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THE ELEMENTS OF SCULPTURE \*\*\*

**Library Edition**

**THE COMPLETE WORKS**

OF

**JOHN RUSKIN**

CROWN OF WILD OLIVE  
TIME AND TIDE  
QUEEN OF THE AIR  
LECTURES ON ART AND LANDSCAPE  
ARATRA PENTELICI

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**ARATRA PENTELICI.**

**SEVEN LECTURES**

ON THE

**ELEMENTS OF SCULPTURE,**

GIVEN BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
IN MICHAELMAS TERM, 1870.

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## PREFACE.

1. I must pray the readers of the following Lectures to remember that the duty at present laid on me at Oxford is of an exceptionally complex character. Directly, it is to awaken the interest of my pupils in a study which they have hitherto found unattractive, and imagined to be useless; but

more imperatively, it is to define the principles by which the study itself should be guided; and to vindicate their security against the doubts with which frequent discussion has lately incumbered a subject which all think themselves competent to discuss. The possibility of such vindication is, of course, implied in the original consent of the Universities to the establishment of Art Professorships. Nothing can be made an element of education of which it is impossible to determine whether it is ill done or well; and the clear assertion that there is a canon law in formative Art is, at this time, a more important function of each University than the instruction of its younger members in any branch of practical skill. It matters comparatively little whether few or many of our students learn to draw; but it matters much that all who learn should be taught with accuracy. And the number who may be justifiably advised to give any part of the time they spend at college to the study of painting or sculpture ought to depend, and finally *must* depend, on their being certified that painting and sculpture, no less than language, or than reasoning, have grammar and method,—that they permit a recognizable distinction between scholarship and ignorance, and enforce a constant distinction between Right and Wrong.

2. This opening course of Lectures on Sculpture is therefore restricted to the statement, not only of first principles, but of those which were illustrated by the practice of one school, and by that practice in its simplest branch, the analysis of which could be certified by easily accessible examples, and aided by the indisputable evidence of photography.<sup>[1]</sup>

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The exclusion of the terminal Lecture<sup>[2]</sup> of the course from the series now published, is in order to mark more definitely this limitation of my subject; but in other respects the Lectures have been amplified in arranging them for the press, and the portions of them trusted at the time to extempore delivery (not through indolence, but because explanations of detail are always most intelligible when most familiar) have been in substance to the best of my power set down, and in what I said too imperfectly, completed.

3. In one essential particular I have felt it necessary to write what I would not have spoken. I had intended to make no reference, in my University Lectures, to existing schools of Art, except in cases where it might be necessary to point out some undervalued excellence. The objects specified in the eleventh paragraph of my inaugural Lecture<sup>[3]</sup> might, I hoped, have been accomplished without reference to any works deserving of blame; but the Exhibition of the Royal Academy in the present year showed me a necessity of departing from my original intention. The task of impartial criticism<sup>[4]</sup> is now, unhappily, no longer to rescue modest skill from neglect; but to withstand the errors of insolent genius, and abate the influence of plausible mediocrity.

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The Exhibition of 1871 was very notable in this important particular, that it embraced some representation of the modern schools of nearly every country in Europe: and I am well assured that, looking back upon it after the excitement of that singular interest has passed away, every thoughtful judge of Art will confirm my assertion, that it contained not a single picture of accomplished merit; while it contained many that were disgraceful to Art, and some that were disgraceful to humanity.

4. It becomes, under such circumstances, my inevitable duty to speak of the existing conditions of Art with plainness enough to guard the youths whose judgments I am intrusted to form, from being misled, either by their own naturally vivid interest in what represents, however unworthily, the scenes and persons of their own day, or by the cunningly devised, and, without doubt, powerful allurements of Art which has long since confessed itself to have no other object than to allure. I have, therefore, added to the second of these Lectures such illustration of the motives and course of modern industry as naturally arose out of its subject; and shall continue in future to make similar applications; rarely indeed, permitting myself, in the Lectures actually read before the University, to introduce, subjects of instant, and therefore too exciting, interest; but completing the addresses which I prepare for publication in these, and in any other, particulars, which may render them more widely serviceable.

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5. The present course of Lectures will be followed, if I am able to fulfill the design of them, by one of a like elementary character on Architecture; and that by a third series on Christian Sculpture: but, in the meantime, my effort is to direct the attention of the resident students to Natural History, and to the higher branches of ideal Landscape: and it will be, I trust, accepted as sufficient reason for the delay which has occurred in preparing the following sheets for the press, that I have not only been interrupted by a dangerous illness, but engaged, in what remained to me of the summer, in an endeavor to deduce, from the overwhelming complexity of modern classification in the Natural Sciences, some forms capable of easier reference by Art students, to whom the anatomy of brutal and floral nature is often no less important than that of the human body.

The preparation of examples for manual practice, and the arrangement of standards for reference, both in Painting and Sculpture, had to be carried on, meanwhile, as I was able. For what has already been done, the reader is referred to the "Catalogue of the Educational Series," published at the end of the Spring Term: of what remains to be done I will make no anticipatory statement, being content to have ascribed to me rather the fault of narrowness in design, than of extravagance in expectation.

DENMARK HILL,

*25th November, 1871.*

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## FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Photography cannot exhibit the character of large and finished sculpture; but its audacity of shadow is in perfect harmony with the more roughly picturesque treatment necessary in coins. For the rendering of all such frank relief, and for the better explanation of forms disturbed by the luster of metal or polished stone, the method employed in the plates of this volume will be found, I believe, satisfactory. Casts are first taken from the coins, in white plaster; these are photographed, and the photograph printed by the autotype process. Plate XII. is exceptional, being a pure mezzotint engraving of the old school, excellently carried through by my assistant, Mr. Allen, who was taught, as a personal favor to myself, by my friend, and Turner's fellow-worker, Thomas Lupton. Plate IV. was intended to be a photograph from the superb vase in the British Museum, No. 564 in Mr. Newton's Catalogue; but its variety of color defied photography, and after the sheets had gone to press I was compelled to reduce Le Normand's plate of it, which is unsatisfactory, but answers my immediate purpose.

The enlarged photographs for use in the Lecture Room were made for me with most successful skill by Sergeant Spackman, of South Kensington; and the help throughout rendered to me by Mr. Burgess is acknowledged in the course of the Lectures; though with thanks which must remain inadequate lest they should become tedious; for Mr. Burgess drew the subjects of Plates III., X., and XIII.; and drew and engraved every wood-cut in the book.

- [2] It is included in this edition. See Lecture VII., pp. 132-158.
- [3] Lectures on Art, 1870.
- [4] A pamphlet by the Earl of Southesk, 'Britain's Art Paradise' (Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh), contains an entirely admirable criticism of the most faultful pictures of the 1871 Exhibition. It is to be regretted that Lord Southesk speaks only to condemn; but indeed, in my own three days' review of the rooms, I found nothing deserving of notice otherwise, except Mr. Hook's always pleasant sketches from fisher-life, and Mr. Pettie's graceful and powerful, though too slightly painted, study from Henry IV.

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## ARATRA PENTELICI.

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### LECTURE I.

[Pg 1]

### OF THE DIVISION OF ARTS.

*November, 1870.*

1. If, as is commonly believed, the subject of study which it is my special function to bring before you had no relation to the great interests of mankind, I should have less courage in asking for your attention to-day, than when I first addressed you; though, even then, I did not do so without painful diffidence. For at this moment, even supposing that in other places it were possible for men to pursue their ordinary avocations undisturbed by indignation or pity,—here, at least, in the midst of the deliberative and religious influences of England, only one subject, I am well assured, can seriously occupy your thoughts—the necessity, namely, of determining how it has come to pass that, in these recent days, iniquity the most reckless and monstrous can be committed unanimously, by men more generous than ever yet in the world's history were deceived into deeds of cruelty; and that prolonged agony of body and spirit, such as we should shrink from inflicting willfully on a single criminal, has become the appointed and accepted portion of unnumbered multitudes of innocent persons, inhabiting the districts of the world which, of all others, as it seemed, were best instructed in the laws of civilization, and most richly invested with the honor, and indulged in the felicity, of peace.

Believe me, however, the subject of Art—instead of being foreign to these deep questions of social duty and peril,—is so vitally connected with them, that it would be impossible for me now to pursue the line of thought in which I began these lectures, because so ghastly an emphasis would be given to every sentence by the force of passing events. It is well, then, that in the plan I have laid down for your study, we shall now be led into the examination of technical details, or abstract conditions of sentiment; so that the hours you spend with me may be times of repose from heavier thoughts. But it chances strangely that, in this course of minutely detailed study, I have first to set before you the most essential piece of human workmanship, the plow, at the very moment when—(you may see the announcement in the journals either of yesterday or the day before)—the swords of your soldiers have been sent for *to be sharpened*, and not at all to be beaten into plowshares. I permit myself, therefore, to remind you of the watchword of all my earnest writings—"Soldiers of the Plowshare, instead of Soldiers of the Sword,"—and I know it my duty to assert to you that the work we enter upon to-day is no trivial one, but full of solemn hope; the hope, namely, that among you there may be found men wise enough to lead the national passions towards the arts of peace, instead of the arts of war.

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I say, the work "we enter upon," because the first four lectures I gave in the spring were wholly prefatory; and the following three only defined for you methods of practice. To-day we begin the systematic analysis and progressive study of our subject.

2. In general, the three great, or fine, Arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, are thought of as distinct from the lower and more mechanical formative arts, such as carpentry or pottery. But we cannot, either verbally, or with any practical advantage, admit such classification. How are we to distinguish painting on canvas from painting on china?—or painting on china from painting on glass?—or painting on glass from infusion of color into any vitreous substance, such as enamel?—or the infusion of color into glass and enamel from the infusion of color into wool or silk, and weaving of pictures in tapestry, or patterns in dress? You will find that although, in ultimately accurate use of the word, painting must be held to mean only the laying of a pigment on a surface with a soft instrument; yet, in broad comparison of the functions of Art, we must conceive of one and the same great artistic faculty, as governing *every mode of disposing colors in a permanent relation on, or in, a solid substance*; whether it be by tinting canvas, or dyeing stuffs; inlaying metals with fused flint, or coating walls with colored stone.

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3. Similarly, the word 'Sculpture,'—though in ultimate accuracy it is to be limited to the development of form in hard substances by cutting away portions of their mass—in broad definition, must be held to signify *the reduction of any shapeless mass of solid matter into an intended shape*, whatever the consistence of the substance, or nature of the instrument employed; whether we carve a granite mountain, or a piece of box-wood, and whether we use, for our forming instrument, ax, or hammer, or chisel, or our own hands, or water to soften, or fire to fuse;—whenever and however we bring a shapeless thing into shape, we do so under the laws of the one great art of Sculpture.

4. Having thus broadly defined painting and sculpture, we shall see that there is, in the third place, a class of work separated from both, in a specific manner, and including a great group of arts which neither, of necessity, *tint*, nor for the sake of form merely, *shape* the substances they deal with; but construct or arrange them with a view to the resistance of some external force. We construct, for instance, a table with a flat top, and some support of prop, or leg, proportioned in strength to such weights as the table is intended to carry. We construct a ship out of planks, or plates of iron, with reference to certain forces of impact to be sustained, and of inertia to be overcome; or we construct a wall or roof with distinct reference to forces of pressure and oscillation, to be sustained or guarded against; and, therefore, in every case, with especial consideration of the strength of our materials, and the nature of that strength, elastic, tenacious, brittle, and the like.

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Now although this group of arts nearly always involves the putting of two or more separate pieces together, we must not define it by that accident. The blade of an oar is not less formed with reference to external force than if it were made of many pieces; and the frame of a boat, whether hollowed out of a tree-trunk, or constructed of planks nailed together, is essentially the same piece of art; to be judged by its buoyancy and capacity of progression. Still, from the most wonderful piece of all architecture, the human skeleton, to this simple one,<sup>[5]</sup> the plowshare, on which it depends for its subsistence, *the putting of two or more pieces together* is curiously necessary to the perfectness of every fine instrument; and the peculiar mechanical work of Dædalus,—inlaying,—becomes all the more delightful to us in external aspect, because, as in the jawbone of a Saurian, or the wood of a bow, it is essential to the finest capacities of tension and resistance.

5. And observe how unbroken the ascent from this, the simplest architecture, to the loftiest. The placing of the timbers in a ship's stem, and the laying of the stones in a bridge buttress, are similar in art to the construction of the plowshare, differing in no essential point, either in that they deal with other materials, or because, of the three things produced, one has to divide earth by advancing through it, another to divide water by advancing through it, and the third to divide water which advances against it. And again, the buttress of a bridge differs only from that of a cathedral in having less weight to sustain, and more to resist. We can find no term in the gradation, from the plowshare to the cathedral buttress, at which we can set a logical distinction.

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6. Thus then we have simply three divisions of Art—one, that of giving colors to substance; another, that of giving form to it without question of resistance to force; and the third, that of giving form or position which will make it capable of such resistance. All the fine arts are embraced under these three divisions. Do not think that it is only a logical or scientific affectation to mass them together in this manner; it is, on the contrary, of the first practical importance to understand that the painter's faculty, or masterhood over color, being as subtle as a musician's over sound, must be looked to for the government of every operation in which color is employed; and that, in the same manner, the appliance of any art whatsoever to minor objects cannot be right, unless under the direction of a true master of that art. Under the present system, you keep your Academician occupied only in producing tinted pieces of canvas to be shown in frames, and smooth pieces of marble to be placed in niches; while you expect your builder or constructor to design colored patterns in stone and brick, and your china-ware merchant to keep a separate body of workwomen who can paint china, but nothing else. By this division of labor, you ruin all the arts at once. The work of the Academician becomes mean and effeminate, because he is not used to treat color on a grand scale and in rough materials; and your manufactures become base, because no well-educated person sets hand to them. And therefore it is necessary to understand, not merely as a logical statement, but as a practical necessity, that wherever beautiful color is to be arranged, you need a Master of Painting; and wherever noble form is to be given, a Master of



Sculpture; and wherever complex mechanical force is to be resisted; a Master of Architecture.

7. But over this triple division there must rule another yet more important. Any of these three arts may be either imitative of natural objects or limited to useful appliance. You may either paint a picture that represents a scene, or your street door, to keep it from rotting; you may mold a statue, or a plate; build the resemblance of a cluster of lotus stalks, or only a square pier. Generally speaking, Painting and Sculpture will be imitative, and Architecture merely useful; but there is a great deal of Sculpture—as this crystal ball,<sup>[6]</sup> for instance, which is not imitative, and a great deal of architecture which, to some extent, is so, as the so-called foils of Gothic apertures; and for many other reasons you will find it necessary to keep distinction clear in your minds between the arts—of whatever kind—which are imitative, and produce a resemblance or image of something which is not present; and those which are limited to the production of some useful reality, as the blade of a knife, or the wall of a house. You will perceive also, as we advance, that sculpture and painting are indeed in this respect only one art; and that we shall have constantly to speak and think of them as simply *graphic*, whether with chisel or color, their principal function being to make us, in the words of Aristotle, "θεωρητικοι του περι τα σωματα καλλους" (Polit. 8. 3), "having capacity and habit of contemplation of the beauty that is in material things;" while architecture, and its correlative arts, are to be practiced under quite other conditions of sentiment.

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8. Now it is obvious that so far as the fine arts consist either in imitation or mechanical construction, the right judgment of them must depend on our knowledge of the things they imitate, and forces they resist: and my function of teaching here would (for instance) so far resolve itself, either into demonstration that this painting of a peach<sup>[7]</sup> does resemble a peach, or explanation of the way in which this plowshare (for instance) is shaped so as to throw the earth aside with least force of thrust. And in both of these methods of study, though of course your own diligence must be your chief master, to a certain extent your Professor of Art can always guide you securely, and can show you, either that the image does truly resemble what it attempts to resemble, or that the structure is rightly prepared for the service it has to perform. But there is yet another virtue of fine art which is, perhaps, exactly that about which you will expect your Professor to teach you most, and which, on the contrary, is exactly that about which you must teach yourselves all that it is essential to learn.

[Pg 7]

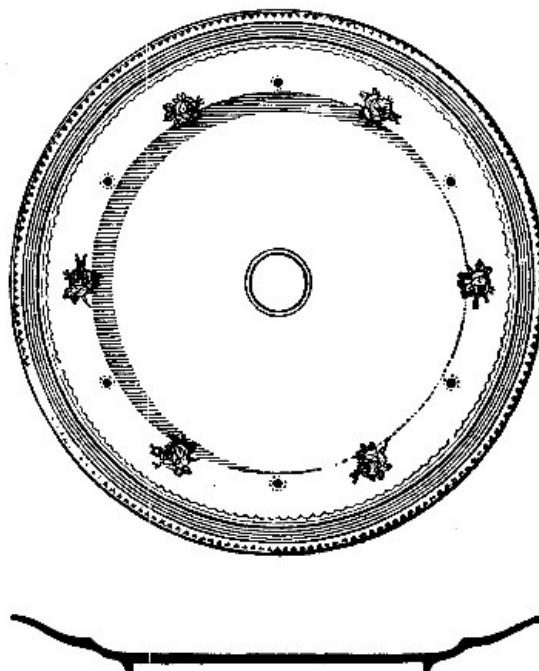


Fig. 1

9. I have here in my hand one of the simplest possible examples of the union of the graphic and constructive powers,—one of my breakfast plates. Since all the finely architectural arts, we said, began in the shaping of the cup and the platter, we will begin, ourselves, with the platter.

Why has it been made round? For two structural reasons: first, that the greatest holding surface may be gathered into the smallest space; and secondly, that in being pushed past other things on the table, it may come into least contact with them.

Next, why has it a rim? For two other structural reasons: first, that it is convenient to put salt or mustard upon; but secondly, and chiefly, that the plate may be easily laid hold of. The rim is the simplest form of continuous handle.

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Farther, to keep it from soiling the cloth, it will be wise to put this ridge beneath, round the bottom; for as the rim is the simplest possible form of continuous handle, so this is the simplest form of continuous leg. And we get the section given beneath the figure for the essential one of a rightly made platter.

10. Thus far our art has been strictly utilitarian, having respect to conditions of collision, of

carriage, and of support. But now, on the surface of our piece of pottery, here are various bands and spots of color which are presumably set there to make it pleasanter to the eye. Six of the spots, seen closely, you discover are intended to represent flowers. These then have as distinctly a graphic purpose as the other properties of the plate have an architectural one, and the first critical question we have to ask about them is, whether they are like roses or not. I will anticipate what I have to say in subsequent Lectures so far as to assure you that, if they are to be like roses at all, the liker they can be, the better. Do not suppose, as many people will tell you, that because this is a common manufactured article, your roses on it are the better for being ill-painted, or half-painted. If they had been painted by the same hand that did this peach, the plate would have been all the better for it; but, as it chanced, there was no hand such as William Hunt's to paint them, and their graphic power is not distinguished. In any case, however, that graphic power must have been subordinate to their effect as pink spots, while the band of green-blue round the plate's edge, and the spots of gold, pretend to no graphic power at all, but are meaningless spaces of color or metal. Still less have they any mechanical office: they add nowise to the serviceableness of the plate; and their agreeableness, if they possess any, depends, therefore, neither on any imitative, nor any structural, character; but on some inherent pleasantness in themselves, either of mere colors to the eye, (as of taste to the tongue,) or in the placing of those colors in relations which obey some mental principle of order, or physical principle of harmony.

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11. These abstract relations and inherent pleasantnesses, whether in space, number, or time, and whether of colors or sounds, form what we may properly term the musical or harmonic element in every art; and the study of them is an entirely separate science. It is the branch of art-philosophy to which the word 'æsthetics' should be strictly limited, being the inquiry into the nature of things that in themselves are pleasant to the human senses or instincts, though they represent nothing, and serve for nothing, their only service *being* their pleasantness. Thus it is the province of æsthetics to tell you, (if you did not know it before,) that the taste and color of a peach are pleasant, and to ascertain, if it be ascertainable, (and you have any curiosity to know,) why they are so.

12. The information would, I presume, to most of you, be gratuitous. If it were not, and you chanced to be in a sick state of body in which you disliked peaches, it would be, for the time, to you false information, and, so far as it was true of other people, to you useless. Nearly the whole study of æsthetics is in like manner either gratuitous or useless. Either you like the right things without being recommended to do so, or, if you dislike them, your mind cannot be changed by lectures on the laws of taste. You recollect the story of Thackeray, provoked, as he was helping himself to strawberries, by a young coxcomb's telling him that "he never took fruit or sweets." "That," replied, or is said to have replied, Thackeray, "is because you are a sot, and a glutton." And the whole science of æsthetics is, in the depth of it, expressed by one passage of Goethe's in the end of the second part of Faust;—the notable one that follows the song of the Lemures, when the angels enter to dispute with the fiends for the soul of Faust. They enter singing—"Pardon to sinners and life to the dust." Mephistopheles hears them first, and exclaims to his troop, "Discord I hear, and filthy jingling"—"Mis-töne höre ich: garstiges Geklimper." This, you see, is the extreme of bad taste in music. Presently the angelic host begin strewing roses, which discomfits the diabolic crowd altogether. Mephistopheles in vain calls to them—"What do you duck and shrink for—is that proper hellish behavior? Stand fast, and let them strew"—"Was duckt und zuckt ihr; ist das Hellen-brauch? So haltet stand, und lasst sie streuen." There you have also, the extreme, of bad taste in sight and smell. And in the whole passage is a brief embodiment for you of the ultimate fact that all æsthetics depend on the health of soul and body, and the proper exercise of both, not only through years, but generations. Only by harmony of both collateral and successive lives can the great doctrine of the Muses be received which enables men "χαρπευ ορθως,"—"to have pleasure rightly;" and there is no other definition of the beautiful, nor of any subject of delight to the æsthetic faculty, than that it is what one noble spirit has created, seen and felt by another of similar or equal nobility. So much as there is in you of ox, or of swine, perceives no beauty, and creates none: what is human in you, in exact proportion to the perfectness of its humanity, can create it, and receive.

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13. Returning now to the very elementary form in which the appeal to our æsthetic virtue is made in our breakfast-plate, you notice that there are two distinct kinds of pleasantness attempted. One by hues of color; the other by proportions of space. I have called these the musical elements of the arts relating to sight; and there are indeed two complete sciences, one of the combinations of color, and the other of the combinations of line and form, which might each of them separately engage us in as intricate study as that of the science of music. But of the two, the science of color is, in the Greek sense, the more musical, being one of the divisions of the Apolline power; and it is so practically educational, that if we are not using the faculty for color to discipline nations, they will infallibly use it themselves as a means of corruption. Both music and color are naturally influences of peace; but in the war trumpet, and the war shield, in the battle song and battle standard, they have concentrated by beautiful imagination the cruel passions of men; and there is nothing in all the Divina Commedia of history more grotesque, yet more frightful, than the fact that, from the almost fabulous period when the insanity and impiety of war wrote themselves in the symbols of the shields of the Seven against Thebes, colors have been the sign and stimulus of the most furious and fatal passions that have rent the nations: blue against green, in the decline of the Roman Empire; black against white, in that of Florence; red against white, in the wars of the Royal houses in England; and at this moment, red against white, in the contest of anarchy and loyalty, in all the world.

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14. On the other hand, the directly ethical influence of color in the sky, the trees, flowers, and

colored creatures round us, and in our own various arts massed under the one name of painting, is so essential and constant that we cease to recognize it, because we are never long enough altogether deprived of it to feel our need; and the mental diseases induced by the influence of corrupt color are as little suspected, or traced to their true source, as the bodily weaknesses resulting from atmospheric miasmata.

