi?" dit Gérard.
>
> "Parce que tu as bien parlé."

[75] See *ante*, p. 343, § 73.—Ed.

[76] Chapter VI., which is here omitted, having been already reprinted in *The Queen of the Air* (§§ 142-159), together with the last paragraph (somewhat altered) of the present chapter. After the publication of Chapter VI. the essays were discontinued until January 1866.—Ed.

[77] *Art Journal*, vol. v., pp. 9, 10. January 1866.—Ed.

[78] Routledge, 1864. The engraving is all by Dalziel. I do not ask the reader's pardon for speaking of myself, with reference to the point at issue. It is perhaps quite as modest to relate personal experience as to offer personal opinion; and the accurate statement of such experience is, in questions of this sort, the only contribution at present possible towards their solution.

[79] *Art Journal*, vol. v., pp. 33-4. February 1866,—Ed.

[80] It may be, they would not ask larger incomes in a time of highest national life; and that then the noble art would be far cheaper to the nation than the ignoble. But I speak of existing circumstances.

[81] I have never found more than two people (students excepted) in the room occupied by Turner's drawings at Kensington, and one of the two, if there *are* two, always looks as if he had got in by mistake.

[82] *Art Journal*, vol. v., pp. 97-8. April 1866.—Ed.

[83] The present paper was, however, the last.—Ed.

Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.