15. The second musical science which belongs peculiarly to sculpture, (and to painting, so far as it represents form,) consists in the disposition of beautiful masses. That is to say, beautiful surfaces limited by beautiful lines. Beautiful *surfaces*, observe; and remember what is noted in my Fourth Lecture of the difference between a space and a mass. If you have at any time examined carefully, or practiced from, the drawings of shells placed in your copying series, you cannot but have felt the difference in the grace between the aspects of the same line, when inclosing a rounded or unrounded space. The exact science of sculpture is that of the relations between outline and the solid form it limits; and it does not matter whether that relation be indicated by drawing or carving, so long as the expression of solid form is the mental purpose; it is the science always of the beauty of relation in three dimensions. To take the simplest possible line of continuous limit—the circle: the flat disk inclosed by it may indeed be made an element of decoration, though a very meager one; but its relative mass, the ball, being gradated in three dimensions, is always delightful. Here<sup>[8]</sup> is at once the simplest, and, in mere patient mechanism, the most skillful, piece of sculpture I can possibly show you,—a piece of the purest rock-crystal, chiseled, (I believe, by mere toil of hand,) into a perfect sphere. Imitating nothing, constructing nothing; sculpture for sculpture's sake of purest natural substance into simplest primary form.

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16. Again. Out of the nacre of any mussel or oyster shell you might cut, at your pleasure, any quantity of small flat circular disks of the prettiest color and luster. To some extent, such tinsel or foil of shell *is* used pleasantly for decoration. But the mussel or oyster becoming itself an unwilling modeler, agglutinates its juice into three dimensions, and the fact of the surface being now geometrically gradated, together with the savage instinct of attributing value to what is difficult to obtain, make the little boss so precious in men's sight, that wise eagerness of search for the kingdom of heaven can be likened to their eagerness of search for *it*; and the gates of Paradise can be no otherwise rendered so fair to their poor intelligence, as by telling them that every gate was of "one pearl."

17. But take note here. We have just seen that the sum of the perceptive faculty is expressed in these words of Aristotle's, "to take pleasure rightly" or straightly—*χαίρειν ὀρθῶς*. Now, it is not possible to do the direct opposite of that,—to take pleasure iniquitously or obliquely—*χαίρειν ἀδικῶς* or *σκολιῶς*,—more than you do in enjoying a thing because your neighbor cannot get it. You may enjoy a thing legitimately because it is rare, and cannot be seen often (as you do a fine aurora, or a sunset, or an unusually lovely flower); that is Nature's way of stimulating your attention. But if you enjoy it because your neighbor cannot have it,—and, remember, all value attached to pearls more than glass beads, is merely and purely for that cause,—then you rejoice through the worst of idolatries, covetousness; and neither arithmetic, nor writing, nor any other so-called essential of education, is now so vitally necessary to the population of Europe, as such acquaintance with the principles of intrinsic value, as may result in the iconoclasm of jewelry; and in the clear understanding that we are not, in that instinct, civilized, but yet remain wholly savage, so far as we care for display of this selfish kind.

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You think, perhaps, I am quitting my subject, and proceeding, as it is too often with appearance of justice alleged against me, into irrelevant matter. Pardon me; the end, not only of these Lectures, but of my whole Professorship, would be accomplished,—and far more than that,—if only the English nation could be made to understand that the beauty which is indeed to be a joy forever, must be a joy for all; and that though the idolatry may not have been wholly divine which sculptured gods, the idolatry is wholly diabolic, which, for vulgar display, sculpts diamonds.

18. To go back to the point under discussion. A pearl, or a glass bead, may owe its pleasantness in some degree to its luster as well as to its roundness. But a mere and simple ball of unpolished stone is enough for sculpturesque value. You may have noticed that the quatrefoil used in the Ducal Palace of Venice owes its complete loveliness in distant effect to the finishing of its cusps. The extremity of the cusp is a mere ball of Istrian marble; and consider how subtle the faculty of sight must be, since it recognizes at any distance, and is gratified by, the mystery of the termination of cusp obtained by the gradated light on the ball.

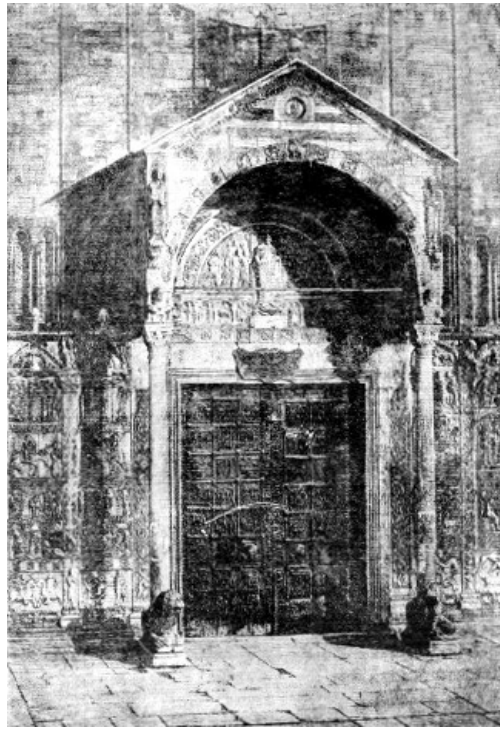
In that Venetian tracery this simplest element of sculptured form is used sparingly, as the most precious that can be employed to finish the façade. But alike in our own, and the French, central Gothic, the ball-flower is lavished on every line—and in your St. Mary's spire, and the Salisbury spire, and the towers of Notre Dame of Paris, the rich pleasantness of decoration,—indeed, their so-called 'decorative style,'—consists only in being daintily beset with stone balls. It is true the balls are modified into dim likeness of flowers; but do you trace the resemblance to the rose in their distant, which is their intended, effect?

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19. But, farther, let the ball have motion; then the form it generates will be that of a cylinder. You have, perhaps, thought that pure early English architecture depended for its charm on visibility of construction. It depends for its charm altogether on the abstract harmony of groups of cylinders,<sup>[9]</sup> arbitrarily bent into moldings, and arbitrarily associated as shafts, having no *real* relation to construction whatsoever, and a theoretical relation so subtle that none of us had seen it till Professor Willis worked it out for us.

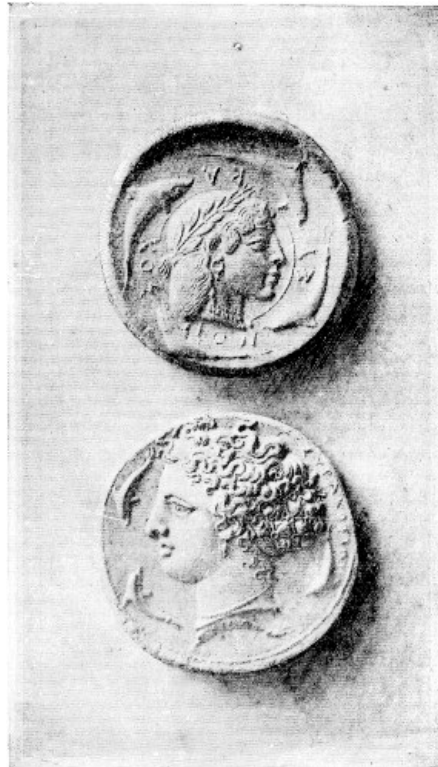


20. And now, proceeding to analysis of higher sculpture, you may have observed the importance I have attached to the porch of San Zenone, at Verona, by making it, among your standards, the first of the group which is to illustrate the system of sculpture and architecture founded on faith in a future life. That porch, fortunately represented in the photograph, from which Plate I. has been engraved, under a clear and pleasant light, furnishes you with examples of sculpture of every kind, from the flattest incised bas-relief to solid statues, both in marble and bronze. And the two points I have been pressing upon you are conclusively exhibited here, namely,—(1) that sculpture is essentially the production of a pleasant bossiness or roundness of surface; (2) that the pleasantness of that bossy condition to the eye is irrespective of imitation on one side, and of structure on the other.



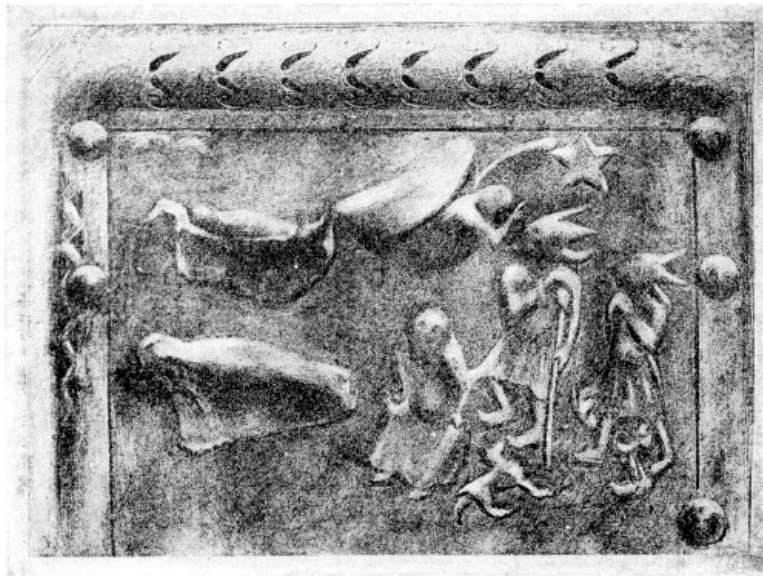
I.

**PORCH OF SAN ZENONE. VERONA.**



II.

**THE ARETHUSA OF SYRACUSE.**



III.

THE WARNING TO THE KINGS  
SAN ZENONE. VERONA.

21. (1.) Sculpture is essentially the production of a pleasant bossiness or roundness of surface. [Pg 15]

If you look from some distance at these two engravings of Greek coins, (place the book open, so that you can see the opposite plate three or four yards off,) you will find the relief on each of them simplifies itself into a pearl-like portion of a sphere, with exquisitely gradated light on its surface. When you look at them nearer, you will see that each smaller portion into which they are divided—cheek, or brow, or leaf, or tress of hair—resolves itself also into a rounded or undulated surface, pleasant by gradation of light. Every several surface is delightful in itself, as a shell, or a tuft of rounded moss, or the bossy masses of distant forest would be. That these intricately modulated masses present some resemblance to a girl's face, such as the Syracusans imagined that of the water-goddess Arethusa, is entirely a secondary matter; the primary condition is that the masses shall be beautifully rounded, and disposed with due discretion and order.

22. (2.) It is difficult for you, at first, to feel this order and beauty of surface, apart from the imitation. But you can see there is a pretty disposition of, and relation between, the projections of a fir-cone, though the studded spiral imitates nothing. Order exactly the same in kind, only much more complex; and an abstract beauty of surface rendered definite by increase and decline of light—for every curve of surface has its own luminous law, and the light and shade on a parabolic solid differs, specifically, from that on an elliptical or spherical one—it is the essential business of the sculptor to obtain; as it is the essential business of a painter to get good color, whether he imitates anything or not. At a distance from the picture, or carving, where the things represented become absolutely unintelligible, we must yet be able to say, at a glance, "That is good painting, or good carving."

And you will be surprised to find, when you try the experiment, how much the eye must instinctively judge in this manner. Take the front of San Zenone, for instance, Plate I. You will find it impossible, without a lens, to distinguish in the bronze gates, and in great part of the wall, anything that their bosses represent. You cannot tell whether the sculpture is of men, animals, or trees; only you feel it to be composed of pleasant projecting masses; you acknowledge that both gates and wall are, somehow, delightfully roughened; and only afterwards, by slow degrees, can you make out what this roughness means; nay, though here (Plate III.) I magnify<sup>[10]</sup> one of the bronze plates of the gate to a scale, which gives you the same advantage as if you saw it quite close, in the reality,—you may still be obliged to me for the information that *this* boss represents the Madonna asleep in her little bed; and this smaller boss, the Infant Christ in His; and this at the top, a cloud with an angel coming out of it; and these jagged bosses, two of the Three Kings, with their crowns on, looking up to the star, (which is intelligible enough, I admit); but what this straggling, three-legged boss beneath signifies, I suppose neither you nor I can tell, unless it be the shepherd's dog, who has come suddenly upon the Kings with their crowns on, and is greatly startled at them. [Pg 16]

23. Farther, and much more definitely, the pleasantness of the surface decoration is independent of structure; that is to say, of any architectural requirement of stability. The greater part of the sculpture here is exclusively ornamentation of a flat wall, or of door-paneling; only a small portion of the church front is thus treated, and the sculpture has no more to do with the form of the building than a piece of lace veil would have, suspended beside its gates on a festal day: the proportions of shaft and arch might be altered in a hundred different ways without diminishing their stability; and the pillars would stand more safely on the ground than on the backs of these carved animals. [Pg 17]

24. I wish you especially to notice these points, because the false theory that ornamentation should be merely decorated structure is so pretty and plausible, that it is likely to take away your attention from the far more important abstract conditions of design. Structure should never be

contradicted, and in the best buildings it is pleasantly exhibited and enforced: in this very porch the joints of every stone are visible, and you will find me in the Fifth Lecture insisting on this clearness of its anatomy as a merit; yet so independent is the mechanical structure of the true design, that when I begin my Lectures on Architecture, the first building I shall give you as a standard will be one in which the structure is wholly concealed. It will be the Baptistry of Florence, which is, in reality, as much a buttressed chapel with a vaulted roof, as the Chapter House of York;—but round it, in order to conceal that buttressed structure, (not to decorate, observe, but to *conceal*.) a flat external wall is raised; simplifying the whole to a mere hexagonal box, like a wooden piece of Tunbridge ware, on the surface of which the eye and intellect are to be interested by the relations of dimension and curve between pieces of incrusting marble of different colors, which have no more to do with the real make of the building than the diaper of a Harlequin's jacket has to do with his bones.

25. The sense of abstract proportion, on which the enjoyment of such a piece of art entirely depends, is one of the æsthetic faculties which nothing can develop but time and education. It belongs only to highly trained nations; and, among them, to their most strictly refined classes, though the germs of it are found, as part of their innate power, in every people capable of art. It has for the most part vanished at present from the English mind, in consequence of our eager desire for excitement, and for the kind of splendor that exhibits wealth, careless of dignity; so that, I suppose, there are very few now even of our best trained Londoners who know the difference between the design of Whitehall and that of any modern club-house in Pall Mall. The order and harmony which, in his enthusiastic account of the Theater of Epidaurus, Pausanias insists on before beauty, can only be recognized by stern order and harmony in our daily lives; and the perception of them is as little to be compelled, or taught suddenly, as the laws of still finer choice in the conception of dramatic incident which regulate poetic sculpture.

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26. And now, at last, I think, we can sketch out the subject before us in a clear light. We have a structural art, divine and human, of which the investigation comes under the general term Anatomy; whether the junctions or joints be in mountains, or in branches of trees, or in buildings, or in bones of animals. We have next a musical art, falling into two distinct divisions—one using colors, the other masses, for its elements of composition; lastly, we have an imitative art, concerned with the representation of the outward appearances of things. And, for many reasons, I think it best to begin with imitative Sculpture; that being defined as *the art which, by the musical disposition of masses, imitates anything of which the imitation is justly pleasant to us; and does so in accordance with structural laws having due reference to the materials employed.*

So that you see our task will involve the immediate inquiry what the things are of which the imitation is justly pleasant to us: what, in few words,—if we are to be occupied in the making of graven images,—we ought to like to make images *of*. Secondly, after having determined its subject, what degree of imitation or likeness we ought to desire in our graven image; and, lastly, under what limitations demanded by structure and material, such likeness may be obtained.

These inquiries I shall endeavor to pursue with you to some practical conclusion, in my next four Lectures; and in the sixth, I will briefly sketch the actual facts that have taken place in the development of sculpture by the two greatest schools of it that hitherto have existed in the world.

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27. The tenor of our next Lecture, then, must be an inquiry into the real nature of Idolatry; that is to say, the invention and service of Idols: and, in the interval, may I commend to your own thoughts this question, not wholly irrelevant, yet which I cannot pursue; namely, whether the God to whom we have so habitually prayed for deliverance "from battle, murder, and sudden death," *is* indeed, seeing that the present state of Christendom is the result of a thousand years' praying to that effect, "as the gods of the heathen who were but idols;" or whether—(and observe, one or other of these things *must* be true)—whether our prayers to Him have been, by this much, worse than Idolatry;—that heathen prayer was true prayer to false gods; and our prayers have been false prayers to the True One?

### FOOTNOTES:

[5] I had a real plowshare on my lecture-table; but it would interrupt the drift of the statements in the text too long if I attempted here to illustrate by figures the relation of the colter to the share, and of the hard to the soft pieces of metal in the share itself.

[6] A sphere of rock crystal, cut in Japan, enough imaginable by the reader, without a figure.

[7] One of William Hunt's peaches; not, I am afraid, imaginable altogether, but still less representable by figure.

[8] The crystal ball above mentioned.

[9] All grandest effects in moldings may be, and for the most part have been, obtained by rolls and cavettos of circular (segmental) section. More refined sections, as that of the fluting of a Doric shaft, are only of use near the eye and in beautiful stone; and the pursuit of them was one of the many errors of later Gothic. The statement in the text that the moldings, even of best time, "have no real relation to construction," is scarcely strong enough: they in fact contend with, and deny the construction, their principal purpose seeming to be the concealment of the joints of the voussoirs.

[10] Some of the most precious work done for me by my assistant, Mr. Burgess, during the course of these Lectures, consisted in making enlarged drawings from portions of

## LECTURE II.

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### IDOLATRY.

*November, 1870.*

28. Beginning with the simple conception of sculpture as the art of fiction in solid substance, we are now to consider what its subject should be. What—having the gift of imagery—should we by preference endeavor to image? A question which is, indeed, subordinate to the deeper one—why we should wish to image anything at all.

29. Some years ago, having been always desirous that the education of women should begin in learning how to cook, I got leave, one day, for a little girl of eleven years old to exchange, much to her satisfaction, her schoolroom for the kitchen. But as ill-fortune would have it, there was some pastry toward, and she was left unadvisedly in command of some delicately rolled paste; whereof she made no pies, but an unlimited quantity of cats and mice.

Now you may read the works of the gravest critics of art from end to end; but you will find, at last, they can give you no other true account of the spirit of sculpture than that it is an irresistible human instinct for the making of cats and mice, and other imitable living creatures, in such permanent form that one may play with the images at leisure.

Play with them, or love them, or fear them, or worship them. The cat may become the goddess Pasht, and the mouse, in the hand of a sculptured king, enforce his enduring words "εξ εμε τις ὀρεων ευσεβης εστω"; but the great mimetic instinct underlies all such purpose; and is zooplactic, —life-shaping,—alike in the reverent and the impious.

30. Is, I say, and has been, hitherto; none of us dare say that it will be. I shall have to show you hereafter that the greater part of the technic energy of men, as yet, has indicated a kind of childhood; and that the race becomes, if not more wise, at least more manly,<sup>[11]</sup> with every gained century. I can fancy that all this sculpturing and painting of ours may be looked back upon, in some distant time, as a kind of doll-making, and that the words of Sir Isaac Newton may be smiled at no more: only it will not be for stars that we desert our stone dolls, but for men. When the day comes, as come it must, in which we no more deface and defile God's image in living clay, I am not sure that we shall any of us care so much for the images made of Him, in burnt clay.

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31. But, hitherto, the energy of growth in any people may be almost directly measured by their passion for imitative art; namely, for sculpture, or for the drama, which is living and speaking sculpture, or, as in Greece, for both; and in national as in actual childhood, it is not merely the *making*, but the *making-believe*; not merely the acting for the sake of the scene, but acting for the sake of acting, that is delightful. And, of the two mimetic arts, the drama, being more passionate, and involving conditions of greater excitement and luxury, is usually in its excellence the sign of culminating strength in the people; while fine sculpture, requiring always submission to severe law, is an unfailing proof of their being in early and active progress. *There is no instance of fine sculpture being produced by a nation either torpid, weak, or in decadence.* Their drama may gain in grace and wit; but their sculpture, in days of decline, is *always* base.

32. If my little lady in the kitchen had been put in command of colors, as well as of dough, and if the paste would have taken the colors, we may be sure her mice would have been painted brown, and her cats tortoiseshell; and this, partly indeed for the added delight and prettiness of color itself, but more for the sake of absolute realization to her eyes and mind. Now all the early sculpture of the most accomplished nations has been thus colored, rudely or finely; and therefore you see at once how necessary it is that we should keep the term 'graphic' for imitative art generally; since no separation can at first be made between carving and painting, with reference to the mental powers exerted in, or addressed by, them. In the earliest known art of the world, a reindeer hunt may be scratched in outline on the flat side of a clean-picked bone, and a reindeer's head carved out of the end of it; both these are flint-knife work, and, strictly speaking, sculpture: but the scratched outline is the beginning of drawing, and the carved head of sculpture proper. When the spaces inclosed by the scratched outline are filled with color, the coloring soon becomes a principal means of effect; so that, in the engraving of an Egyptian-color bas-relief (S. 101), Rosellini has been content to miss the outlining incisions altogether, and represent it as a painting only. Its proper definition is, 'painting accented by sculpture;' on the other hand, in solid colored statues,—Dresden china figures, for example,—we have pretty sculpture accented by painting; the mental purpose in both kinds of art being to obtain the utmost degree of realization possible, and the ocular impression being the same, whether the delineation is obtained by engraving or painting. For, as I pointed out to you in my Fifth Lecture, everything is seen by the eye as patches of color, and of color only;—a fact which the Greeks knew well; so that when it becomes a question in the dialogue of Minos, "τινι οντι τη οπει οραται τα ορωμενα," the answer is "αισθησει ταυτη τη δια των οφθαλμων δηλωση ημιν τα

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χρωματα."—"What kind of power is the sight with which we see things? It is that sense which, through the eyes, can reveal *colors* to us."

33. And now observe that, while the graphic arts begin in the mere mimetic effort, they proceed, as they obtain more perfect realization, to act under the influence of a stronger and higher instinct. They begin by scratching the reindeer, the most interesting object of sight. But presently, as the human creature rises in scale of intellect, it proceeds to scratch, not the most interesting object of sight only, but the most interesting object of imagination; not the reindeer, but the Maker and Giver of the reindeer. And the second great condition for the advance of the art of sculpture is that the race should possess, in addition to the mimetic instinct, the realistic or idolizing instinct; the desire to see as substantial the powers that are unseen, and bring near those that are far off, and to possess and cherish those that are strange. To make in some way tangible and visible the nature of the gods—to illustrate and explain it by symbols; to bring the immortals out of the recesses of the clouds, and make them Penates; to bring back the dead from darkness, and make them Lares.

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34. Our conception of this tremendous and universal human passion has been altogether narrowed by the current idea that Pagan religious art consisted only, or chiefly, in giving personality to the gods. The personality was never doubted; it was visibility, interpretation, and possession that the hearts of men sought. Possession, first of all—the getting hold of some hewn log of wild olive-wood that would fall on its knees if it was pulled from its pedestal—and, afterwards, slowly clearing manifestation; the exactly right expression is used in Lucian's dream, —Φειδίας εδειξε τον Δια; "Showed<sup>[12]</sup> Zeus;" manifested him; nay, in a certain sense, brought forth, or created, as you have it, in Anacreon's ode to the Rose, of the birth of Athena herself,—

πολεμοκλονον τ' Αθηνην  
κορυφης εδεικνυε Ζευς

But I will translate the passage from Lucian to you at length—it is in every way profitable.

35. "There came to me, in the healing<sup>[13]</sup> night, a divine dream, so clear that it missed nothing of the truth itself; yes, and still after all this time, the shapes of what I saw remain in my sight, and the sound of what I heard dwells in my ears"—(note the lovely sense of εναυλος—the sound being as of a stream passing always by in the same channel)—"so distinct was everything to me. Two women laid hold of my hands and pulled me, each towards herself, so violently, that I had like to have been pulled asunder; and they cried out against one another,—the one, that she resolved to have me to herself, being indeed her own; and the other, that it was vain for her to claim what belonged to others;—and the one who first claimed me for her own was like a hard worker, and had strength as a man's; and her hair was dusty, and her hand full of horny places, and her dress fastened tight about her, and the folds of it loaded with white marble-dust, so that she looked just as my uncle used to look when he was filing stones: but the other was pleasant in features, and delicate in form, and orderly in her dress; and so, in the end, they left it to me to decide, after hearing what they had to say, with which of them I would go; and first the hard-featured and masculine one spoke:—

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36. "'Dear child, I am the Art of Image-sculpture, which yesterday you began to learn; and I am as one of your own people, and of your house, for your grandfather' (and she named my mother's father) 'was a stone-cutter; and both your uncles had good name through me: and if you will keep yourself well clear of the sillinesses and fluent follies that come from this creature,' (and she pointed to the other woman,) 'and will follow me, and live with me, first of all, you shall be brought up as a man should be, and have strong shoulders; and, besides that, you shall be kept well quit of all restless desires, and you shall never be obliged to go away into any foreign places, leaving your own country and the people of your house; *neither shall all men praise you for your talk.*<sup>[14]</sup> And you must not despise this rude serviceableness of my body, neither this meanness of my dusty dress; for, pushing on in their strength from such things as these, that great Phidias revealed Zeus, and Polyclitus wrought out Hera, and Myron was praised, and Praxiteles marveled at: therefore are these men worshiped with the gods.'"

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37. There is a beautiful ambiguity in the use of the preposition with the genitive in this last sentence. "Pushing on from these things" means indeed, justly, that the sculptors rose from a mean state to a noble one; but not as *leaving* the mean state,—not as, from a hard life, attaining to a soft one,—but as being helped and strengthened by the rough life to do what was greatest. Again, "worshiped with the gods" does not mean that they are thought of as in any sense equal to, or like to, the gods, but as being on the side of the gods against what is base and ungodly; and that the kind of worth which is in them is therefore indeed worshipful, as having its source with the gods. Finally, observe that every one of the expressions used of the four sculptors is definitely the best that Lucian could have chosen. Phidias carved like one who had seen Zeus, and had only to *reveal* him; Polyclitus, in labor of intellect, completed his sculpture by just law, and *wrought* out Hera; Myron was of all most *praised*, because he did best what pleased the vulgar; and Praxiteles the most *wondered at*, or admired, because he bestowed utmost exquisiteness of beauty.

38. I am sorry not to go on with the dream: the more refined lady, as you may remember, is liberal or gentlemanly Education, and prevails at last; so that Lucian becomes an author instead of a sculptor, I think to his own regret, though to our present benefit. One more passage of his I must refer you to, as illustrative of the point before us; the description of the temple of the Syrian



Hieropolis, where he explains the absence of the images of the sun and moon. "In the temple itself," he says, "on the left hand as one goes in, there is set first the throne of the sun; but no form of him is thereon, for of these two powers alone, the sun and the moon, they show no carved images. And I also learned why this is their law, for they say that it is permissible, indeed, to make of the other gods, graven images, since the forms of them are not visible to all men. But Helios and Selenia are everywhere clear-bright, and all men behold them; what need is there therefore for sculptured work of these, who appear in the air?"

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39. This, then, is the second instinct necessary to sculpture; the desire for the manifestation, description, and companionship of unknown powers; and for possession of a bodily substance—the 'bronze Strasbourg,' which you can embrace, and hang immortelles on the head of—instead of an abstract idea. But if you get nothing more in the depth of the national mind than these two feelings, the mimetic and idolizing instincts, there may be still no progress possible for the arts except in delicacy of manipulation and accumulative caprice of design. You must have not only the idolizing instinct, but an εθος which chooses the right thing to idolize! Else, you will get states of art like those in China or India, non-progressive, and in great part diseased and frightful, being wrought under the influence of foolish terror, or foolish admiration. So that a third condition, completing and confirming both the others, must exist in order to the development of the creative power.

40. This third condition is that the heart of the nation shall be set on the discovery of just or equal law, and shall be from day to day developing that law more perfectly. The Greek school of sculpture is formed during, and in consequence of, the national effort to discover the nature of justice; the Tuscan, during, and in consequence of, the national effort to discover the nature of justification. I assert to you at present briefly, what will, I hope, be the subject of prolonged illustration hereafter.

41. Now when a nation with mimetic instinct and imaginative longing is also thus occupied earnestly in the discovery of Ethic law, that effort gradually brings precision and truth into all its manual acts; and the physical progress of sculpture, as in the Greek, so in the Tuscan, school, consists in gradually *limiting* what was before indefinite, in *verifying* what was inaccurate, and in *humanizing* what was monstrous. I might perhaps content you by showing these external phenomena, and by dwelling simply on the increasing desire of naturalness, which compels, in every successive decade of years, literally, in the sculptured images, the mimicked bones to come together, bone to his bone; and the flesh to come up upon them, until from a flattened and pinched handful of clay, respecting which you may gravely question whether it was intended for a human form at all;—by slow degrees, and added touch to touch, in increasing consciousness of the bodily truth,—at last the Aphrodite of Melos stands before you, a perfect woman. But all that search for physical accuracy is merely the external operation, in the arts, of the seeking for truth in the inner soul; it is impossible without that higher effort, and the demonstration of it would be worse than useless to you, unless I made you aware at the same time of its spiritual cause.

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42. Observe farther; the increasing truth in representation is correlative with increasing beauty in the thing to be represented. The pursuit of justice which regulates the imitative effort, regulates also the development of the race into dignity of person, as of mind; and their culminating art-skill attains the grasp of entire truth at the moment when the truth becomes most lovely. And then, ideal sculpture may go on safely into portraiture. But I shall not touch on the subject of portrait sculpture to-day; it introduces many questions of detail, and must be a matter for subsequent consideration.

43. These, then, are the three great passions which are concerned in true sculpture. I cannot find better, or, at least, more easily remembered, names for them than 'the Instincts of Mimicry, Idolatry, and Discipline;' meaning, by the last, the desire of equity and wholesome restraint, in all acts and works of life. Now of these, there is no question but that the love of Mimicry is natural and right, and the love of Discipline is natural and right. But it looks a grave question whether the yearning for Idolatry (the desire of companionship with images) is right. Whether, indeed, if such an instinct be essential to good sculpture, the art founded on it can possibly be 'fine' art.

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44. I must now beg for your close attention, because I have to point out distinctions in modes of conception which will appear trivial to you, unless accurately understood; but of an importance in the history of art which cannot be overrated.

When the populace of Paris adorned the statue of Strasbourg with immortelles, none, even the simplest of the pious decorators, would suppose that the city of Strasbourg itself, or any spirit or ghost of the city, was actually there, sitting in the Place de la Concorde. The figure was delightful to them as a visible nucleus for their fond thoughts about Strasbourg; but never for a moment supposed to *be* Strasbourg.

Similarly, they might have taken delight in a statue purporting to represent a river instead of a city,—the Rhine, or Garonne, suppose,—and have been touched with strong emotion in looking at it, if the real river were dear to them, and yet never think for an instant that the statue *was* the river.

And yet again, similarly, but much more distinctly, they might take delight in the beautiful image of a god, because it gathered and perpetuated their thoughts about that god; and yet never suppose, nor be capable of being deceived by any arguments into supposing, that the statue *was* the god.

On the other hand, if a meteoric stone fell from the sky in the sight of a savage, and he picked it up hot, he would most probably lay it aside in some, to him, sacred place, and believe the *stone itself* to be a kind of god, and offer prayer and sacrifice to it.

In like manner, any other strange or terrifying object, such, for instance, as a powerfully noxious animal or plant, he would be apt to regard in the same way; and very possibly also construct for himself frightful idols of some kind, calculated to produce upon him a vague impression of their being alive; whose imaginary anger he might deprecate or avert with sacrifice, although incapable of conceiving in them any one attribute of exalted intellectual or moral nature.

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45. If you will now refer to §§ 52-9 of my Introductory Lectures, you will find this distinction between a resolute conception, recognized for such, and an involuntary apprehension of spiritual existence, already insisted on at some length. And you will see more and more clearly as we proceed, that the deliberate and intellectually commanded conception is not idolatrous in any evil sense whatever, but is one of the grandest and wholesomest functions of the human soul; and that the essence of evil idolatry begins only in the idea or belief of a real presence of any kind, in a thing in which there is no such presence.

46. I need not say that the harm of the idolatry must depend on the certainty of the negative. If there be a real presence in a pillar of cloud, in an unconsuming flame, or in a still small voice, it is no sin to bow down before these.

But, as matter of historical fact, the idea of such presence has generally been both ignoble and false, and confined to nations of inferior race, who are often condemned to remain for ages in conditions of vile terror, destitute of thought. Nearly all Indian architecture and Chinese design arise out of such a state: so also, though in a less gross degree, Ninevite and Phœnician art, early Irish, and Scandinavian; the latter, however, with vital elements of high intellect mingled in it from the first.

But the greatest races are never grossly subject to such terror, even in their childhood, and the course of their minds is broadly divisible into three distinct stages.

47. (I.) In their infancy they begin to imitate the real animals about them, as my little girl made the cats and mice, but with an under-current of partial superstition—a sense that there must be more in the creatures than they can see; also they catch up vividly any of the fancies of the baser nations round them, and repeat these more or less apishly, yet rapidly naturalizing and beautifying them. They then connect all kinds of shapes together, compounding meanings out of the old chimeras, and inventing new ones with the speed of a running wildfire; but always getting more of man into their images, and admitting less of monster or brute; their own characters, meanwhile, expanding and purging themselves, and shaking off the feverish fancy, as springing flowers shake the earth off their stalks.

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48. (II.) In the second stage, being now themselves perfect men and women, they reach the conception of true and great gods as existent in the universe; and absolutely cease to think of them as in any wise present in statues or images; but they have now learned to make these statues beautifully human, and to surround them with attributes that may concentrate their thoughts of the gods. This is, in Greece, accurately the Pindaric time, just a little preceding the Phidian; the Phidian is already dimmed with a faint shadow of infidelity; still, the Olympic Zeus may be taken as a sufficiently central type of a statue which was no more supposed to *be* Zeus, than the gold or elephants' tusks it was made of; but in which the most splendid powers of human art were exhausted in representing a believed and honored God to the happy and holy imagination of a sincerely religious people.

49. (III.) The third stage of national existence follows, in which, the imagination having now done its utmost, and being partly restrained by the sanctities of tradition, which permit no farther change in the conceptions previously created, begins to be superseded by logical deduction and scientific investigation. At the same moment, the elder artists having done all that is possible in realizing the national conceptions of the gods, the younger ones, forbidden to change the scheme of existing representations, and incapable of doing anything better in that kind, betake themselves to refine and decorate the old ideas with more attractive skill. Their aims are thus more and more limited to manual dexterity, and their fancy paralyzed. Also in the course of centuries, the methods of every art continually improving, and being made subjects of popular inquiry, praise is now to be got, for eminence in these, from the whole mob of the nation; whereas intellectual design can never be discerned but by the few. So that in this third era we find every kind of imitative and vulgar dexterity more and more cultivated; while design and imagination are every day less cared for, and less possible.

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50. Meanwhile, as I have just said, the leading minds in literature and science become continually more logical and investigative; and once that they are established in the habit of testing facts accurately, a very few years are enough to convince all the strongest thinkers that the old imaginative religion is untenable, and cannot any longer be honestly taught in its fixed traditional form, except by ignorant persons. And at this point the fate of the people absolutely depends on the degree of moral strength into which their hearts have been already trained. If it be a strong, industrious, chaste, and honest race, the taking its old gods, or at least the old forms of them, away from it, will indeed make it deeply sorrowful and amazed; but will in no whit shake its will, nor alter its practice. Exceptional persons, naturally disposed to become drunkards, harlots, and cheats, but who had been previously restrained from indulging these dispositions by their fear of God, will, of course, break out into open vice, when that fear is removed. But the heads of the

families of the people, instructed in the pure habits and perfect delights of an honest life, and to whom the thought of a Father in heaven had been a comfort, not a restraint, will assuredly not seek relief from the discomfort of their orphanage by becoming uncharitable and vile. Also the high leaders of their thought gather their whole strength together in the gloom; and at the first entrance to this Valley of the Shadow of Death, look their new enemy full in the eyeless face of him, and subdue him, and his terror, under their feet. "Metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum, ... strepitumque Acherontis avari." This is the condition of national soul expressed by the art, and the words, of Holbein, Dürer, Shakspeare, Pope, and Goethe.

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51. But if the people, at the moment when the trial of darkness approaches, be not confirmed in moral character, but are only maintaining a superficial virtue by the aid of a spectral religion; the moment the staff of their faith is broken, the character of the race falls like a climbing plant cut from its hold: then all the earthliest vices attack it as it lies in the dust; every form of sensual and insane sin is developed; and half a century is sometimes enough to close in hopeless shame the career of the nation in literature, art, and war.

52. Notably, within the last hundred years, all religion has perished from the practically active national mind of France and England. No statesman in the senate of either country would dare to use a sentence out of their acceptedly divine Revelation, as having now a literal authority over them for their guidance, or even a suggestive wisdom for their contemplation. England, especially, has cast her Bible full in the face of her former God; and proclaimed, with open challenge to Him, her resolved worship of His declared enemy, Mammon. All the arts, therefore, founded on religion and sculpture chiefly, are here in England effete and corrupt, to a degree which arts never were hitherto in the history of mankind; and it is possible to show you the condition of sculpture living, and sculpture dead, in accurate opposition, by simply comparing the nascent Pisan school in Italy with the existing school in England.

53. You were perhaps surprised at my placing in your educational series, as a type of original Italian sculpture, the pulpit by Niccola Pisano in the Duomo of Siena. I would rather, had it been possible, have given the pulpit by Giovanni Pisano in the Duomo of Pisa; but that pulpit is dispersed in fragments through the upper galleries of the Duomo, and the cloister of the Campo Santo; and the casts of its fragments now put together at Kensington are too coarse to be of use to you. You may partly judge, however, of the method of their execution by the eagle's head, which I have sketched from the marble in the Campo Santo (Edu., No. 113), and the lioness with her cubs (Edu., No. 103, more carefully studied at Siena); and I will get you other illustrations in due time. Meanwhile, I want you to compare the main purpose of the Cathedral of Pisa, and its associated Bell Tower, Baptistery, and Holy Field, with the main purpose of the principal building lately raised for the people of London. In these days, we indeed desire no cathedrals; but we have constructed an enormous and costly edifice, which, in claiming educational influence over the whole London populace, and middle class, is verily the Metropolitan cathedral of this century,—the Crystal Palace.

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54. It was proclaimed, at its erection, an example of a newly discovered style of architecture, greater than any hitherto known,—our best popular writers, in their enthusiasm, describing it as an edifice of Fairyland. You are nevertheless to observe that this novel production of fairy enchantment is destitute of every kind of sculpture, except the bosses produced by the heads of nails and rivets; while the Duomo of Pisa, in the wreathen work of its doors, in the foliage of its capitals, inlaid color designs of its façade, embossed panels of its Baptistery font, and figure sculpture of its two pulpits, contained the germ of a school of sculpture which was to maintain, through a subsequent period of four hundred years, the greatest power yet reached by the arts of the world, in description of Form, and expression of Thought.

55. Now it is easy to show you the essential cause of the vast discrepancy in the character of these two buildings.

In the vault of the apse of the Duomo of Pisa was a colossal image of Christ, in colored mosaic, bearing to the temple, as nearly as possible, the relation which the statue of Athena bore to the Parthenon; and in the same manner, concentrating the imagination of the Pisan on the attributes of the God in whom he believed.

In precisely the same position with respect to the nave of the building, but of larger size, as proportioned to the three or four times greater scale of the whole, a colossal piece of sculpture was placed by English designers, at the extremity of the Crystal Palace, in preparation for their solemnities in honor of the birthday of Christ, in December 1867 or 1868.

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That piece of sculpture was the face of the clown in a pantomime, some twelve feet high from brow to chin, which face, being moved by the mechanism which is our pride, every half-minute opened its mouth from ear to ear, showed its teeth, and revolved its eyes, the force of these periodical seasons of expression being increased and explained by the illuminated inscription underneath, "Here we are again."

56. When it is assumed, and with too good reason, that the mind of the English populace is to be addressed, in the principal Sacred Festival of its year, by sculpture such as this, I need scarcely point out to you that the hope is absolutely futile of advancing their intelligence by collecting within this building (itself devoid absolutely of every kind of art, and so vilely constructed that those who traverse it are continually in danger of falling over the cross-bars that bind it together,) examples of sculpture filched indiscriminately from the past work, bad and good, of Turks, Greeks, Romans, Moors, and Christians, miscolored, misplaced, and misinterpreted;<sup>[15]</sup>

here thrust into unseemly corners, and there mortised together into mere confusion of heterogeneous obstacle; pronouncing itself hourly more intolerable in weariness, until any kind of relief is sought from it in steam wheelbarrows or cheap toyshops; and most of all in beer and meat, the corks and the bones being dropped through the chinks in the damp deal flooring of the English Fairy Palace.

57. But you will probably think me unjust in assuming that a building prepared only for the amusement of the people can typically represent the architecture or sculpture of modern England. You may urge that I ought rather to describe the qualities of the refined sculpture which is executed in large quantities for private persons belonging to the upper classes, and for sepulchral and memorial purposes. But I could not now criticise that sculpture with any power of conviction to you, because I have not yet stated to you the principles of good sculpture in general. I will, however, in some points, tell you the facts by anticipation.

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58. We have much excellent portrait sculpture; but portrait sculpture, which is nothing more, is always third-rate work, even when produced by men of genius;—nor does it in the least require men of genius to produce it. To paint a portrait, indeed, implies the very highest gifts of painting; but any man, of ordinary patience and artistic feeling, can carve a satisfactory bust.

59. Of our powers in historical sculpture, I am, without question, just, in taking for sufficient evidence the monuments we have erected to our two greatest heroes by sea and land; namely, the Nelson Column, and the statue of the Duke of Wellington opposite Apsley House. Nor will you, I hope, think me severe,—certainly, whatever you may think me, I am using only the most temperate language, in saying of both these monuments, that they are absolutely devoid of high sculptural merit. But consider how much is involved in the fact thus dispassionately stated, respecting the two monuments in the principal places of our capital, to our two greatest heroes.

60. Remember that we have before our eyes, as subjects of perpetual study and thought, the art of all the world for three thousand years past; especially, we have the best sculpture of Greece, for example of bodily perfection; the best of Rome, for example of character in portraiture; the best of Florence, for example of romantic passion; we have unlimited access to books and other sources of instruction; we have the most perfect scientific illustrations of anatomy, both human and comparative; and we have bribes for the reward of success, large in the proportion of at least twenty to one, as compared with those offered to the artists of any other period. And with all these advantages, and the stimulus also of fame carried instantly by the press to the remotest corners of Europe, the best efforts we can make, on the grandest of occasions, result in work which it is impossible in any one particular to praise.

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Now consider for yourselves what an intensity of the negation of the faculty of sculpture this implies in the national mind! What measure can be assigned to the gulf of incapacity, which can deliberately swallow up in the gorge of it the teaching and example of three thousand years, and produce, as the result of that instruction, what it is courteous to call 'nothing'?

61. That is the conclusion at which we arrive on the evidence presented by our historical sculpture. To complete the measure of ourselves, we must endeavor to estimate the rank of the two opposite schools of sculpture employed by us in the nominal service of religion, and in the actual service of vice.

I am aware of no statue of Christ, nor of any apostle of Christ, nor of any scene related in the New Testament, produced by us within the last three hundred years, which has possessed even superficial merit enough to attract public attention.

Whereas the steadily immoral effect of the formative art which we learn, more or less apishly, from the French schools, and employ, but too gladly, in manufacturing articles for the amusement of the luxurious classes, must be ranked as one of the chief instruments used by joyful fiends and angry fates for the ruin of our civilization.

If, after I have set before you the nature and principles of true sculpture, in Athens, Pisa, and Florence, you consider these facts,—(which you will then at once recognize as such),—you will find that they absolutely justify my assertion that the state of sculpture in modern England, as compared with that of the great Ancients, is literally one of corrupt and dishonorable death, as opposed to bright and fateful life.

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62. And now, will you bear with me while I tell you finally why this is so?

The cause with which you are personally concerned is your own frivolity; though essentially this is not your fault, but that of the system of your early training. But the fact remains the same, that here, in Oxford, you, a chosen body of English youth, in nowise care for the history of your country, for its present dangers, or its present duties. You still, like children of seven or eight years old, are interested only in bats, balls, and oars: nay, including with you the students of Germany and France, it is certain that the general body of modern European youth have their minds occupied more seriously by the sculpture and painting of the bowls of their tobacco-pipes, than by all the divinest workmanship and passionate imagination of Greece, Rome, and Mediæval Christendom.

63. But the elementary causes, both of this frivolity in you, and of worse than frivolity in older persons, are the two forms of deadly Idolatry which are now all but universal in England.

The first of these is the worship of the Eidolon, or Fantasm of Wealth; worship of which you will

find the nature partly examined in the thirty-seventh paragraph of my 'Munera Pulveris'; but which is briefly to be defined as the servile apprehension of an active power in Money, and the submission to it as the God of our life.

64. The second elementary cause of the loss of our nobly imaginative faculty, is the worship of the Letter, instead of the Spirit, in what we chiefly accept as the ordinance and teaching of Deity; and the apprehension of a healing sacredness in the act of reading the Book whose primal commands we refuse to obey.

No feather idol of Polynesia was ever a sign of a more shameful idolatry than the modern notion in the minds of certainly the majority of English religious persons, that the Word of God, by which the heavens were of old, and the earth, standing out of the water and in the water,—the Word of God which came to the prophets, and comes still forever to all who will hear it (and to many who will forbear); and which, called Faithful and True, is to lead forth, in the judgment, the armies of heaven,—that this 'Word of God' may yet be bound at our pleasure in morocco, and carried about in a young lady's pocket, with tasseled ribbons to mark the passages she most approves of.

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65. Gentlemen, there has hitherto been seen no instance, and England is little likely to give the unexampled spectacle, of a country successful in the noble arts, yet in which the youths were frivolous, the maidens falsely religious; the men, slaves of money, and the matrons, of vanity. Not from all the marble of the hills of Luini will such a people ever shape one statue that may stand nobly against the sky; not from all the treasures bequeathed to them by the great dead, will they gather, for their own descendants, any inheritance but shame.

### FOOTNOTES:

- [11] Glance forward at once to § 75, read it, and return to this.
- [12] There is a primary and vulgar sense of 'exhibited' in Lucian's mind; but the higher meaning is involved in it.
- [13] In the Greek, 'ambrosial.' Recollect always that ambrosia, as food of gods, is the continual restorer of strength; that all food is ambrosial when it nourishes, and that the night is called 'ambrosial' because it restores strength to the soul through its peace, as, in the 23d Psalm, the stillness of waters.
- [14] I have italicized this final promise of blessedness, given by the noble Spirit of Workmanship. Compare Carlyle's fifth Latter-day Pamphlet, throughout; but especially pp. 12-14, in the first edition.
- [15] "Falsely represented," would be the better expression. In the cast of the tomb of Queen Eleanor, for a single instance, the Gothic foliage, of which one essential virtue is its change over every shield, is represented by a repetition of casts from one mold, of which the design itself is entirely conjectural.

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## LECTURE III.

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### IMAGINATION.

*November, 1870.*

66. The principal object of the preceding Lecture, (and I choose rather to incur your blame for tediousness in repeating, than for obscurity in defining it,) was to enforce the distinction between the ignoble and false phase of Idolatry, which consists in the attribution of a spiritual power to a material thing; and the noble and truth-seeking phase of it, to which I shall in these Lectures<sup>[16]</sup> give the general term of Imagination;—that is to say, the invention of material symbols which may lead us to contemplate the character and nature of gods, spirits, or abstract virtues and powers, without in the least implying the actual presence of such Beings among us, or even their possession, in reality, of the forms we attribute to them.





**Fig. 2.**

67. For instance, in the ordinarily received Greek type of Athena, on vases of the Phidian time, (sufficiently represented in the following wood-cut,) no Greek would have supposed the vase on which this was painted to be itself Athena, nor to contain Athena inside of it, as the Arabian fisherman's casket contained the genie; neither did he think that this rude black painting, done at speed as the potter's fancy urged his hand, represented anything like the form or aspect of the goddess herself. Nor would he have thought so, even had the image been ever so beautifully wrought. The goddess might, indeed, visibly appear under the form of an armed virgin, as she might under that of a hawk or a swallow, when it pleased her to give such manifestation of her presence; but it did not, therefore, follow that she was constantly invested with any of these forms, or that the best which human skill could, even by her own aid, picture of her, was, indeed, a likeness of her. The real use, at all events, of this rude image, was only to signify to the eye and heart the facts of the existence, in some manner, of a Spirit of wisdom, perfect in gentleness, irresistible in anger; having also physical dominion over the air which is the life and breath of all creatures, and clothed, to human eyes, with ægis of fiery cloud, and raiment of falling dew.

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**Fig. 3.**

68. In the yet more abstract conception of the Spirit of Agriculture, in which the wings of the chariot represent the winds of Spring, and its crested dragons are originally a mere type of the seed with its twisted root piercing the ground, and sharp-edged leaves rising above it, we are in still less danger of mistaking the symbol for the presumed form of an actual Person. But I must, with persistence, beg of you to observe that in all the noble actions of imagination in this kind, the distinction from idolatry consists, not in the denial of the being, or presence, of the Spirit, but only in the due recognition of our human incapacity to conceive the one, or compel the other.

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69. Farther—and for this statement I claim your attention still more earnestly. As no nation has

ever attained real greatness during periods in which it was subject to any condition of Idolatry, so no nation has ever attained or persevered in greatness, except in reaching and maintaining a passionate Imagination of a spiritual estate higher than that of men; and of spiritual creatures nobler than men, having a quite real and personal existence, however imperfectly apprehended by us.

And all the arts of the present age deserving to be included under the name of sculpture have been degraded by us, and all principles of just policy have vanished from us,—and that totally,—for this double reason; that we are, on one side, given up to idolatries of the most servile kind, as I showed you in the close of the last Lecture,—while, on the other hand, we have absolutely ceased from the exercise of faithful imagination; and the only remnants of the desire of truth which remain in us have been corrupted into a prurient itch to discover the origin of life in the nature of the dust, and prove that the source of the order of the universe is the accidental concurrence of its atoms.

70. Under these two calamities of our time, the art of sculpture has perished more totally than any other, because the object of that art is exclusively the representation of form as the exponent of life. It is essentially concerned only with the human form, which is the exponent of the highest life we know; and with all subordinate forms only as they exhibit conditions of vital power which have some certain relation to humanity. It deals with the "particula undique desecta" of the animal nature, and itself contemplates, and brings forward for its disciples' contemplation, all the energies of creation which transform the πηλος, or, lower still, the βορβορος of the *trivia*, by Athena's help, into forms of power;—(το μιν ολον αρχιτεκτων αυτος ην συνειργαζετο δε τοι και η' Αθηνα εμπνεουσα τον πηλον και εμψυχα ποιουσα ειναι τα πλασματα;)[17]—but it has nothing whatever to do with the representation of forms not living, however beautiful (as of clouds or waves); nor may it condescend to use its perfect skill, except in expressing the noblest conditions of life.

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These laws of sculpture, being wholly contrary to the practice of our day, I cannot expect you to accept on my assertion, nor do I wish you to do so. By placing definitely good and bad sculpture before you, I do not doubt but that I shall gradually prove to you the nature of all excelling and enduring qualities; but to-day I will only confirm my assertions by laying before you the statement of the Greeks themselves on the subject; given in their own noblest time, and assuredly authoritative, in every point which it embraces, for all time to come.

71. If any of you have looked at the explanation I have given of the myth of Athena in my 'Queen of the Air,' you cannot but have been surprised that I took scarcely any note of the story of her birth. I did not, because that story is connected intimately with the Apolline myths; and is told of Athena, not essentially as the goddess of the air, but as the goddess of Art-Wisdom.

You have probably often smiled at the legend itself, or avoided thinking of it, as revolting. It is, indeed, one of the most painful and childish of sacred myths; yet remember, ludicrous and ugly as it seems to us, this story satisfied the fancy of the Athenian people in their highest state; and if it did not satisfy, yet it was accepted by, all later mythologists: you may also remember I told you to be prepared always to find that, given a certain degree of national intellect, the ruder the symbol, the deeper would be its purpose. And this legend of the birth of Athena is the central myth of all that the Greeks have left us respecting the power of their arts; and in it they have expressed, as it seemed good to them, the most important things they had to tell us on these matters. We may read them wrongly; but we must read them here, if anywhere.

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72. There are so many threads to be gathered up in the legend, that I cannot hope to put it before you in total clearness, but I will take main points. Athena is born in the island of Rhodes; and that island is raised out of the sea by Apollo, after he had been left without inheritance among the gods. Zeus<sup>[18]</sup> would have cast the lot again, but Apollo orders the golden-girdled Lachesis to stretch out her hands; and not now by chance or lot, but by noble enchantment, the island rises out of the sea.

Physically, this represents the action of heat and light on chaos, especially on the deep sea. It is the "Fiat lux" of Genesis, the first process in the conquest of Fate by Harmony. The island is dedicated to the nymph Rhodos, by whom Apollo has the seven sons who teach σοφωτατα νοηματα; because the rose is the most beautiful organism existing in matter not vital, expressive of the direct action of light on the earth, giving lovely form and color at once, (compare the use of it by Dante, as the form of the sainted crowd in highest heaven); and remember that, therefore, the rose is, in the Greek mind, essentially a Doric flower, expressing the worship of Light, as the Iris or Ion is an Ionic one, expressing the worship of the Winds and Dew.

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73. To understand the agency of Hephæstus at the birth of Athena, we must again return to the founding of the arts on agriculture by the hand. Before you can cultivate land, you must clear it; and the characteristic weapon of Hephæstus,—which is as much his attribute as the trident is of Poseidon, and the rhabdos of Hermes, is not, as you would have expected, the hammer, but the clearing-ax—the double-edged ρελεκυς, the same that Calypso gives Ulysses with which to cut down the trees for his home voyage; so that both the naval and agricultural strength of the Athenians are expressed by this weapon, with which they had to hew out their fortune. And you must keep in mind this agriculturally laborious character of Hephæstus, even when he is most distinctly the god of serviceable fire; thus Horace's perfect epithet for him, "avidus," expresses at once the devouring eagerness of fire, and the zeal of progressive labor, for Horace gives it to him when he is fighting against the giants. And this rude symbol of his cleaving the forehead of Zeus

with the ax, and giving birth to Athena, signifies indeed, physically, the thrilling power of heat in the heavens, rending the clouds, and giving birth to the blue air; but far more deeply it signifies the subduing of adverse Fate by true labor; until, out of the chasm, cleft by resolute and industrious fortitude, springs the Spirit of Wisdom.



Fig. 4.

74. Here (Fig. 4) is an early drawing of the myth, to which I shall have to refer afterwards in illustration of the childishness of the Greek mind at the time when its art-symbols were first fixed; but it is of peculiar value, because the physical character of Vulcan, as fire, is indicated by his wearing the εὐδρομίδες of Hermes, while the antagonism of Zeus, as the adverse chaos, either of cloud or of fate, is shown by his striking at Hephæstus with his thunderbolt. But Plate IV. gives you (as far as the light on the rounded vase will allow it to be deciphered) a characteristic representation of the scene, as conceived in later art.

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75. I told you in a former Lecture of this course<sup>[19]</sup> that the entire Greek intellect was in a childish phase as compared to that of modern times. Observe, however, childishness does not necessarily imply universal inferiority: there may be a vigorous, acute, pure, and solemn childhood, and there may be a weak, foul, and ridiculous condition of advanced life; but the one is still essentially the childish, and the other the adult phase of existence.

76. You will find, then, that the Greeks were the first people that were born into complete humanity. All nations before them had been, and all around them still were, partly savage, bestial, clay-incumbered, inhuman; still semi-goat, or semi-ant, or semi-stone, or semi-cloud. But the power of a new spirit came upon the Greeks, and the stones were filled with breath, and the clouds clothed with flesh; and then came the great spiritual battle between the Centaurs and Lapithæ; and the living creatures became "Children of Men." Taught, yet by the Centaur—sown, as they knew, in the fang—from the dappled skin of the brute, from the leprous scale of the serpent, their flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and they were clean.

Fix your mind on this as the very central character of the Greek race—the being born pure and human out of the brutal misery of the past, and looking abroad, for the first time, with their children's eyes, wonderingly open, on the strange and divine world.



IV.

#### THE NATIVITY OF ATHENA.

77. Make some effort to remember, so far as may be possible to you, either what you felt in yourselves when you were young, or what you have observed in other children, of the action of thought and fancy. Children are continually represented as living in an ideal world of their own. So far as I have myself observed, the distinctive character of a child is to live always in the tangible present, having little pleasure in memory, and being utterly impatient and tormented by anticipation: weak alike in reflection and forethought, but having an intense possession of the actual present, down to the shortest moments and least objects of it; possessing it, indeed, so intensely that the sweet childish days are as long as twenty days will be; and setting all the faculties of heart and imagination on little things, so as to be able to make anything out of them

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he chooses. Confined to a little garden, he does not imagine himself somewhere else, but makes a great garden out of that; possessed of an acorn-cup, he will not despise it and throw it away, and covet a golden one in its stead: it is the adult who does so. The child keeps his acorn-cup as a treasure, and makes a golden one out of it in his mind; so that the wondering grown-up person standing beside him is always tempted to ask concerning his treasures, not, "What would you have more than these?" but "What possibly can you see *in* these?" for, to the bystander, there is a ludicrous and incomprehensible inconsistency between the child's words and the reality. The little thing tells him gravely, holding up the acorn-cup, that "this is a queen's crown," or "a fairy's boat," and, with beautiful effrontery, expects him to believe the same. But observe—the acorn-cup must be *there*, and in his own hand. "Give it me; then I will make more of it for myself." That is the child's one word, always.

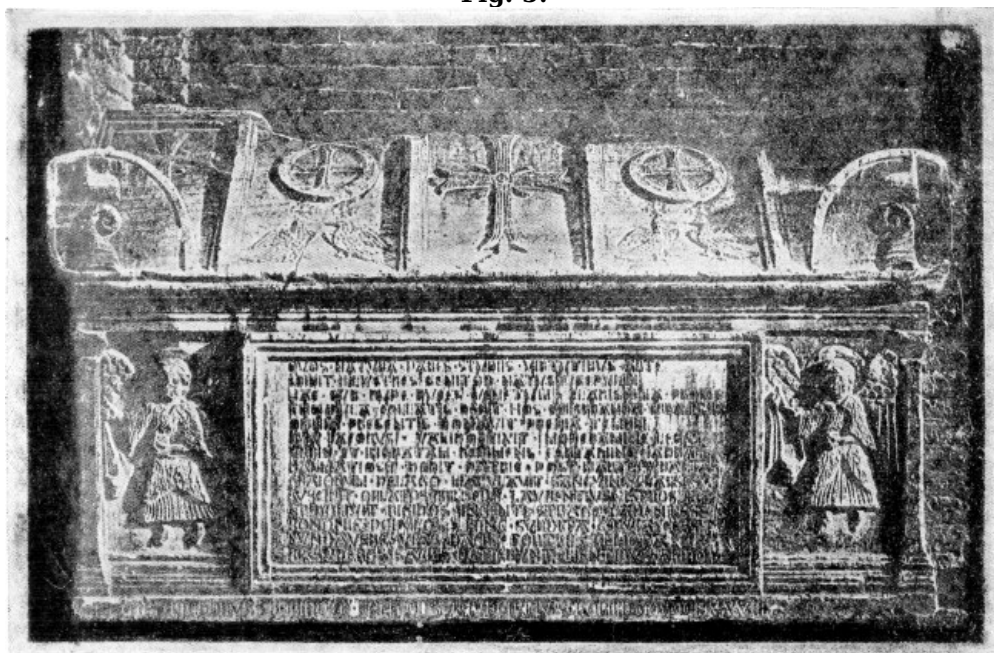
78. It is also the one word of the Greek—"Give it me." Give me *any* thing definite here in my sight, then I will make more of it.

I cannot easily express to you how strange it seems to me that I am obliged, here in Oxford, to take the position of an apologist for Greek art; that I find, in spite of all the devotion of the admirable scholars who have so long maintained in our public schools the authority of Greek literature, our younger students take no interest in the manual work of the people upon whose thoughts the tone of their early intellectual life has exclusively depended. But I am not surprised that the interest, if awakened, should not at first take the form of admiration. The inconsistency between an Homeric description of a piece of furniture or armor, and the actual rudeness of any piece of art approximating, within even three or four centuries, to the Homeric period, is so great, that we at first cannot recognize the art as elucidatory of, or in any way related to, the poetic language.

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Fig. 5.



V.



79. You will find, however, exactly the same kind of discrepancy between early sculpture, and the languages of deed and thought, in the second birth, and childhood, of the world, under Christianity. The same fair thoughts and bright imaginations arise again; and, similarly, the fancy is content with the rudest symbols by which they can be formalized to the eyes. You cannot understand that the rigid figure (2) with checkers or spots on its breast, and sharp lines of drapery to its feet, could represent, to the Greek, the healing majesty of heaven: but can you any better understand how a symbol so haggard as this (Fig. 5) could represent to the noblest hearts of the Christian ages the power and ministration of angels? Yet it not only did so, but retained in the rude undulatory and linear ornamentation of its dress, record of the thoughts intended to be conveyed by the spotted ægis and falling chiton of Athena, eighteen hundred years before. Greek and Venetian alike, in their noble childhood, knew with the same terror the coiling wind and congealed hail in heaven—saw with the same thankfulness the dew shed softly on the earth, and on its flowers; and both recognized, ruling these, and symbolized by them, the great helpful spirit of Wisdom, which leads the children of men to all knowledge, all courage, and all art.

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80. Read the inscription written on the sarcophagus (Plate V.), at the extremity of which this angel is sculptured. It stands in an open recess in the rude brick wall of the west front of the church of St. John and Paul at Venice, being the tomb of the two doges, father and son, Jacopo and Lorenzo Tiepolo. This is the inscription:—

"Quos natura pares studiis, virtutibus, arte  
Edidit, illustres genitor natusque, sepulti  
Hâc sub rupe Duces. Venetum charissima proles  
Theupula collatis dedit hos celebranda triumphis.  
Omnia presentis donavit predia templi  
Dux Jacobus: valido fixit moderamine leges  
Urbis, et ingratham redimens certamine Jadram  
Dalmatiosque dedit patrie post, Marte subactas  
Graiorum pelago maculavit sanguine classes.  
Suscipit oblatos princeps Laurentius Istros,  
Et domuit rigidos, ingenti strage cadentes,  
Bononie populos. Hinc subdita Cervia cessit.  
Fundavere vias pacis; fortique relictâ  
Re, superos sacris petierunt mentibus ambo.

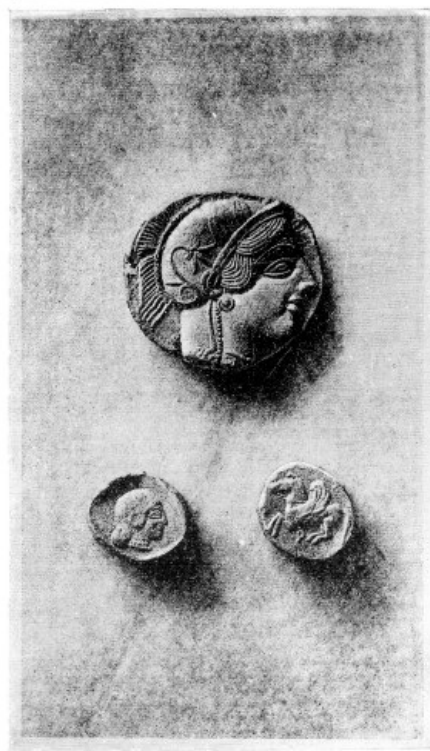
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Dominus Jachobus hobiit<sup>[20]</sup> M. CCLI. Dominus Laurentius hobiit  
M. CCLXXVIII."

You see, therefore, this tomb is an invaluable example of thirteenth-century sculpture in Venice. In Plate VI., you have an example of the (coin) sculpture of the date accurately corresponding in Greece to the thirteenth century in Venice, when the meaning of symbols was everything, and the workmanship comparatively nothing. The upper head is an Athena, of Athenian work in the seventh or sixth century—the coin itself may have been struck later, but the archaic type was retained). The two smaller impressions below are the front and obverse of a coin of the same age from Corinth, the head of Athena on one side, and Pegasus, with the archaic Koppa, on the other. The smaller head is bare, the hair being looped up at the back and closely bound with an olive branch. You are to note this general outline of the head, already given in a more finished type in Plate II., as a most important elementary form in the finest sculpture, not of Greece only, but of all Christendom. In the upper head the hair is restrained still more closely by a round helmet, for the most part smooth, but embossed with a single flower tendril, having one bud, one flower, and, above it, two olive leaves. You have thus the most absolutely restricted symbol possible to human thought of the power of Athena over the flowers and trees of the earth. An olive leaf by itself could not have stood for the sign of a tree, but the two can, when set in position of growth.

I would not give you the reverse of the coin on the same plate, because you would have looked at it only, laughed at it, and not examined the rest; but here it is, wonderfully engraved for you (Fig. 6): of it we shall have more to say afterwards.





VI.

**ARCHAIC ATHENA OF ATHENS  
AND CORINTH.**

81. And now as you look at these rude vestiges of the religion of Greece, and at the vestiges still ruder, on the Ducal tomb, of the religion of Christendom, take warning against two opposite errors. [Pg 51]

There is a school of teachers who will tell you that nothing but Greek art is deserving of study, and that all our work at this day should be an imitation of it.

Whenever you feel tempted to believe them, think of these portraits of Athena and her owl, and be assured that Greek art is not in all respects perfect, nor exclusively deserving of imitation.



**Fig. 6.**

There is another school of teachers who will tell you that Greek art is good for nothing; that the soul of the Greek was outcast, and that Christianity entirely superseded its faith, and excelled its works.

Whenever you feel tempted to believe *them*, think of this angel on the tomb of Jacopo Tiepolo; and remember that Christianity, after it had been twelve hundred years existent as an imaginative power on the earth, could do no better work than this, though with all the former power of Greece to help it; nor was able to engrave its triumph in having stained its fleets in the seas of Greece with the blood of her people, but between barbarous imitations of the pillars which that people had invented.

82. Receiving these two warnings, receive also this lesson. In both examples, childish though it be, this Heathen and Christian art is alike sincere, and alike vividly imaginative: the actual work is that of infancy; the thoughts, in their visionary simplicity, are also the thoughts of infancy, but in their solemn virtue they are the thoughts of men. [Pg 52]

We, on the contrary, are now, in all that we do, absolutely without sincerity;—absolutely, therefore, without imagination, and without virtue. Our hands are dexterous with the vile and deadly dexterity of machines; our minds filled with incoherent fragments of faith, which we cling to in cowardice, without believing, and make pictures of in vanity, without loving. False and base alike, whether we admire or imitate, we cannot learn from the Heathen's art, but only pilfer it; we cannot revive the Christian's art, but only galvanize it; we are, in the sum of us, not human artists at all, but mechanisms of conceited clay, masked in the furs and feathers of living creatures, and convulsed with voltaic spasms, in mockery of animation.

83. You think, perhaps, that I am using terms unjustifiable in violence. They would, indeed, be unjustifiable, if, spoken from this chair, they were violent at all. They are, unhappily, temperate and accurate,—except in shortcoming of blame. For we are not only impotent to restore, but strong to defile, the work of past ages. Of the impotence, take but this one, utterly humiliating, and, in the full meaning of it, ghastly, example. We have lately been busy embanking, in the capital of the country, the river which, of all its waters, the imagination of our ancestors had made most sacred, and the bounty of nature most useful. Of all architectural features of the metropolis, that embankment will be, in future, the most conspicuous; and in its position and purpose it was the most capable of noble adornment.

For that adornment, nevertheless, the utmost which our modern poetical imagination has been able to invent, is a row of gas-lamps. It has, indeed, farther suggested itself to our minds as appropriate to gas-lamps set beside a river, that the gas should come out of fishes' tails; but we have not ingenuity enough to cast so much as a smelt or a sprat for ourselves; so we borrow the shape of a Neapolitan marble, which has been the refuse of the plate and candlestick shops in every capital in Europe for the last fifty years. We cast *that* badly, and give luster to the ill-cast fish with lacquer in imitation of bronze. On the base of their pedestals, towards the road, we put, for advertisement's sake, the initials of the casting firm; and, for farther originality and Christianity's sake, the caduceus of Mercury: and to adorn the front of the pedestals, towards the river, being now wholly at our wits' end, we can think of nothing better than to borrow the door-knocker which—again for the last fifty years—has disturbed and decorated two or three millions of London street-doors; and magnifying the marvelous device of it, a lion's head with a ring in its mouth, (still borrowed from the Greek,) we complete the embankment with a row of heads and rings, on a scale which enables them to produce, at the distance at which only they can be seen, the exact effect of a row of sentry-boxes.

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84. Farther. In the very center of the City, and at the point where the Embankment commands a view of Westminster Abbey on one side, and of St. Paul's on the other,—that is to say, at precisely the most important and stately moment of its whole course,—it has to pass under one of the arches of Waterloo Bridge, which, in the sweep of its curve, is as vast—it alone—as the Rialto at Venice, and scarcely less seemly in proportions. But over the Rialto, though of late and debased Venetian work, there still reigns some power of human imagination: on the two flanks of it are carved the Virgin and the Angel of the Annunciation; on the keystone, the descending Dove. It is not, indeed, the fault of living designers that the Waterloo arch is nothing more than a gloomy and hollow heap of wedged blocks of blind granite. But just beyond the damp shadow of it, the new Embankment is reached by a flight of stairs, which are, in point of fact, the principal approach to it, afoot, from central London; the descent from the very midst of the metropolis of England to the banks of the chief river of England; and for this approach, living designers *are* answerable.

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85. The principal decoration of the descent is again a gas-lamp, but a shattered one, with a brass crown on the top of it, or, rather, half-crown, and that turned the wrong way, the back of it to the river and causeway, its flame supplied by a visible pipe far wandering along the wall; the whole apparatus being supported by a rough cross-beam. Fastened to the center of the arch above is a large placard, stating that the Royal Humane Society's drags are in constant readiness, and that their office is at 4, Trafalgar Square. On each side of the arch are temporary, but dismally old and battered boardings, across two angles capable of unseemly use by the British public. Above one of these is another placard, stating that this is the Victoria Embankment. The steps themselves—some forty of them—descend under a tunnel, which the shattered gas-lamp lights by night, and nothing by day. They are covered with filthy dust, shaken off from infinitude of filthy feet; mixed up with shreds of paper, orange-peel, foul straw, rags, and cigar-ends, and ashes; the whole agglutinated, more or less, by dry saliva into slippery blotches and patches; or, when not so fastened, blown dismally by the sooty wind hither and thither, or into the faces of those who ascend and descend. The place is worth your visit, for you are not likely to find elsewhere a spot which, either in costly and ponderous brutality of building, or in the squalid and indecent accompaniment of it, is so far separated from the peace and grace of nature, and so accurately indicative of the methods of our national resistance to the Grace, Mercy, and Peace of Heaven.

86. I am obliged always to use the English word 'Grace' in two senses, but remember that the Greek *χαρις* includes them both (the bestowing, that is to say, of Beauty and Mercy); and especially it includes these in the passage of Pindar's first ode, which gives us the key to the right interpretation of the power of sculpture in Greece. You remember that I told you, in my Sixth Introductory Lecture (§ 151), that the mythic accounts of Greek sculpture begin in the legends of the family of Tantalus; and especially in the most grotesque legend of them all, the inlaying of the ivory shoulder of Pelops. At that story Pindar pauses,—not, indeed, without admiration, nor alleging any impossibility in the circumstances themselves, but doubting the careless hunger of Demeter,—and gives his own reading of the event, instead of the ancient one. He justifies this to

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himself, and to his hearers, by the plea that myths have, in some sort, or degree, (ρου τι,) led the mind of mortals beyond the truth; and then he goes on:—

"Grace, which creates everything that is kindly and soothing for mortals, adding honor, has often made things, at first untrustworthy, become trustworthy through Love."

87. I cannot, except in these lengthened terms, give you the complete force of the passage; especially of the *απιστον εμησατο πιστον*—"made it trustworthy by passionate desire that it should be so"—which exactly describes the temper of religious persons at the present day, who are kindly and sincere, in clinging to the forms of faith which either have long been precious to themselves, or which they feel to have been without question instrumental in advancing the dignity of mankind. And it is part of the constitution of humanity—a part which, above others, you are in danger of unwisely contemning under the existing conditions of our knowledge, that the things thus sought for belief with eager passion, do, indeed, become trustworthy to us; that, to each of us, they verily become what we would have them; the force of the *μηρις* and *μηρημη* with which we seek after them, does, indeed, make them powerful to us for actual good or evil; and it is thus granted to us to create not only with our hands things that exalt or degrade our sight, but with our hearts also, things that exalt or degrade our souls; giving true substance to all that we hoped for; evidence to things that we have not seen, but have desired to see; and calling, in the sense of creating, things that are not, as though they were.

88. You remember that in distinguishing Imagination from Idolatry, I referred<sup>[21]</sup> you to the forms of passionate affection with which a noble people commonly regards the rivers and springs of its native land. Some conception of personality, or of spiritual power in the stream, is almost necessarily involved in such emotion; and prolonged *χαρις*, in the form of gratitude, the return of Love for benefits continually bestowed, at last alike in all the highest and the simplest minds, when they are honorable and pure, makes this untrue thing trustworthy; *απιστον εμησατο πιστον*, until it becomes to them the safe basis of some of the happiest impulses of their moral nature. Next to the marbles of Verona, given you as a primal type of the sculpture of Christianity, moved to its best energy in adorning the entrance of its temples, I have not unwillingly placed, as your introduction to the best sculpture of the religion of Greece, the forms under which it represented the personality of the fountain Arethusa. But without restriction to those days of absolute devotion, let me simply point out to you how this untrue thing, made true by Love, has intimate and heavenly authority even over the minds of men of the most practical sense, the most shrewd wit, and the most severe precision of moral temper. The fair vision of Sabrina in 'Comus,' the endearing and tender promise, "Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium," and the joyful and proud affection of the great Lombard's address to the lakes of his enchanted land,—

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"Te, Lari maxume, teque  
Fluctibus et fremitu assurgens, Benace, marino,"

may surely be remembered by you with regretful piety, when you stand by the blank stones which at once restrain and disgrace your native river, as the final worship rendered to it by modern philosophy. But a little incident which I saw last summer on its bridge at Wallingford, may put the contrast of ancient and modern feeling before you still more forcibly.

89. Those of you who have read with attention (none of us can read with too much attention), Molière's most perfect work, 'The Misanthrope,' must remember Celimène's description of her lovers, and her excellent reason for being unable to regard with any favor, "notre grand flandrin de vicomte,—depuis que je l'ai vu, trois quarts d'heure durant, cracher dans un puits pour faire des ronds." That sentence is worth noting, both in contrast to the reverence paid by the ancients to wells and springs, and as one of the most interesting traces of the extension of the loathsome habit among the upper classes of Europe and America, which now renders all external grace, dignity, and decency impossible in the thoroughfares of their principal cities. In connection with that sentence of Molière's you may advisably also remember this fact, which I chanced to notice on the bridge of Wallingford. I was walking from end to end of it, and back again, one Sunday afternoon of last May, trying to conjecture what had made this especial bend and ford of the Thames so important in all the Anglo-Saxon wars. It was one of the few sunny afternoons of the bitter spring, and I was very thankful for its light, and happy in watching beneath it the flow and the glittering of the classical river, when I noticed a well-dressed boy, apparently just out of some orderly Sunday-school, leaning far over the parapet; watching, as I conjectured, some bird or insect on the bridge-buttruss. I went up to him to see what he was looking at; but just as I got close to him, he started over to the opposite parapet, and put himself there into the same position, his object being, as I then perceived, to spit from both sides upon the heads of a pleasure party who were passing in a boat below.

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90. The incident may seem to you too trivial to be noticed in this place. To me, gentlemen, it was by no means trivial. It meant, in the depth of it, such absence of all true *χαρις*, reverence, and intellect, as it is very dreadful to trace in the mind of any human creature, much more in that of a child educated with apparently every advantage of circumstance in a beautiful English country town, within ten miles of our University. Most of all is it terrific when we regard it as the exponent (and this, in truth, it is) of the temper which, as distinguished from former methods, either of discipline or recreation, the present tenor of our general teaching fosters in the mind of youth;—teaching which asserts liberty to be a right, and obedience a degradation; and which, regardless alike of the fairness of nature and the grace of behavior, leaves the insolent spirit and degraded senses to find their only occupation in malice, and their only satisfaction in shame.

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91. You will, I hope, proceed with me, not scornfully any more, to trace, in the early art of a noble heathen nation, the feeling of what was at least a better childishness than this of ours; and the efforts to express, though with hands yet failing, and minds oppressed by ignorant fantasy, the first truth by which they knew that they lived; the birth of wisdom and of all her powers of help to man, as the reward of his resolute labor.

92. "Ἀφαιστοῦ τεχνισί." Note that word of Pindar in the Seventh Olympic. This ax-blow of Vulcan's was to the Greek mind truly what Clytemnestra falsely asserts hers to have been, "της δε δεξιας χερσος, εργου, δικαιας τεκτονος"; physically, it meant the opening of the blue through the rent clouds of heaven, by the action of local terrestrial heat (of Hephæstus as opposed to Apollo, who shines on the surface of the upper clouds, but cannot pierce them); and, spiritually, it meant the first birth of prudent thought out of rude labor, the clearing-ax in the hand of the woodman being the practical elementary sign of his difference from the wild animals of the wood. Then he goes on, "From the high head of her Father, Athenaia rushing forth, cried with her great and exceeding cry; and the Heaven trembled at her, and the Earth Mother." The cry of Athena, I have before pointed out, physically distinguishes her, as the spirit of the air, from silent elemental powers; but in this grand passage of Pindar it is again the mythic cry of which he thinks; that is to say, the giving articulate words, by intelligence, to the silence of Fate. "Wisdom crieth aloud, she uttereth her voice in the streets," and Heaven and Earth tremble at her reproof.

93. Uttereth her voice in the "streets." For all men, that is to say; but to what work did the Greeks think that her voice was to call them? What was to be the impulse communicated by her prevailing presence; what the sign of the people's obedience to her? [Pg 59]

This was to be the sign—"But she, the goddess herself, gave to them to prevail over the dwellers upon earth, *with best-laboring hands in every art. And by their paths there were the likenesses of living and of creeping things*; and the glory was deep. For to the cunning workman, greater knowledge comes, undeceitful."

94. An infinitely pregnant passage, this, of which to-day you are to note mainly these three things: First, that Athena is the goddess of Doing, not at all of sentimental inaction. She is begotten, as it were, of the woodman's ax; her purpose is never in a word only, but in a word and a blow. She guides the hands that labor best, in every art.

95. Secondly. The victory given by Wisdom, the worker, to the hands that labor best, is that the streets and ways, κελυθοι, shall be filled by likenesses of living and creeping things.

Things living, and creeping! Are the Reptile things not alive then? You think Pindar wrote that carelessly? or that, if he had only known a little modern anatomy, instead of 'reptile' things, he would have said 'monochondylous' things? Be patient, and let us attend to the main points first.

Sculpture, it thus appears, is the only work of wisdom that the Greeks care to speak of; they think it involves and crowns every other. Image-making art; *this* is Athena's, as queenliest of the arts. Literature, the order and the strength of word, of course belongs to Apollo and the Muses; under Athena are the Substances and the Forms of things.

96. Thirdly. By this forming of Images there is to be gained a 'deep'—that is to say, a weighty, and prevailing, glory; not a floating nor fugitive one. For to the cunning workman, greater knowledge comes, 'undeceitful.'

"Δαεντι" I am forced to use two English words to translate that single Greek one. The 'cunning' workman, thoughtful in experience, touch, and vision of the thing to be done; no machine, witless, and of necessary motion; yet not cunning only, but having perfect habitual skill of hand also; the confirmed reward of truthful doing. Recollect, in connection with this passage of Pindar, Homer's three verses about getting the lines of ship-timber true, (Il. xv. 410): [Pg 60]

Ἄλλ' ὥστε σταθμη δορυ νηιου ἐξιθυνηι  
τεκτονος ἐν παλαμ σι δαημονος, ὅο ῥα τε πασης  
ἐν εἶδη σοφης, ὑποθημοσυνησιω' Ἀθηνης,"

and the beautiful epithet of Persephone,—"δαερα," as the Tryer and Knower of good work; and remembering these, trust Pindar for the truth of his saying, that to the cunning workman—(and let me solemnly enforce the words by adding—that to him *only*,) knowledge comes undeceitful.

97. You may have noticed, perhaps, and with a smile, as one of the paradoxes you often hear me blamed for too fondly stating, what I told you in the close of my Third Introductory Lecture,<sup>[22]</sup> that "so far from art's being immoral, little else except art is moral." I have now farther to tell you, that little else, except art, is wise; that all knowledge, unaccompanied by a habit of useful action, is too likely to become deceitful, and that every habit of useful action must resolve itself into some elementary practice of manual labor. And I would, in all sober and direct earnestness, advise you, whatever may be the aim, predilection, or necessity of your lives, to resolve upon this one thing at least, that you will enable yourselves daily to do actually with your hands, something that is useful to mankind. To do anything well with your hands, useful or not; to be, even in trifling, παλαμησι δαημων, is already much. When we come to examine the art of the Middle Ages, I shall be able to show you that the strongest of all influences of right then brought to bear upon character was the necessity for exquisite manual dexterity in the management of the spear and bridle; and in your own experience most of you will be able to recognize the wholesome effect, alike on body and mind, of striving, within proper limits of time, to become either good [Pg 61]

batsmen or good oarsmen. But the bat and the racer's oar are children's toys. Resolve that you will be men in usefulness, as well as in strength; and you will find that then also, but not till then, you can become men in understanding; and that every fine vision and subtle theorem will present itself to you thence-forward undeceitfully, ὑποθημοσυστησιυ Αθηνης.

98. But there is more to be gathered yet from the words of Pindar. He is thinking, in his brief intense way, at once of Athena's work on the soul, and of her literal power on the dust of the Earth. His "κελευθοι" is a wide word, meaning all the paths of sea and land. Consider, therefore, what Athena's own work *actually is*—in the literal fact of it. The blue, clear air *is* the sculpturing power upon the earth and sea. Where the surface of the earth is reached by that, and its matter and substance inspired with and filled by that, organic form becomes possible. You must indeed have the sun, also, and moisture; the kingdom of Apollo risen out of the sea: but the sculpturing of living things, shape by shape, is Athena's, so that under the brooding spirit of the air, what was without form, and void, brings forth the moving creature that hath life.

99. That is her work then—the giving of Form; then the separately Apolline work is the giving of Light; or, more strictly, Sight: giving that faculty to the retina to which we owe not merely the idea of light, but the existence of it; for light is to be defined only as the sensation produced in the eye of an animal, under given conditions; those same conditions being, to a stone, only warmth or chemical influence, but not light. And that power of seeing, and the other various personalities and authorities of the animal body, in pleasure and pain, have never, hitherto, been, I do not say, explained, but in anywise touched or approached by scientific discovery. Some of the conditions of mere external animal form and of muscular vitality have been shown; but for the most part that is true, even of external form, which I wrote six years ago. "You may always stand by Form against Force. To a painter, the essential character of anything is the form of it, and the philosophers cannot touch that. They come and tell you, for instance, that there is as much heat, or motion, or calorific energy (or whatever else they like to call it), in a tea-kettle, as in a gier-eagle. Very good: that is so, and it is very interesting. It requires just as much heat as will boil the kettle, to take the gier-eagle up to his nest, and as much more to bring him down again on a hare or a partridge. But we painters, acknowledging the equality and similarity of the kettle and the bird in all scientific respects, attach, for our part, our principal interest to the difference in their forms. For us, the primarily cognizable facts, in the two things, are, that the kettle has a spout, and the eagle a beak; the one a lid on its back, the other a pair of wings; not to speak of the distinction also of volition, which the philosophers may properly call merely a form or mode of force—but then, to an artist, the form or mode is the gist of the business."<sup>[23]</sup>

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100. As you will find that it is, not to the artist only, but to all of us. The laws under which matter is collected and constructed are the same throughout the universe: the substance so collected, whether for the making of the eagle, or the worm, may be analyzed into gaseous identity; a diffusive vital force, apparently so closely related to mechanically measurable heat as to admit the conception of its being itself mechanically measurable, and unchanging in total quantity, ebbs and flows alike through the limbs of men and the fibers of insects. But, above all this, and ruling every grotesque or degraded accident of this, are two laws of beauty in form, and of nobility in character, which stand in the chaos of creation between the Living and the Dead, to separate the things that have in them a sacred and helpful, from those that have in them an accursed and destroying, nature; and the power of Athena, first physically put forth in the sculpturing of these ζωα and ἔρπετα, these living and reptile things, is put forth, finally, in enabling the hearts of men to discern the one from the other; to know the unquenchable fires of the Spirit from the unquenchable fires of Death; and to choose, not unaided, between submission to the Love that cannot end, or to the Worm that cannot die.

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101. The unconsciousness of their antagonism is the most notable characteristic of the modern scientific mind; and I believe no credulity or fallacy admitted by the weakness (or it may sometimes rather have been the strength) of early imagination, indicates so strange a depression beneath the due scale of human intellect, as the failure of the sense of beauty in form, and loss of faith in heroism of conduct, which have become the curses of recent science,<sup>[24]</sup> art, and policy.

102. That depression of intellect has been alike exhibited in the mean consternation confessedly felt on one side, and the mean triumph apparently felt on the other, during the course of the dispute now pending as to the origin of man. Dispute for the present not to be decided, and of which the decision is, to persons in the modern temper of mind, wholly without significance: and I earnestly desire that you, my pupils, may have firmness enough to disengage your energies from investigation so premature and so fruitless, and sense enough to perceive that it does not matter how you have been made, so long as you are satisfied with being what you are. If you are dissatisfied with yourselves, it ought not to console, but humiliate you, to imagine that you were once seraphs; and if you are pleased with yourselves, it is not any ground of reasonable shame to you if, by no fault of your own, you have passed through the elementary condition of apes.

103. Remember, therefore, that it is of the very highest importance that you should know what you *are*, and determine to be the best that you may be; but it is of no importance whatever, except as it may contribute to that end, to know what you have been. Whether your Creator shaped you with fingers, or tools, as a sculptor would a lump of clay, or gradually raised you to manhood through a series of inferior forms, is only of moment to you in this respect—that in the one case you cannot expect your children to be nobler creatures than you are yourselves—in the other, every act and thought of your present life may be hastening the advent of a race which will look back to you, their fathers (and you ought at least to have attained the dignity of desiring that

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it may be so,) with incredulous disdain.

104. But that you *are* yourselves capable of that disdain and dismay; that you are ashamed of having been apes, if you ever were so; that you acknowledge, instinctively, a relation of better and worse, and a law respecting what is noble and base, which makes it no question to you that the man is worthier than the baboon,—*this* is a fact of infinite significance. This law of preference in your hearts is the true essence of your being, and the consciousness of that law is a more positive existence than any dependent on the coherence or forms of matter.

105. Now, but a few words more of mythology, and I have done. Remember that Athena holds the weaver's shuttle, not merely as an instrument of *texture*, but as an instrument of *picture*; the ideas of clothing, and of the warmth of life, being thus inseparably connected with those of graphic beauty, and the brightness of life. I have told you that no art could be recovered among us without perfectness in dress, nor without the elementary graphic art of women, in divers colors of needlework. There has been no nation of any art-energy, but has strenuously occupied and interested itself in this household picturing, from the web of Penelope to the tapestry of Queen Matilda, and the meshes of Arras and Gobelins.

106. We should then naturally ask what kind of embroidery Athena put on her own robe; "πεπλον εανον, ποικιλον, ον ρ' αυτη ποιησατο και καμε χερσιν."

The subject of that ποικιλια of hers, as you know, was the war of the giants and gods. Now the real name of these giants, remember, is that used by Hesiod, 'πηλογονοι,' 'mud-begotten,' and the meaning of the contest between these and Zeus, πηλογονων ελατηρ, is, again, the inspiration of life into the clay, by the goddess of breath; and the actual confusion going on visibly before you, daily, of the earth, heaping itself into cumbrous war with the powers above it.

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107. Thus, briefly, the entire material of Art, under Athena's hand, is the contest of life with clay; and all my task in explaining to you the early thought of both the Athenian and Tuscan schools will only be the tracing of this battle of the giants into its full heroic form, when, not in tapestry only, but in sculpture, and on the portal of the Temple of Delphi itself, you have the "κλονος εν τειχεσι λαυνοισι γιγαντων," and their defeat hailed by the passionate cry of delight from the Athenian maids, beholding Pallas in her full power, "λευσσω; Παλλαδ'εμαν θεου," my own goddess. All our work, I repeat, will be nothing but the inquiry into the development of this one subject, and the pressing fully home the question of Plato about that embroidery—"And think you that there is verily war with each other among the Gods? and dreadful enmities and battles, such as the poets have told, and such as our painters set forth in graven scripture, to adorn all our sacred rites and holy places; yes, and in the great Panathenaea themselves, the Peplus, full of such wild picturing, is carried up into the Acropolis—shall we say that these things are true, oh Euthuphron, right-minded friend?"

108. Yes, we say, and know, that these things are true; and true forever: battles of the gods, not among themselves, but against the earth-giants. Battle prevailing age by age, in nobler life and lovelier imagery; creation, which no theory of mechanism, no definition of force, can explain, the adoption and completing of individual form by individual animation, breathed out of the lips of the Father of Spirits. And to recognize the presence in every knitted shape of dust, by which it lives and moves and has its being—to recognize it, revere, and show it forth, is to be our eternal Idolatry.

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"Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them."

"Assuredly no," we answered once, in our pride; and through porch and aisle, broke down the carved work thereof, with axes and hammers.

Who would have thought the day so near when we should bow down to worship, not the creatures, but their atoms,—not the forces that form, but those that dissolve them? Trust me, gentlemen, the command which is stringent against adoration of brutality, is stringent no less against adoration of chaos, nor is faith in an image fallen from heaven to be reformed by a faith only in the phenomenon of decadence. We have ceased from the making of monsters to be appeased by sacrifice;—it is well,—if indeed we have also ceased from making them in our thoughts. We have learned to distrust the adorning of fair fantasies, to which we once sought for succor;—it is well, if we learn to distrust also the adorning of those to which we seek, for temptation; but the verity of gains like these can only be known by our confession of the divine seal of strength and beauty upon the tempered frame, and honor in the fervent heart, by which, increasing visibly, may yet be manifested to us the holy presence, and the approving love, of the Loving God, who visits the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, and shows mercy unto thousands of them that love Him, and keep His Commandments.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[16] I shall be obliged in future Lectures, as hitherto in my other writings, to use the terms Idolatry and Imagination in a more comprehensive sense; but here I use them for convenience' sake, limitedly, to avoid the continual occurrence of the terms noble and ignoble, or false and true, with reference to modes of conception.

[17] "And in sum, he himself (Prometheus) was the master-maker, and Athena worked together with him, breathing into the clay, and caused the molded things to have soul



(psyche) in them."—LUCIAN, *Prometheus*.

- [18] His relations with the two great Titans, Themis and Mnemosyne, belong to another group of myths. The father of Athena is the lower and nearer physical Zeus, from whom Metis, the mother of Athena, long withdraws and disguises herself.
- [19] *Ante*, § 30.
- [20] The Latin verses are of later date; the contemporary plain prose retains the Venetian gutturals and aspirates.
- [21] *Ante*, § 44.
- [22] "Lectures on Art," § 95.
- [23] "Ethics of the Dust," Lecture X.
- [24] The best modern illustrated scientific works show perfect faculty of representing monkeys, lizards, and insects; absolute incapability of representing either a man, a horse, or a lion.

## LECTURE IV.

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### LIKENESS.

*November, 1870.*

109. You were probably vexed, and tired, towards the close of my last Lecture, by the time it took us to arrive at the apparently simple conclusion that sculpture must only represent organic form, and the strength of life in its contest with matter. But it is no small thing to have that "λευσσω Παλλαδα" fixed in your minds, as the one necessary sign by which you are to recognize right sculpture; and, believe me, you will find it the best of all things, if you can take for yourselves the saying from the lips of the Athenian maids, in its entirety, and say also—λευσσω Παλλαδ' εμιν θεον. I proceed to-day into the practical appliance of this apparently speculative, but in reality imperative, law.

110. You observe, I have hitherto spoken of the power of Athena, as over painting no less than sculpture. But her rule over both arts is only so far as they are zoographic;—representative, that is to say, of animal life, or of such order and discipline among other elements, as may invigorate and purify it. Now there is a speciality of the art of painting beyond this, namely, the representation of phenomena of color and shadow, as such, without question of the nature of the things that receive them. I am now accordingly obliged to speak of sculpture and painting as distinct arts: but the laws which bind sculpture, bind no less the painting of the higher schools, which has, for its main purpose, the showing beauty in human or animal form; and which is therefore placed by the Greeks equally under the rule of Athena, as the Spirit, first, of Life, and then of Wisdom in conduct.

111. First, I say, you are to 'see Pallas' in all such work, as the Queen of Life; and the practical law which follows from this, is one of enormous range and importance, namely, that nothing must be represented by sculpture, external to any living form, which does not help to enforce or illustrate the conception of life. Both dress and armor may be made to do this, by great sculptors, and are continually so used by the greatest. One of the essential distinctions between the Athenian and Florentine schools is dependent on their treatment of drapery in this respect; an Athenian always sets it to exhibit the action of the body, by flowing with it, or over it, or from it, so as to illustrate both its form and gesture; a Florentine, on the contrary, always uses his drapery to conceal or disguise the forms of the body, and exhibit mental emotion; but both use it to enhance the life, either of the body or soul; Donatello and Michael Angelo, no less than the sculptors of Gothic chivalry, ennoble armor in the same way; but base sculptors carve drapery and armor for the sake of their folds and picturesqueness only, and forget the body beneath. The rule is so stern, that all delight in mere incidental beauty, which painting often triumphs in, is wholly forbidden to sculpture;—for instance, in *painting* the branch of a tree, you may rightly represent and enjoy the lichens and moss on it, but a sculptor must not touch one of them: they are inessential to the tree's life,—he must give the flow and bending of the branch only, else he does not enough 'see Pallas' in it.

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Or, to take a higher instance, here is an exquisite little painted poem, by Edward Frere; a cottage interior, one of the thousands which within the last two months<sup>[25]</sup> have been laid desolate in unhappy France. Every accessory in the painting is of value—the fireside, the tiled floor, the vegetables lying upon it, and the basket hanging from the roof. But not one of these accessories would have been admissible in sculpture. You must carve nothing but what has life. "Why?" you probably feel instantly inclined to ask me.—You see the principle we have got, instead of being blunt or useless, is such an edged tool that you are startled the moment I apply it. "Must we refuse every pleasant accessory and picturesque detail, and petrify nothing but living creatures?" Even so: I would not assert it on my own authority. It is the Greeks who say it, but whatever they say of sculpture, be assured, is true.

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112. That then is the first law—you must see Pallas as the Lady of Life; the second is, you must see her as the Lady of Wisdom; or σοφία—and this is the chief matter of all. I cannot but think that, after the considerations into which we have now entered, you will find more interest than hitherto in comparing the statements of Aristotle, in the Ethics, with those of Plato in the Polity, which are authoritative as Greek definitions of goodness in art, and which you may safely hold authoritative as constant definitions of it. You remember, doubtless, that the σοφία, or ἀρετή πεχης, for the sake of which Phidias is called σοφός as a sculpture, and Polyclitus as an image-maker, Eth. 6. 7. (the opposition is both between ideal and portrait sculpture, and between working in stone and bronze), consists in the "νοῦς τῶν τιμιωτάτων τῆ φύσει," "the mental apprehension of the things that are most honorable in their nature." Therefore, what is indeed most lovely, the true image-maker will most love; and what is most hateful, he will most hate; and in all things discern the best and strongest part of them, and represent that essentially, or, if the opposite of that, then with manifest detestation and horror. That is his art wisdom; the knowledge of good and evil, and the love of good, so that you may discern, even in his representation of the vilest thing, his acknowledgment of what redemption is possible for it, or latent power exists in it; and, contrariwise, his sense of its present misery. But, for the most part, he will idolize, and force us also to idolize, whatever is living, and virtuous, and victoriously right; opposing to it in some definite mode the image of the conquered ἐμπειτον.

113. This is generally true of both the great arts; but in severity and precision, true of sculpture. To return to our illustration: this poor little girl was more interesting to Edward Frere, he being a painter, because she was poorly dressed, and wore these clumsy shoes, and old red cap, and patched gown. May we sculpture her so? No. We may sculpture her naked, if we like; but not in rags.

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But if we may not put her into marble in rags, may we give her a pretty frock with ribbons and flounces to it, and put her into marble in that? No. We may put her simplest peasant's dress, so it be perfect and orderly, into marble; anything finer than that would be more dishonorable in the eyes of Athena than rags. If she were a French princess, you might carve her embroidered robe and diadem; if she were Joan of Arc, you might carve her armor—for then these also would be "τῶν τιμιωτάτων," not otherwise.

114. Is not this an edge-tool we have got hold of, unawares? and a subtle one too; so delicate and cimeter-like in decision. For note that even Joan of Arc's armor must be only sculptured, *if she has it on*; it is not the honorableness or beauty of it that are enough, but the direct bearing of it by her body. You might be deeply, even pathetically, interested by looking at a good knight's dented coat of mail, left in his desolate hall. May you sculpture it where it hangs? No; the helmet for his pillow, if you will—no more.

You see we did not do our dull work for nothing in last Lecture. I define what we have gained once more, and then we will enter on our new ground.

115. The proper subject of sculpture, we have determined, is the spiritual power seen in the form of any living thing, and so represented as to give evidence that the sculptor has loved the good of it and hated the evil.

"So represented," we say; but how is that to be done? Why should it not be represented, if possible, just as it is seen? What mode or limit of representation may we adopt? We are to carve things that have life;—shall we try so to imitate them that they may indeed seem living,—or only half living, and like stone instead of flesh?

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It will simplify this question if I show you three examples of what the Greeks actually did: three typical pieces of their sculpture, in order of perfection.

116. And now, observe that in all our historical work, I will endeavor to do, myself, what I have asked you to do in your drawing exercises; namely, to outline firmly in the beginning, and then fill in the detail more minutely. I will give you first, therefore, in a symmetrical form, absolutely simple and easily remembered, the large chronology of the Greek school; within that unforgettable scheme we will place, as we discover them, the minor relations of arts and times.

I number the nine centuries before Christ thus, upwards, and divide them into three groups of three each.

	{9
A. ARCHAIC.	{8
	{7
	---
	{6
B. BEST.	{5
	{4
	---
	{3
C. CORRUPT.	{2
	{1

Then the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries are the period of archaic Greek art, steadily progressive wherever it existed.

The sixth, fifth, and fourth are the period of Central Greek art; the fifth, or central, century producing the finest. That is easily recollected by the battle of Marathon. And the third, second, and first centuries are the period of steady decline.

Learn this A B C thoroughly, and mark, for yourselves, what you, at present, think the vital events in each century. As you know more, you will think other events the vital ones; but the best historical knowledge only approximates to true thought in that matter; only be sure that what is truly vital in the character which governs events, is always expressed by the art of the century; so that if you could interpret that art rightly, the better part of your task in reading history would be done to your hand.

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117. It is generally impossible to date with precision art of the archaic period—often difficult to date even that of the central three hundred years. I will not weary you with futile minor divisions of time; here are three coins (Plate VII.) roughly, but decisively, characteristic of the three ages. The first is an early coin of Tarentum. The city was founded, as you know, by the Spartan Phalanthus, late in the eighth century. I believe the head is meant for that of Apollo Archegetes; it may however be Taras, the son of Poseidon; it is no matter to us at present whom it is meant for, but the fact that we cannot know, is itself of the greatest import. We cannot say, with any certainty, unless by discovery of some collateral evidence, whether this head is intended for that of a god, or demigod, or a mortal warrior. Ought not that to disturb some of your thoughts respecting Greek idealism? Farther, if by investigation we discover that the head is meant for that of Phalanthus, we shall know nothing of the character of Phalanthus from the face; for there is no portraiture at this early time.

118. The second coin is of Ænus in Macedonia; probably of the fifth or early fourth century, and entirely characteristic of the central period. This we know to represent the face of a god—Hermes. The third coin is a king's, not a city's. I will not tell you, at this moment, what king's; but only that it is a late coin of the third period, and that it is as distinct in purpose as the coin of Tarentum is obscure. We know of this coin, that it represents no god nor demigod, but a mere mortal; and we know precisely, from the portrait, what that mortal's face was like.



VII.

**ARCHAIC, CENTRAL AND  
DECLINING ART OF GREECE.**

119. A glance at the three coins, as they are set side by side, will now show you the main differences in the three great Greek styles. The archaic coin is sharp and hard; every line decisive and numbered, set unhesitatingly in its place; nothing is wrong, though everything incomplete, and, to us who have seen finer art, ugly. The central coin is as decisive and clear in arrangement of masses, but its contours are completely rounded and finished. There is no character in its execution so prominent that you can give an epithet to the style. It is not hard, it is not soft, it is not delicate, it is not coarse, it is not grotesque, it is not beautiful; and I am convinced, unless you had been told that this is fine central Greek art, you would have seen nothing at all in it to interest you. Do not let yourselves be anywise forced into admiring it; there is, indeed, nothing more here than an approximately true rendering of a healthy youthful face, without the slightest attempt to give an expression of activity, cunning, nobility, or any other

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attribute of the Mercurial mind. Extreme simplicity, unpretending vigor of work, which claims no admiration either for minuteness or dexterity, and suggests no idea of effort at all; refusal of extraneous ornament, and perfectly arranged disposition of counted masses in a sequent order, whether in the beads, or the ringlets of hair; this is all you have to be pleased with; neither will you ever find, in the best Greek Art, more. You might at first suppose that the chain of beads round the cap was an extraneous ornament; but I have little doubt that it is as definitely the proper fillet for the head of Hermes, as the olive for Zeus, or corn for Triptolemus. The cap or petasus cannot have expanded edges; there is no room for them on the coin; these must be understood, therefore; but the nature of the cloud-petasus is explained by edging it with beads, representing either dew or hail. The shield of Athena often bears white pellets for hail, in like manner.

120. The third coin will, I think, at once strike you by what we moderns should call its 'vigor of character.' You may observe also that the features are finished with great care and subtlety, but at the cost of simplicity and breadth. But the *essential* difference between it and the central art, is its disorder in design—you see the locks of hair cannot be counted any longer—they are entirely disheveled and irregular. Now the individual character may, or may not, be a sign of decline; but the licentiousness, the casting loose of the masses in the design, is an infallible one. The effort at portraiture is good for art if the men to be portrayed are good men, not otherwise. In the instance before you, the head is that of Mithridates VI. of Pontus, who had, indeed, the good qualities of being a linguist and a patron of the arts; but, as you will remember, murdered, according to report, his mother, certainly his brother, certainly his wives and sisters, I have not counted how many of his children, and from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand persons besides; these last in a single day's massacre. The effort to represent this kind of person is not by any means a method of study from life ultimately beneficial to art.

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121. This, however, is not the point I have to urge to-day. What I want you to observe is, that though the master of the great time does not attempt portraiture, he *does* attempt animation. And as far as his means will admit, he succeeds in making the face—you might almost think—vulgarly animated; as like a real face, literally, 'as it can stare.' Yes: and its sculptor meant it to be so; and that was what Phidias meant his Jupiter to be, if he could manage it. Not, indeed, to be taken for Zeus himself; and yet, to be as like a living Zeus as art could make it. Perhaps you think he tried to make it look living only for the sake of the mob, and would not have tried to do so for connoisseurs. Pardon me; for real connoisseurs he would, and did; and herein consists a truth which belongs to all the arts, and which I will at once drive home in your minds, as firmly as I can.

122. All second-rate artists—(and remember, the second-rate ones are a loquacious multitude, while the great come only one or two in a century; and then, silently)—all second-rate artists will tell you that the object of fine art is not resemblance, but some kind of abstraction more refined than reality. Put that out of your heads at once. The object of the great Resemblant Arts is, and always has been, to resemble; and to resemble as closely as possible. It is the function of a good portrait to set the man before you in habit as he lived, and I would we had a few more that did so. It is the function of a good landscape to set the scene before you in its reality; to make you, if it may be, think the clouds are flying, and the streams foaming. It is the function of the best sculptor—the true Dædalus—to make stillness look like breathing, and marble look like flesh.

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123. And in all great times of art, this purpose is as naïvely expressed as it is steadily held. All the talk about abstraction belongs to periods of decadence. In living times, people see something living that pleases them; and they try to make it live forever, or to make something as like it as possible, that will last forever. They paint their statues, and inlay the eyes with jewels, and set real crowns on the heads; they finish, in their pictures, every thread of embroidery, and would fain, if they could, draw every leaf upon the trees. And their only verbal expression of conscious success is that they have made their work 'look real.'

124. You think all that very wrong. So did I, once; but it was I that was wrong. A long time ago, before ever I had seen Oxford, I painted a picture of the Lake of Como, for my father. It was not at all like the Lake of Como; but I thought it rather the better for that. My father differed with me; and objected particularly to a boat with a red and yellow awning, which I had put into the most conspicuous corner of my drawing. I declared this boat to be 'necessary to the composition.' My father not the less objected, that he had never seen such a boat, either at Como or elsewhere; and suggested that if I would make the lake look a little more like water, I should be under no necessity of explaining its nature by the presence of floating objects. I thought him at the time a very simple person for his pains; but have since learned, and it is the very gist of all practical matters, which, as Professor of Fine Art, I have now to tell you, that the great point in painting a lake is—to get it to look like water.

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125. So far, so good. We lay it down for a first principle that our graphic art, whether painting or sculpture, is to produce something which shall look as like Nature as possible. But now we must go one step farther, and say that it is to produce what shall look like Nature to people who know what Nature is like! You see this is at once a great restriction, as well as a great exaltation of our aim. Our business is not to deceive the simple; but to deceive the wise! Here, for instance, is a modern Italian print, representing, to the best of its power, St. Cecilia, in a brilliantly realistic manner. And the fault of the work is not in its earnest endeavor to show St. Cecilia in habit as she lived, but in that the effort could only be successful with persons unaware of the habit St. Cecilia lived in. And this condition of appeal only to the wise increases the difficulty of imitative resemblance so greatly, that, with only average skill or materials, we must surrender all hope of

it, and be content with an imperfect representation, true as far as it reaches, and such as to excite the imagination of a wise beholder to complete it; though falling very far short of what either he or we should otherwise have desired. For instance, here is a suggestion, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, of the general appearance of a British Judge,—requiring the imagination of a very wise beholder indeed to fill it up, or even at first to discover what it is meant for. Nevertheless, it is better art than the Italian St. Cecilia, because the artist, however little he may have done to represent his knowledge, does, indeed, know altogether what a Judge is like, and appeals only to the criticism of those who know also.

126. There must be, therefore, two degrees of truth to be looked for in the good graphic arts; one, the commonest, which, by any partial or imperfect sign, conveys to you an idea which you must complete for yourself; and the other, the finest, a representation so perfect as to leave you nothing to be farther accomplished by this independent exertion; but to give you the same feeling of possession and presence which you would experience from the natural object itself. For instance of the first, in this representation of a rainbow,<sup>[26]</sup> the artist has no hope that, by the black lines of engraving, he can deceive you into any belief of the rainbow's being there, but he gives indication enough of what he intends, to enable you to supply the rest of the idea yourself, providing always you know beforehand what a rainbow is like. But in this drawing of the falls of Terni,<sup>[27]</sup> the painter has strained his skill to the utmost to give an actually deceptive resemblance of the iris, dawning and fading among the foam. So far as he has not actually deceived you, it is not because he would not have done so if he could; but only because his colors and science have fallen short of his desire. They have fallen so little short, that, in a good light, you may all but believe the foam, and the sunshine are drifting and changing among the rocks.

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127. And after looking a little while, you will begin to regret that they are not so: you will feel that, lovely as the drawing is, you would like far better to see the real place, and the goats skipping among the rocks, and the spray floating above the fall. And this is the true sign of the greatest art—to part voluntarily with its greatness;—to make *itself* poor and unnoticed; but so to exalt and set forth its theme, that you may be fain to see the theme instead of it. So that you have never enough admired a great workman's doing, till you have begun to despise it. The best homage that could be paid to the Athena of Phidias would be to desire rather to see the living goddess; and the loveliest Madonnas of Christian art fall short of their due power, if they do not make their beholders sick at heart to see the living Virgin.

128. We have then, for our requirement of the finest art, (sculpture, or anything else,) that it shall be so like the thing it represents as to please those who best know or can conceive the original; and, if possible, please them deceptively—its final triumph being to deceive even the wise; and (the Greeks thought) to please even the Immortals, who were so wise as to be undeceivable. So that you get the Greek, thus far entirely true, idea of perfectness in sculpture, expressed to you by what Phalaris says, at first sight of the bull of Perilaus, "It only wanted motion and bellowing to seem alive; and as soon as I saw it, I cried out, it ought to be sent to the god,"—to Apollo, for only he, the undeceivable, could thoroughly understand such sculpture, and perfectly delight in it.

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129. And with this expression of the Greek ideal of sculpture, I wish you to join the early Italian, summed in a single line by Dante—"non vide me' di me, chi vide 'l vero." Read the twelfth canto of the Purgatory, and learn that whole passage by heart; and if ever you chance to go to Pistoja, look at La Robbia's colored porcelain bas-reliefs of the seven works of Mercy on the front of the hospital there; and note especially the faces of the two sick men—one at the point of death, and the other in the first peace and long-drawn breathing of health after fever—and you will know what Dante meant by the preceding line, "Morti li morti, e i vivi parèn vivi."

130. But now, may we not ask farther,—is it impossible for art such as this, prepared for the wise, to please the simple also? Without entering on the awkward questions of degree, how many the wise can be, or how much men should know, in order to be rightly called wise, may we not conceive an art to be possible, which would deceive *everybody*, or everybody worth deceiving? I showed you at my First Lecture, a little ringlet of Japan ivory, as a type of elementary bas-relief touched with color; and in your rudimentary series you have a drawing, by Mr. Burgess, of one of the little fishes enlarged, with every touch of the chisel facsimiled on the more visible scale; and showing the little black bead inlaid for the eye, which in the original is hardly to be seen without a lens. You may, perhaps, be surprised when I tell you that (putting the question of *subject* aside for the moment, and speaking only of the mode of execution and aim at resemblance,) you have there a perfect example of the Greek ideal of method in sculpture. And you will admit that, to the simplest person whom we could introduce as a critic, that fish would be a satisfactory, nay, almost a deceptive, fish; while, to any one caring for subtleties of art, I need not point out that every touch of the chisel is applied with consummate knowledge, and that it would be impossible to convey more truth and life with the given quantity of workmanship.

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131. Here is, indeed, a drawing by Turner, (Edu. 131), in which, with some fifty times the quantity of labor, and far more highly educated faculty of sight, the artist has expressed some qualities of luster and color which only very wise persons indeed could perceive in a John Dory; and this piece of paper contains, therefore, much more, and more subtle, art, than the Japan ivory; but are we sure that it is therefore *greater* art? or that the painter was better employed in producing this drawing, which only one person can possess, and only one in a hundred enjoy, than he would have been in producing two or three pieces on a larger scale, which should have been at once accessible to, and enjoyable by, a number of simpler persons? Suppose, for



instance, that Turner, instead of faintly touching this outline, on white paper, with his camel's-hair pencil, had struck the main forms of his fish into marble, thus, (Fig. 7); and instead of coloring the white paper so delicately that, perhaps, only a few of the most keenly observant artists in England can see it at all, had, with his strong hand, tinted the marble with a few colors, deceptive to the people, and harmonious to the initiated; suppose that he had even conceded so much to the spirit of popular applause as to allow of a bright glass bead being inlaid for the eye, in the Japanese manner; and that the enlarged, deceptive, and popularly pleasing work had been carved on the outside of a great building,—say Fishmongers' Hall,—where everybody commercially connected with Billingsgate could have seen it, and ratified it with a wisdom of the market;—might not the art have been greater, worthier, and kinder in such use?

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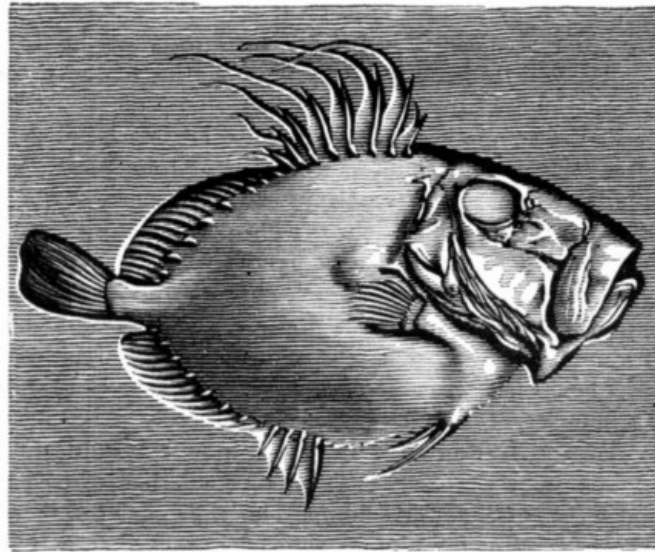


Fig. 7.

132. Perhaps the idea does not at once approve itself to you of having your public buildings covered with ornaments; but, pray remember that the choice of *subject* is an ethical question, not now before us. All I ask you to decide is whether the method is right, and would be pleasant, in giving the distinctiveness to pretty things, which it has here given to what, I suppose it may be assumed, you feel to be an ugly thing. Of course, I must note parenthetically, such realistic work is impossible in a country where the buildings are to be discolored by coal-smoke; but so is all fine sculpture whatsoever; and the whiter, the worse its chance. For that which is prepared for private persons, to be kept under cover, will, of necessity, degenerate into the copyism of past work, or merely sensational and sensual forms of present life, unless there be a governing school addressing the populace, for their instruction, on the outside of buildings. So that, as I partly warned you in my Third Lecture, you can simply have *no* sculpture in a coal country. Whether you like coals or carvings best, is no business of mine. I merely have to assure you of the fact that they are incompatible.

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But, assuming that we are again, some day, to become a civilized and governing race, deputing ironmongery, coal-digging, and lucre-digging, to our slaves in other countries, it is quite conceivable that, with an increasing knowledge of natural history, and desire for such knowledge, what is now done by careful, but inefficient, wood-cuts, and in ill-colored engravings, might be put in quite permanent sculptures, with inlay of variegated precious stones, on the outside of buildings, where such pictures would be little costly to the people; and in a more popular manner still, by Robbia ware and Palissy ware, and inlaid majolica, which would differ from the housewife's present favorite decoration of plates above her kitchen dresser, by being every piece of it various, instructive, and universally visible.

133. You hardly know, I suppose, whether I am speaking in jest or earnest. In the most solemn earnest, I assure you; though such is the strange course of our popular life that all the irrational arts of destruction are at once felt to be earnest; while any plan for those of instruction on a grand scale, sounds like a dream, or jest. Still, I do not absolutely propose to decorate our public buildings with sculpture wholly of this character; though beast, and fowl, and creeping things, and fishes, might all find room on such a building as the Solomon's House of a New Atlantis; and some of them might even become symbolic of much to us again. Passing through the Strand, only the other day, for instance, I saw four highly finished and delicately colored pictures of cock-fighting, which, for imitative quality, were nearly all that could be desired, going far beyond the Greek cock of Himera; and they would have delighted a Greek's soul, if they had meant as much as a Greek cock-fight; but they were only types of the "εβδομαχας αλεκτωρ," and of the spirit of home contest, which has been so fatal lately to the Bird of France; and not of the defense of one's own barnyard, in thought of which the Olympians set the cock on the pillars of their chariot course; and gave it goodly alliance in its battle, as you may see here, in what is left of the angle of moldering marble in the chair of the priest of Dionusos. The cast of it, from the center of the theater under the Acropolis, is in the British Museum; and I wanted its spiral for you, and this kneeling Angel of Victory;—it is late Greek art, but nobly systematic flat bas-relief. So I set Mr. Burgess to draw it; but neither he nor I, for a little while, could make out what the Angel of Victory was kneeling for. His attitude is an ancient and grandly conventional one among the

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Egyptians; and I was tracing it back to a kneeling goddess of the greatest dynasty of the Pharaohs—a goddess of Evening, or Death, laying down the sun out of her right hand;—when, one bright day, the shadows came out clear on the Athenian throne, and I saw that my Angel of Victory was only backing a cock at a cock-fight.

134. Still, as I have said, there is no reason why sculpture, even for simplest persons, should confine itself to imagery of fish, or fowl, or four-footed things.

We go back to our first principle: we ought to carve nothing but what is honorable. And you are offended, at this moment, with my fish, (as I believe, when the first sculptures appeared on the windows of this museum, offense was taken at the unnecessary introduction of cats,) these dissatisfactions being properly felt by your "νους των τιμιωτατων." For indeed, in all cases, our right judgment must depend on our wish to give honor only to things and creatures that deserve it.

135. And now I must state to you another principle of veracity, both in sculpture, and all following arts, of wider scope than any hitherto examined. We have seen that sculpture is to be a true representation of true internal form. Much more is it to be a representation of true internal emotion. You must carve only what you yourself see as you see it; but, much more, you must carve only what you yourself feel, as you feel it. You may no more endeavor to feel through other men's souls, than to see with other men's eyes. Whereas generally now, in Europe and America, every man's energy is bent upon acquiring some false emotion, not his own, but belonging to the past, or to other persons, because he has been taught that such and such a result of it will be fine. Every attempted sentiment in relation to art is hypocritical; our notions of sublimity, of grace, or pious serenity, are all secondhand: and we are practically incapable of designing so much as a bell-handle or a door-knocker, without borrowing the first notion of it from those who are gone—where we shall not wake them with our knocking. I would we could.

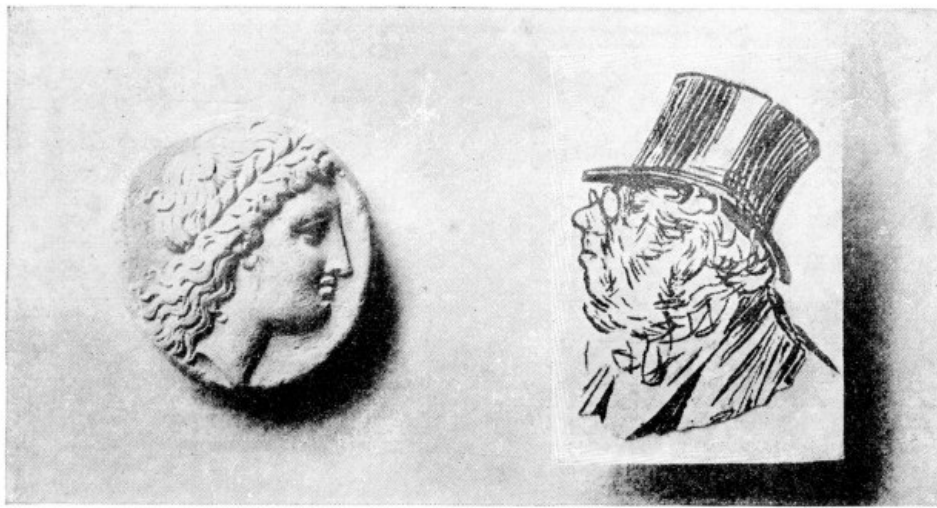
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136. In the midst of this desolation we have nothing to count on for real growth but what we can find of honest liking and longing, in ourselves and in others. We must discover, if we would healthily advance, what things are verily τιμιωτατα among us; and if we delight to honor the dishonorable, consider how, in future, we may better bestow our likings. Now it appears to me, from all our popular declarations, that we, at present, honor nothing so much as liberty and independence; and no person so much as the Free man and Self-made man, who will be ruled by no one, and has been taught, or helped, by no one. And the reason I chose a fish for you as the first subject of sculpture, was that in men who are free and self-made, you have the nearest approach, humanly possible, to the state of the fish, and finely organized εριπετον. You get the exact phrase in Habakkuk, if you take the Septuagint text,—"ποιησεις τους ανθρωπους ως τους ιχθυας της θαλασσης, και ως τα εριπετα τα ουκ εχοντα ηλουμενον." "Thou wilt make men as the fishes of the sea, and as the reptile things, *that have no ruler over them.*" And it chanced that as I was preparing this Lecture, one of our most able and popular prints gave me a wood-cut of the 'self-made man,' specified as such, so vigorously drawn, and with so few touches, that Phidias or Turner himself could scarcely have done it better; so that I had only to ask my assistant to enlarge it with accuracy, and it became comparable with my fish at once. Of course it is not given by the caricaturist as an admirable face; only, I am enabled by his skill to set before you, without any suspicion of unfairness on *my* part, the expression to which the life we profess to think most honorable, naturally leads. If we were to take the hat off, you see how nearly the profile corresponds with that of the typical fish.

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137. Such, then, being the definition, by your best popular art, of the ideal of feature at which we are gradually arriving by self-manufacture: when I place opposite to it (in Plate VIII.) the profile of a man not in anywise self-made, neither by the law of his own will, nor by the love of his own interest—nor capable, for a moment, of any kind of 'Independence,' or of the idea of independence; but wholly dependent upon, and subjected to, external influence of just law, wise teaching, and trusted love and truth, in his fellow-spirits;—setting before you, I say, this profile of a God-made, instead of a self-made, man, I know that you will feel, on the instant, that you are brought into contact with the vital elements of human art; and that this, the sculpture of the good, is indeed the only permissible sculpture.

138. A God-made *man*, I say. The face, indeed, stands as a symbol of more than man in its sculptor's mind. For as I gave you, to lead your first effort in the form of leaves, the scepter of Apollo, so this, which I give you as the first type of rightness in the form of flesh, is the countenance of the holder of that scepter, the Sun-God of Syracuse. But there is nothing in the face (nor did the Greek suppose there was) more perfect than might be seen in the daily beauty of the creatures the Sun-God shone upon, and whom his strength and honor animated. This is not an ideal, but a quite literally true, face of a Greek youth; nay, I will undertake to show you that it is not supremely beautiful, and even to surpass it altogether with the literal portrait of an Italian one. It is in verity no more than the form habitually taken by the features of a well-educated young Athenian or Sicilian citizen; and the one requirement for the sculptors of to-day is not, as it has been thought, to invent the same ideal, but merely to see the same reality.



VIII.

THE APOLLO OF SYRACUSE, AND THE SELF-MADE MAN.



IX.

APOLLO CHRYSOCOMES OF  
CLAZOMENÆ.

Now, you know I told you in my Fourth Lecture<sup>[28]</sup> that the beginning of art was in getting our country clean and our people beautiful, and you supposed that to be a statement irrelevant to my subject; just as, at this moment, you perhaps think I am quitting the great subject of this present Lecture—the method of likeness-making,—and letting myself branch into the discussion of what things we are to make likeness of. But you shall see hereafter that the method of imitating a beautiful thing must be different from the method of imitating an ugly one; and that, with the change in subject from what is dishonorable to what is honorable, there will be involved a parallel change in the management of tools, of lines, and of colors. So that before I can determine for you *how* you are to imitate, you must tell me what kind of face you wish to imitate. The best draughtsman in the world could not draw this Apollo in ten scratches, though he can draw the self-made man. Still less this nobler Apollo of Ionian Greece (Plate IX.), in which the incisions are softened into a harmony like that of Correggio's painting. So that you see the method itself,—the choice between black incision or fine sculpture, and perhaps, presently, the choice between color or no color, will depend on what you have to represent. Color may be expedient for a glistening dolphin or a spotted fawn;—perhaps inexpedient for white Poseidon, and gleaming Dian. So that, before defining the laws of sculpture, I am compelled to ask you, *what you mean to carve*; and that, little as you think it, is asking you how you mean to live, and what the laws of your State are to be, for *they* determine those of your statue. You can only have this kind of face to study from, in the sort of state that produced it. And you will find that sort of state described in the beginning of the fourth book of the laws of Plato; as founded, for one thing, on the conviction that of all the evils that can happen to a state, quantity of money is the greatest! *μειζον κακον, ως επος ειπειν,*

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πολει ουδεν αυ γιγνοια, εις γενναιων και δικαιων ηθων κτηριον, "for, to speak shortly, no greater evil, matching each against each, can possibly happen to a city, as adverse to its forming just or generous character," than its being full of silver and gold.

139. Of course the Greek notion may be wrong, and ours right, only—ὡς επος ειπειν—you can have Greek sculpture only on that Greek theory: shortly expressed by the words put into the mouth of Poverty herself, in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes, "Του πλουτου παρεχω βελτιονας ανδρας, και την γνωμην, και την ιδεαν," "I deliver to you better men than the God of Money can, both in imagination and feature." So, on the other hand, this ichthyoid, reptilian, or monochondyloid ideal of the self-made man can only be reached, universally, by a nation which holds that poverty, either of purse or spirit,—but especially the spiritual character of being πτωχοι τω πνευματι,—is the lowest of degradations; and which believes that the desire of wealth is the first of manly and moral sentiments. As I have been able to get the popular ideal represented by its own living art, so I can give you this popular faith in its own living words; but in words meant seriously, and not at all as caricature, from one of our leading journals, professedly æsthetic also in its very name, the *Spectator*, of August 6, 1870.

"Mr. Ruskin's plan," it says, "would make England poor, in order that she might be cultivated, and refined, and artistic. A wilder proposal was never broached by a man of ability; and it might be regarded as a proof that the assiduous study of art emasculates the intellect, *and even the moral sense*. Such a theory almost warrants the contempt with which art is often regarded by essentially intellectual natures, like Proudhon" (sic). "Art is noble as the flower of life, and the creations of a Titian are a great heritage of the race; but if England could secure high art and Venetian glory of color only by the sacrifice of her manufacturing supremacy, and *by the acceptance of national poverty*, then the pursuit of such artistic achievements would imply that we had ceased to possess natures of manly strength, *or to know the meaning of moral aims*. If we must choose between a Titian and a Lancashire cotton mill, then, in the name of manhood and of morality, give us the cotton mill. Only the dilettanteism of the studio; that dilettanteism which loosens the moral no less than the intellectual fiber, and which is as fatal to rectitude of action as to correctness of reasoning power, would make a different choice."

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You see also, by this interesting and most memorable passage, how completely the question is admitted to be one of ethics—the only real point at issue being, whether this face or that is developed on the truer moral principle.

140. I assume, however, for the present, that this Apolline type is the kind of form you wish to reach and to represent. And now observe, instantly, the whole question of manner of imitation is altered for us. The fins of the fish, the plumes of the swan, and the flowing of the Sun-God's hair are all represented by incisions—but the incisions do sufficiently represent the fin and feather,—they *insufficiently* represent the hair. If I chose, with a little more care and labor, I could absolutely get the surface of the scales and spines of the fish, and the expression of its mouth; but no quantity of labor would obtain the real surface of a tress of Apollo's hair, and the full expression of his mouth. So that we are compelled at once to call the imagination to help us, and say to it, *You* know what the Apollo Chrysocomes must be like; finish all this for yourself. Now, the law under which imagination works, is just that of other good workers. "You must give me clear orders; show me what I have to do, and where I am to begin, and let me alone." And the orders can be given, quite clearly, up to a certain point, in form; but they cannot be given clearly in color, now that the subject is subtle. All beauty of this high kind depends on harmony; let but the slightest discord come into it, and the finer the thing is, the more fatal will be the flaw. Now, on a flat surface, I can command my color to be precisely what and where I mean it to be; on a round one I cannot. For all harmony depends, first, on the fixed proportion of the color of the light to that of the relative shadow; and therefore if I fasten my color, I must fasten my shade. But on a round surface the shadow changes at every hour of the day; and therefore all coloring which is expressive of form, is impossible; and if the form is fine, (and here there is nothing but what is fine,) you may bid farewell to color.

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141. Farewell to color; that is to say, if the thing is to be seen distinctly, and you have only wise people to show it to; but if it is to be seen indistinctly, at a distance, color may become explanatory; and if you have simple people to show it to, color may be necessary to excite *their* imaginations, though not to excite yours. And the art is great always by meeting its conditions in the straightest way; and if it is to please a multitude of innocent and bluntly-minded persons, must express itself in the terms that will touch them; else it is not good. And I have to trace for you through the history of the past, and possibilities of the future, the expedients used by great sculptors to obtain clearness, impressiveness, or splendor; and the manner of their appeal to the people, under various light and shadow, and with reference to different degrees of public intelligence: such investigation resolving itself again and again, as we proceed, into questions absolutely ethical; as, for instance, whether color is to be bright or dull,—that is to say, for a populace cheerful or heartless;—whether it is to be delicate or strong,—that is to say, for a populace attentive or careless; whether it is to be a background like the sky, for a procession of young men and maidens, because your populace revere life—or the shadow of the vault behind a corpse stained with drops of blackened blood, for a populace taught to worship Death. Every critical determination of rightness depends on the obedience to some ethic law, by the most rational and, therefore, simplest means. And you see how it depends most, of all things, on whether you are working for chosen persons, or for the mob; for the joy of the boudoir, or of the Borgo. And if for the mob, whether the mob of Olympia, or of St. Antoine. Phidias, showing his Jupiter for the first time, hides behind the temple door to listen, resolved afterwards "ρυθμιζειν

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το αγαλμα προς το τοις πλειστοις δοκουν, ου γαρ ηγειτομικραν εινα συμβουλην δημου τοσουτου," and truly, as your people is, in judgment, and in multitude, so must your sculpture be, in glory. An elementary principle which has been too long out of mind.

142. I leave you to consider it, since, for some time, we shall not again be able to take up the inquiries to which it leads. But, ultimately, I do not doubt that you will rest satisfied in these following conclusions:

1. Not only sculpture, but all the other fine arts, must be for the people.
2. They must be didactic to the people, and that as their chief end. The structural arts, didactic in their manner; the graphic arts, in their matter also.
3. And chiefly the great representative and imaginative arts—that is to say, the drama and sculpture—are to teach what is noble in past history, and lovely in existing human and organic life.
4. And the test of right manner of execution in these arts, is that they strike, in the most emphatic manner, the rank of popular minds to which they are addressed.
5. And the test of utmost fineness in execution in these arts, is that they make themselves be forgotten in what they represent; and so fulfill the words of their greatest Master,

"THE BEST, IN THIS KIND, ARE BUT SHADOWS."

### FOOTNOTES:

- [25] See date of delivery of Lecture. The picture was of a peasant girl of eleven or twelve years old, peeling carrots by a cottage fire.
- [26] In Dürer's 'Melancholia.'
- [27] Turner's, in the Hakewill series.
- [28] "Lectures on Art," § 116.

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## LECTURE V.

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### STRUCTURE.

*December, 1870.*

143. On previous occasions of addressing you, I have endeavored to show you, first, how sculpture is distinguished from other arts; then its proper subjects; then its proper method in the realization of these subjects. To-day, we must, in the fourth place, consider the means at its command for the accomplishment of these ends; the nature of its materials; and the mechanical or other difficulties of their treatment.

And however doubtful we may have remained as to the justice of Greek ideals, or propriety of Greek methods of representing them, we may be certain that the example of the Greeks will be instructive in all practical matters relating to this great art, peculiarly their own. I think even the evidence I have already laid before you is enough to convince you that it was by rightness and reality, not by idealism or delightfulness only, that their minds were finally guided; and I am sure that, before closing the present course, I shall be able so far to complete that evidence, as to prove to you that the commonly received notions of classic art are, not only unfounded, but even, in many respects, directly contrary to the truth. You are constantly told that Greece idealized whatever she contemplated. She did the exact contrary: she realized and verified it. You are constantly told she sought only the beautiful. She sought, indeed, with all her heart; but she found, because she never doubted that the search was to be consistent with propriety and common sense. And the first thing you will always discern in Greek work is the first which you *ought* to discern in all work; namely, that the object of it has been rational, and has been obtained by simple and unostentatious means.

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144. "That the object of the work has been rational"! Consider how much that implies. That it should be by all means seen to have been determined upon, and carried through, with sense and discretion; these being gifts of intellect far more precious than any knowledge of mathematics, or of the mechanical resources of art. Therefore, also, that it should be a modest and temperate work, a structure fitted to the actual state of men; proportioned to their actual size, as animals,—to their average strength,—to their true necessities,—and to the degree of easy command they have over the forces and substances of nature.

145. You see how much this law excludes! All that is fondly magnificent, insolently ambitious, or vainly difficult. There is, indeed, such a thing as Magnanimity in design, but never unless it be joined also with modesty, and *Equanimity*. Nothing extravagant, monstrous, strained, or singular, can be structurally beautiful. No towers of Babel envious of the skies; no pyramids in mimicry of



the mountains of the earth; no streets that are a weariness to traverse, nor temples that make pigmies of the worshippers.

It is one of the primal merits and decencies of Greek work, that it was, on the whole, singularly small in scale, and wholly within reach of sight, to its finest details. And, indeed, the best buildings that I know are thus modest; and some of the best are minute jewel cases for sweet sculpture. The Parthenon would hardly attract notice, if it were set by the Charing Cross Railway Station: the Church of the Miracoli, at Venice, the Chapel of the Rose, at Lucca, and the Chapel of the Thorn, at Pisa, would not, I suppose, all three together, fill the tenth part, cube, of a transept of the Crystal Palace. And they are better so.

146. In the chapter on Power in the 'Seven Lamps of Architecture,' I have stated what seems, at first, the reverse of what I am saying now; namely, that it is better to have one grand building than any number of mean ones. And that is true: but you cannot command grandeur by size till you can command grace in minuteness; and least of all, remember, will you so command it to-day, when magnitude has become the chief exponent of folly and misery, coördinate in the fraternal enormities of the Factory and Poorhouse,—the Barracks and Hospital. And the final law in this matter is that, if you require edifices only for the grace and health of mankind, and build them without pretense and without chicanery, they will be sublime on a modest scale, and lovely with little decoration.

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147. From these principles of simplicity and temperance, two very severely fixed laws of construction follow; namely, first, that our structure, to be beautiful, must be produced with tools of men; and, secondly, that it must be composed of natural substances. First, I say, produced with tools of men. All fine art requires the application of the whole strength and subtlety of the body, so that such art is not possible to any sickly person, but involves the action and force of a strong man's arm from the shoulder, as well as the delicatest touch of his fingers: and it is the evidence that this full and fine strength has been spent on it which makes the art executively noble; so that no instrument must be used, habitually, which is either too heavy to be delicately restrained, or too small and weak to transmit a vigorous impulse; much less any mechanical aid, such as would render the sensibility of the fingers ineffectual.<sup>[29]</sup>

148. Of course, any kind of work in glass, or in metal, on a large scale, involves some painful endurance of heat; and working in clay, some habitual endurance of cold; but the point beyond which the effort must not be carried is marked by loss of power of manipulation. As long as the eyes and fingers have complete command of the material, (as a glass-blower has, for instance, in doing fine ornamental work,)—the law is not violated; but all our great engine and furnace work, in gun-making and the like, is degrading to the intellect; and no nation can long persist in it without losing many of its human faculties. Nay, even the use of machinery other than the common rope and pulley, for the lifting of weights, is degrading to architecture; the invention of expedients for the raising of enormous stones has always been a characteristic of partly savage or corrupted races. A block of marble not larger than a cart with a couple of oxen could carry, and a cross-beam, with a couple of pulleys, raise, is as large as should generally be used in any building. The employment of large masses is sure to lead to vulgar exhibitions of geometrical arrangement,<sup>[30]</sup> and to draw away the attention from the sculpture. In general, rocks naturally break into such pieces as the human beings that have to build with them can easily lift; and no larger should be sought for.

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149. In this respect, and in many other subtle ways, the law that the work is to be with tools of men is connected with the farther condition of its modesty, that it is to be wrought in substance provided by Nature, and to have a faithful respect to all the essential qualities of such substance.

And here I must ask your attention to the idea, and, more than idea,—the fact, involved in that infinitely misused term, 'Providentia,' when applied to the Divine power. In its truest sense and scholarly use, it is a human virtue, Προμηθεια; the personal type of it is in Prometheus, and all the first power of τεχνη, is from him, as compared to the weakness of days when men without foresight "εφουρον εκη παντα." But, so far as we use the word 'Providence' as an attribute of the Maker and Giver of all things, it does not mean that in a shipwreck He takes care of the passengers who are to be saved, and takes none of those who are to be drowned; but it *does* mean that every race of creatures is born into the world under circumstances of approximate adaptation to its necessities; and, beyond all others, the ingenious and observant race of man is surrounded with elements naturally good for his food, pleasant to his sight, and suitable for the subjects of his ingenuity;—the stone, metal, and clay of the earth he walks upon lending themselves at once to his hand, for all manner of workmanship.

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150. Thus, his truest respect for the law of the entire creation is shown by his making the most of what he can get most easily; and there is no virtue of art, nor application of common sense, more sacredly necessary than this respect to the beauty of natural substance, and the ease of local use; neither are there any other precepts of construction so vital as these—that you show all the strength of your material, tempt none of its weaknesses, and do with it only what can be simply and permanently done.

151. Thus, all good building will be with rocks, or pebbles, or burnt clay, but with no artificial compound; all good painting with common oils and pigments on common canvas, paper, plaster, or wood,—admitting sometimes, for precious work, precious things, but all applied in a simple and visible way. The highest imitative art should not, indeed, at first sight, call attention to the means of it; but even that, at length, should do so distinctly, and provoke the observer to take

pleasure in seeing how completely the workman is master of the particular material he has used, and how beautiful and desirable a substance it was, for work of that kind. In oil painting, its unctuous quality is to be delighted in; in fresco, its chalky quality; in glass, its transparency; in wood, its grain; in marble, its softness; in porphyry, its hardness; in iron, its toughness. In a flint country, one should feel the delightfulness of having flints to pick up, and fasten together into rugged walls. In a marble country, one should be always more and more astonished at the exquisite color and structure of marble; in a slate country, one should feel as if every rock cleft itself only for the sake of being built with conveniently.

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152. Now, for sculpture, there are, briefly, two materials—Clay, and Stone; for glass is only a clay that gets clear and brittle as it cools, and metal a clay that gets opaque and tough as it cools. Indeed, the true use of gold in this world is only as a very pretty and very ductile clay, which you can spread as flat as you like, spin as fine as you like, and which will neither crack nor tarnish.

All the arts of sculpture in clay may be summed up under the word 'Plastic,' and all of those in stone, under the word 'Glyptic.'

153. Sculpture in clay will accordingly include all cast brickwork, pottery, and tile-work<sup>[31]</sup>—a somewhat important branch of human skill. Next to the potter's work, you have all the arts in porcelain, glass, enamel, and metal,—everything, that is to say, playful and familiar in design, much of what is most felicitously inventive, and, in bronze or gold, most precious and permanent.

154. Sculpture in stone, whether granite, gem, or marble, while we accurately use the general term 'glyptic' for it, may be thought of with, perhaps, the most clear force under the English word 'engraving.' For, from the mere angular incision which the Greek consecrated in the triglyphs of his greatest order of architecture, grow forth all the arts of bas-relief, and methods of localized groups of sculpture connected with each other and with architecture: as, in another direction, the arts of engraving and wood-cutting themselves.

155. Over all this vast field of human skill the laws which I have enunciated to you rule with inevitable authority, embracing the greatest, and consenting to the humblest, exertion; strong to repress the ambition of nations, if fantastic and vain, but gentle to approve the efforts of children, made in accordance with the visible intention of the Maker of all flesh, and the Giver of all Intelligence. These laws, therefore, I now repeat, and beg of you to observe them as irrefragable.

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1. That the work is to be with tools of men.
2. That it is to be in natural materials.
3. That it is to exhibit the virtues of those materials, and aim at no quality inconsistent with them.
4. That its temper is to be quiet and gentle, in harmony with common needs, and in consent to common intelligence.

We will now observe the bearing of these laws on the elementary conditions of the art at present under discussion.

156. There is, first, work in baked clay, which contracts, as it dries, and is very easily frangible. Then you must put no work into it requiring niceness in dimension, nor any so elaborate that it would be a great loss if it were broken; but as the clay yields at once to the hand, and the sculptor can do anything with it he likes, it is a material for him to sketch with and play with,—to record his fancies in, before they escape him,—and to express roughly, for people who can enjoy such sketches, what he has not time to complete in marble. The clay, being ductile, lends itself to all softness of line; being easily frangible, it would be ridiculous to give it sharp edges, so that a blunt and massive rendering of graceful gesture will be its natural function: but as it can be pinched, or pulled, or thrust in a moment into projection which it would take hours of chiseling to get in stone, it will also properly be used for all fantastic and grotesque form, not involving sharp edges. Therefore, what is true of chalk and charcoal, for painters, is equally true of clay, for sculptors; they are all most precious materials for true masters, but tempt the false ones into fatal license; and to judge rightly of terra-cotta work is a far higher reach of skill in sculpture-criticism than to distinguish the merits of a finished statue.

157. We have, secondly, work in bronze, iron, gold, and other metals; in which the laws of structure are still more definite.

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All kinds of twisted and wreathen work on every scale become delightful when wrought in ductile or tenacious metal; but metal which is to be *hammered* into form separates itself into two great divisions—solid, and flat.

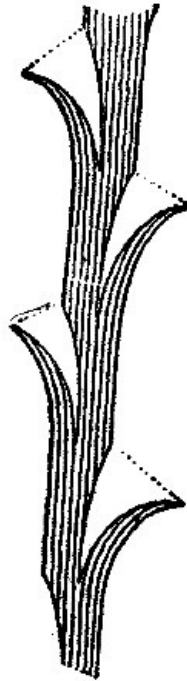
A. In solid metal-work, *i.e.*, metal cast thick enough to resist bending, whether it be hollow or not, violent and various projection may be admitted, which would be offensive in marble; but no sharp edges, because it is difficult to produce them with the hammer. But since the permanence of the material justifies exquisiteness of workmanship, whatever delicate ornamentation can be wrought with rounded surfaces may be advisedly introduced; and since the color of bronze or any other metal is not so pleasantly representative of flesh as that of marble, a wise sculptor will depend less on flesh contour, and more on picturesque accessories, which, though they would be vulgar if attempted in stone, are rightly entertaining in bronze or silver. Verrocchio's statue of Colleone at Venice, Cellini's Perseus at Florence, and Ghiberti's gates at Florence, are models of bronze treatment.

b. When metal is beaten thin, it becomes what is technically called 'plate,' (the *flattened* thing,) and may be treated advisably in two ways: one, by beating it out into bosses, the other by cutting it into strips and ramifications. The vast schools of goldsmiths' work and of iron decoration, founded on these two principles, have had the most powerful influences over general taste in all ages and countries. One of the simplest and most interesting elementary examples of the treatment of flat metal by cutting is the common branched iron bar, Fig. 8, used to close small apertures in countries possessing any good primitive style of ironwork, formed by alternate cuts on its sides, and the bending down of the severed portions. The ordinary domestic window balcony of Verona is formed by mere ribbons of iron, bent into curves as studiously refined as those of a Greek vase, and decorated merely by their own terminations in spiral volutes.

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All cast work in metal, unfinished by hand, is inadmissible in any school of living art, since it cannot possess the perfection of form due to a permanent substance; and the continual sight of it is destructive of the faculty of taste: but metal stamped with precision, as in coins, is to sculpture what engraving is to painting.

158. Thirdly. Stone-sculpture divides itself into three schools: one in very hard material; one in very soft; and one in that of centrally useful consistence.



**Fig. 8.**

a. The virtue of work in hard material is the expression of form in shallow relief, or in broad contours: deep cutting in hard material is inadmissible; and the art, at once pompous and trivial, of gem engraving, has been in the last degree destructive of the honor and service of sculpture.

b. The virtue of work in soft material is deep cutting, with studiously graceful disposition of the masses of light and shade. The greater number of flamboyant churches of France are cut out of an adhesive chalk; and the fantasy of their latest decoration was, in great part, induced by the facility of obtaining contrast of black space, undercut, with white tracery easily left in sweeping and interwoven rods—the lavish use of wood in domestic architecture materially increasing the habit of delight in branched complexity of line. These points, however, I must reserve for illustration in my Lectures on Architecture. To-day, I shall limit myself to the illustration of elementary sculptural structure in the best material,—that is to say, in crystalline marble, neither soft enough to encourage the caprice of the workman, nor hard enough to resist his will.

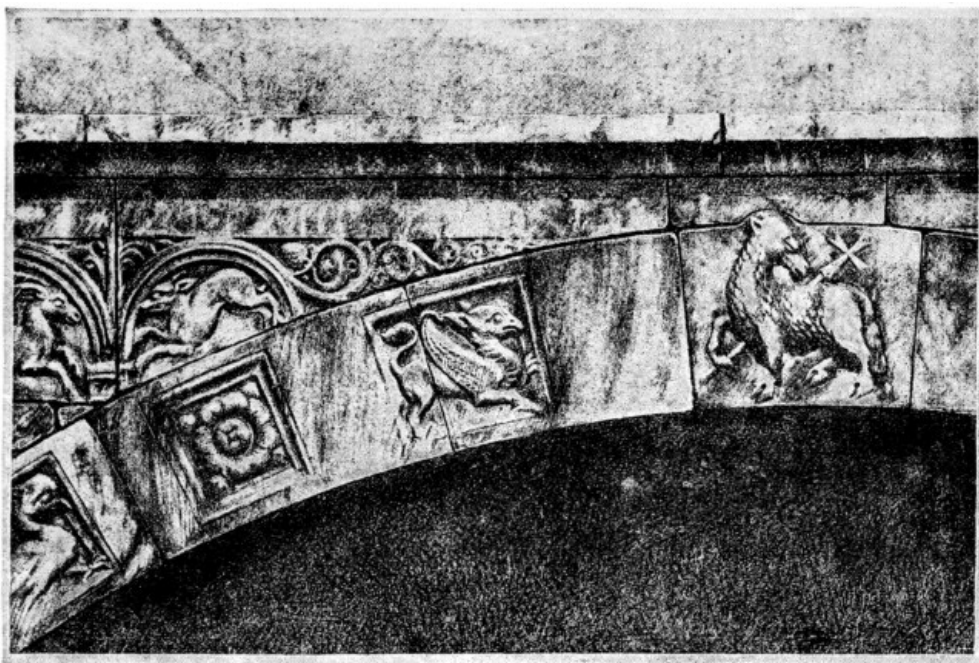
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159. c. By the true 'Providence' of Nature, the rock which is thus submissive has been in some places stained with the fairest colors, and in others blanched into the fairest absence of color that can be found to give harmony to inlaying, or dignity to form. The possession by the Greeks of their λευκοῦ λίθοῦ was indeed the first circumstance regulating the development of their art; it enabled them at once to express their passion for light by executing the faces, hands, and feet of their dark wooden statues in white marble, so that what we look upon only with pleasure for fineness of texture was to them an imitation of the luminous body of the deity shining from behind its dark robes; and ivory afterwards is employed in their best statues for its yet more soft and flesh-like brightness, receptive also of the most delicate color—(therefore to this day the favorite ground of miniature painters). In like manner, the existence of quarries of peach-colored marble within twelve miles of Verona, and of white marble and green serpentine between Pisa and Genoa, defined the manner both of sculpture and architecture for all the Gothic buildings of Italy. No subtlety of education could have formed a high school of art without these materials.

160. Next to the color, the fineness of substance which will take a perfectly sharp edge, is essential; and this not merely to admit fine delineation in the sculpture itself, but to secure a delightful precision in placing the blocks of which it is composed. For the possession of too fine marble, as far as regards the work itself, is a temptation instead of an advantage to an inferior

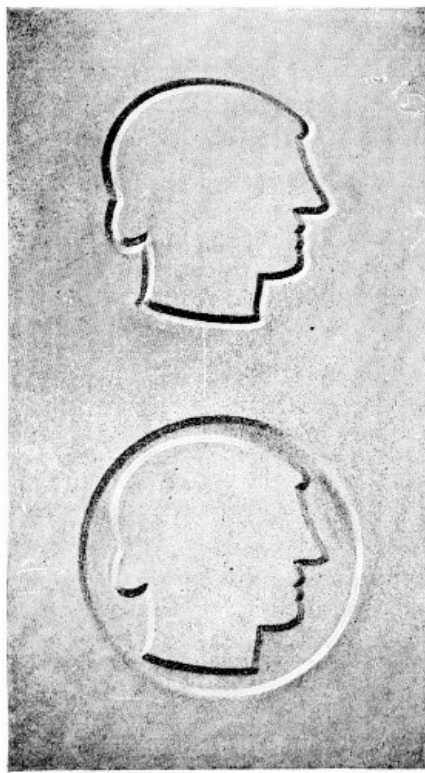
sculptor; and the abuse of the facility of undercutting, especially of undercutting so as to leave profiles defined by an edge against shadow, is one of the chief causes of decline of style in such incrustated bas-reliefs as those of the Certosa of Pavia and its contemporary monuments. But no undue temptation ever exists as to the fineness of block fitting; nothing contributes to give so pure and healthy a tone to sculpture as the attention of the builder to the jointing of his stones; and his having both the power to make them fit so perfectly as not to admit of the slightest portion of cement showing externally, and the skill to insure, if needful, and to suggest always, their stability in cementless construction. Plate X. represents a piece of entirely fine Lombardic building, the central portion of the arch in the Duomo in Verona, which corresponds to that of the porch of San Zenone, represented in Plate I. In both these pieces of building, the only line that traces the architrave round the arch, is that of the masonry joint; yet this line is drawn with extremest subtlety, with intention of delighting the eye by its relation of varied curvature to the arch itself; and it is just as much considered as the finest pen-line of a Raphael drawing. Every joint of the stone is used, in like manner, as a thin black line, which the slightest sign of cement would spoil like a blot. And so proud is the builder of his fine jointing, and so fearless of any distortion or strain spoiling the adjustment afterwards, that in one place he runs his joint quite gratuitously through a bas-relief, and gives the keystone its only sign of preëminence by the minute inlaying of the head of the Lamb into the stone of the course above.

161. Proceeding from this fine jointing to fine draughtsmanship, you have, in the very outset and earliest stage of sculpture, your flat stone surface given you as a sheet of white paper, on which you are required to produce the utmost effect you can with the simplest means, cutting away as little of the stone as may be, to save both time and trouble; and above all, leaving the block itself, when shaped, as solid as you can, that its surface may better resist weather, and the carved parts be as much protected as possible by the masses left around them.



X.

**MARBLE MASONRY IN THE DUOMO OF VERONA.**



XI.

**THE FIRST ELEMENTS OF  
SCULPTURE.  
INCISED OUTLINE AND  
OPENED SPACE.**

162. The first thing to be done is clearly to trace the outline of subject with an incision approximating in section to that of the furrow of a plow, only more equal-sided. A fine sculptor strikes it, as his chisel leans, freely, on marble; an Egyptian, in hard rock, cuts it sharp, as in cuneiform inscriptions. In any case, you have a result somewhat like the upper figure, Plate XI., in which I show you the most elementary indication of form possible, by cutting the outline of the typical archaic Greek head with an incision like that of a Greek triglyph, only not so precise in edge or slope, as it is to be modified afterwards.

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163. Now, the simplest thing we can do next is to round off the flat surface *within* the incision, and put what form we can get into the feeble projection of it thus obtained. The Egyptians do this, often with exquisite skill, and then, as I showed you in a former Lecture, color the whole—using the incision as an outline. Such a method of treatment is capable of good service in representing, at little cost of pains, subjects in distant effect; and common, or merely picturesque, subjects even near. To show you what it is capable of, and what colored sculpture would be in its rudest type, I have prepared the colored relief of the John Dory<sup>[32]</sup> as a natural history drawing for distant effect. You know, also, that I meant him to be ugly—as ugly as any creature can well be. In time, I hope to show you prettier things—peacocks and kingfishers, butterflies and flowers,—on grounds of gold, and the like, as they were in Byzantine work. I shall expect you, in right use of your æsthetic faculties, to like those better than what I show you to-day. But it is now a question of method only; and if you will look, after the Lecture, first at the mere white relief, and then see how much may be gained by a few dashes of color, such as a practiced workman could lay in a quarter of an hour,—the whole forming, if well done, almost a deceptive image,—you will, at least, have the range of power in Egyptian sculpture clearly expressed to you.

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164. But for fine sculpture, we must advance by far other methods. If we carve the subject with real delicacy, the cast shadow of the incision will interfere with its outline, so that, for representation of beautiful things you must clear away the ground about it, at all events for a little distance. As the law of work is to use the least pains possible, you clear it only just as far back as you need, and then, for the sake of order and finish, you give the space a geometrical outline. By taking, in this case, the simplest I can,—a circle,—I can clear the head with little labor in the removal of surface round it; (see the lower figure in Plate XI.)

165. Now, these are the first terms of all well-constructed bas-relief. The mass you have to treat consists of a piece of stone which, however you afterwards carve it, can but, at its most projecting point, reach the level of the external plane surface out of which it was mapped, and defined by a depression round it; that depression being at first a mere trench, then a moat of a certain width, of which the outer sloping bank is in contact, as a limiting geometrical line, with the laterally salient portions of sculpture. This, I repeat, is the primal construction of good bas-relief, implying, first, perfect protection to its surface from any transverse blow, and a geometrically limited space to be occupied by the design, into which it shall pleasantly (and as you shall ultimately see, ingeniously,) contract itself: implying, secondly, a determined depth of



projection, which it shall rarely reach, and never exceed; and implying, finally, the production of the whole piece with the least possible labor of chisel and loss of stone.

166. And these, which are the first, are very nearly the last constructive laws of sculpture. You will be surprised to find how much they include, and how much of minor propriety in treatment their observance involves.

In a very interesting essay on the architecture of the Parthenon, by the Professor of Architecture of the Ecole Polytechnique, M. Émile Boutmy, you will find it noticed that the Greeks do not usually weaken, by carving, the constructive masses of their building; but put their chief sculpture in the empty spaces between the triglyphs, or beneath the roof. This is true; but in so doing, they merely build their panel instead of carving it; they accept, no less than the Goths, the laws of recess and limitation, as being vital to the safety and dignity of their design; and their noblest recumbent statues are, constructively, the fillings of the acute extremity of a panel in the form of an obtusely summited triangle.

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167. In gradual descent from that severest type, you will find that an immense quantity of sculpture of all times and styles may be generally embraced under the notion of a mass hewn out of, or, at least, placed in, a panel or recess, deepening, it may be, into a niche; the sculpture being always designed with reference to its position in such recess: and, therefore, to the effect of the building out of which the recess is hewn.

But, for the sake of simplifying our inquiry, I will at first suppose no surrounding protective ledge to exist, and that the area of stone we have to deal with is simply a flat slab, extant from a flat surface depressed all round it.

168. A *flat* slab, observe. The flatness of surface is essential to the problem of bas-relief. The lateral limit of the panel may, or may not, be required; but the vertical limit of surface *must* be expressed; and the art of bas-relief is to give the effect of true form on that condition. For observe, if nothing more were needed than to make first a cast of a solid form, then cut it in half, and apply the half of it to the flat surface;—if, for instance, to carve a bas-relief of an apple, all I had to do was to cut my sculpture of the whole apple in half, and pin it to the wall, any ordinarily trained sculptor, or even a mechanical workman, could produce bas-relief; but the business is to carve a *round* thing out of a *flat* thing; to carve an apple out of a biscuit!—to conquer, as a subtle Florentine has here conquered,<sup>[33]</sup> his marble, so as not only to get motion into what is most rigidly fixed, but to get boundlessness into what is most narrowly bounded; and carve Madonna and Child, rolling clouds, flying angels, and space of heavenly air behind all, out of a film of stone not the third of an inch thick where it is thickest.

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169. Carried, however, to such a degree of subtlety as this, and with so ambitious and extravagant aim, bas-relief becomes a *tour-de-force*; and, you know, I have just told you all *tour-de-force* are wrong. The true law of bas-relief is to begin with a depth of incision proportioned justly to the distance of the observer and the character of the subject, and out of that rationally determined depth, neither increased for ostentation of effect, nor diminished for ostentation of skill, to do the utmost that will be easily visible to an observer, supposing him to give an average human amount of attention, but not to peer into, or critically scrutinize, the work.

170. I cannot arrest you to-day by the statement of any of the laws of sight and distance which determine the proper depth of bas-relief. Suppose that depth fixed; then observe what a pretty problem, or, rather, continually varying cluster of problems, will be offered to us. You might, at first, imagine that, given what we may call our scale of solidity, or scale of depth, the diminution from nature would be in regular proportion, as, for instance, if the real depth of your subject be, suppose, a foot, and the depth of your bas-relief an inch, then the parts of the real subject which were six inches round the side of it would be carved, you might imagine, at the depth of half an inch, and so the whole thing mechanically reduced to scale. But not a bit of it. Here is a Greek bas-relief of a chariot with two horses (upper figure, Plate XXI.) Your whole subject has therefore the depth of two horses side by side, say six or eight feet. Your bas-relief has, on this scale,<sup>[34]</sup> say the depth of a third of an inch. Now, if you gave only the sixth of an inch for the depth of the off horse, and, dividing him again, only the twelfth of an inch for that of each foreleg, you would make him look a mile away from the other, and his own forelegs a mile apart. Actually, the Greek has made the *near leg of the off horse project much beyond the off leg of the near horse*; and has put nearly the whole depth and power of his relief into the breast of the off horse, while for the whole distance from the head of the nearest to the neck of the other, he has allowed himself only a shallow line; knowing that, if he deepened that, he would give the nearest horse the look of having a thick nose; whereas, by keeping that line down, he has not only made the head itself more delicate, but detached it from the other by giving no cast shadow, and left the shadow below to serve for thickness of breast, cutting it as sharp down as he possibly can, to make it bolder.

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171. Here is a fine piece of business we have got into!—even supposing that all this selection and adaptation were to be contrived under constant laws, and related only to the expression of given forms. But the Greek sculptor, all this while, is not only debating and deciding how to show what he wants, but, much more, debating and deciding what, as he can't show everything, he will choose to show at all. Thus, being himself interested, and supposing that you will be, in the manner of the driving, he takes great pains to carve the reins, to show you where they are knotted, and how they are fastened round the driver's waist, (you recollect how Hippolytus was lost by doing that); but he does not care the least bit about the chariot, and having rather more

geometry than he likes in the cross and circle of one wheel of it, entirely omits the other!

172. I think you must see by this time that the sculptor's is not quite a trade which you can teach like brickmaking; nor its produce an article of which you can supply any quantity 'demanded' for the next railroad waiting-room. It may perhaps, indeed, seem to you that, in the difficulties thus presented by it, bas-relief involves more direct exertion of intellect than finished solid sculpture. It is not so, however. The questions involved by bas-relief are of a more curious and amusing kind, requiring great variety of expedients; though none except such as a true workmanly instinct delights in inventing, and invents easily; but design in solid sculpture involves considerations of weight in mass, of balance, of perspective and opposition, in projecting forms, and of restraint for those which must not project, such as none but the greatest masters have ever completely solved; and they, not always; the difficulty of arranging the composition so as to be agreeable from points of view on all sides of it, being, itself, arduous enough.

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173. Thus far, I have been speaking only of the laws of structure relating to the projection of the mass which becomes itself the sculpture. Another most interesting group of constructive laws governs its relation to the line that contains or defines it.

In your Standard Series I have placed a photograph of the south transept of Rouen Cathedral. Strictly speaking, all standards of Gothic are of the thirteenth century; but, in the fourteenth, certain qualities of richness are obtained by the diminution of restraint; out of which we must choose what is best in their kinds. The pedestals of the statues which once occupied the lateral recesses are, as you see, covered with groups of figures, inclosed each in a quatrefoil panel; the spaces between this panel and the inclosing square being filled with sculptures of animals.

You cannot anywhere find a more lovely piece of fancy, or more illustrative of the quantity of result, than may be obtained with low and simple chiseling. The figures are all perfectly simple in drapery, the story told by lines of action only in the main group, no accessories being admitted. There is no undercutting anywhere, nor exhibition of technical skill, but the fondest and tenderest appliance of it; and one of the principal charms of the whole is the adaptation of every subject to its quaint limit. The tale must be told within the four petals of the quatrefoil, and the wildest and playfulest beasts must never come out of their narrow corners. The attention with which spaces of this kind are filled by the Gothic designers is not merely a beautiful compliance with architectural requirements, but a definite assertion of their delight in the restraint of law; for, in illuminating books, although, if they chose it, they might have designed floral ornaments, as we now usually do, rambling loosely over the leaves, and although, in later works, such license is often taken by them, in all books of the fine time the wandering tendrils are inclosed by limits approximately rectilinear, and in gracefulest branching often detach themselves from the right line only by curvature of extreme severity.

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174. Since the darkness and extent of shadow by which the sculpture is relieved necessarily vary with the depth of the recess, there arise a series of problems, in deciding which the wholesome desire for emphasis by means of shadow is too often exaggerated by the ambition of the sculptor to show his skill in undercutting. The extreme of vulgarity is usually reached when the entire bas-relief is cut hollow underneath, as in much Indian and Chinese work, so as to relieve its forms against an absolute darkness; but no formal law can ever be given; for exactly the same thing may be beautifully done for a wise purpose, by one person, which is basely done, and to no purpose, or to a bad one, by another. Thus, the desire for emphasis itself may be the craving of a deadened imagination, or the passion of a vigorous one; and relief against shadow may be sought by one man only for sensation, and by another for intelligibility. John of Pisa undercuts fiercely, in order to bring out the vigor of life which no level contour could render; the Lombardi of Venice undercut delicately, in order to obtain beautiful lines and edges of faultless precision; but the base Indian craftsmen undercut only that people may wonder how the chiseling was done through the holes, or that they may see every monster white against black.

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175. Yet, here again we are met by another necessity for discrimination. There may be a true delight in the inlaying of white on dark, as there is a true delight in vigorous rounding. Nevertheless, the general law is always, that, the lighter the incisions, and the broader the surface, the grander, *cæteris paribus*, will be the work. Of the structural terms of that work you now know enough to understand that the schools of good sculpture, considered in relation to projection, divide themselves into four entirely distinct groups:—

1st. Flat Relief, in which the surface is, in many places, absolutely flat; and the expression depends greatly on the lines of its outer contour, and on fine incisions within them.

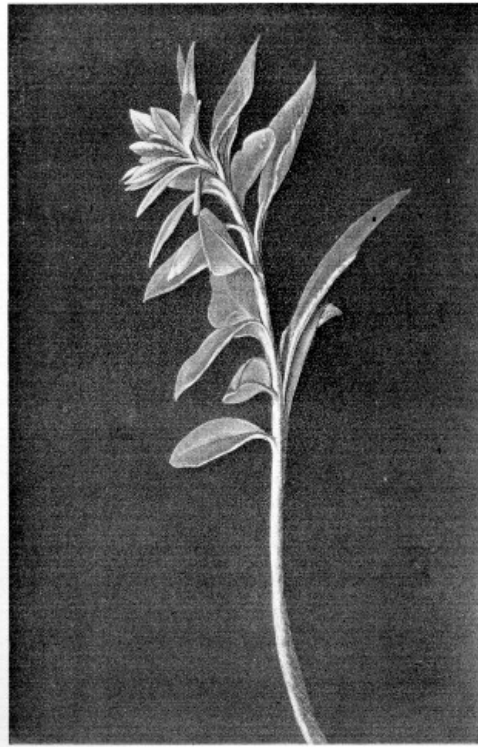
2d. Round Relief, in which, as in the best coins, the sculptured mass projects so as to be capable of complete modulation into form, but is not anywhere undercut. The formation of a coin by the blow of a die necessitates, of course, the severest obedience to this law.

3d. Edged Relief. Undercutting admitted, so as to throw out the forms against a background of shadow.

4th. Full Relief. The statue completely solid in form, and unreduced in retreating depth of it, yet connected locally with some definite part of the building, so as to be still dependent on the shadow of its background and direction of protective line.

176. Let me recommend you at once to take what pains may be needful to enable you to

distinguish these four kinds of sculpture, for the distinctions between them are not founded on mere differences in gradation of depth. They are truly four species, or orders, of sculpture, separated from each other by determined characters. I have used, you may have noted, hitherto in my Lectures, the word 'bas-relief' almost indiscriminately for all, because the degree of lowness or highness of relief is not the question, but the *method* of relief. Observe again, therefore—



**XII.**

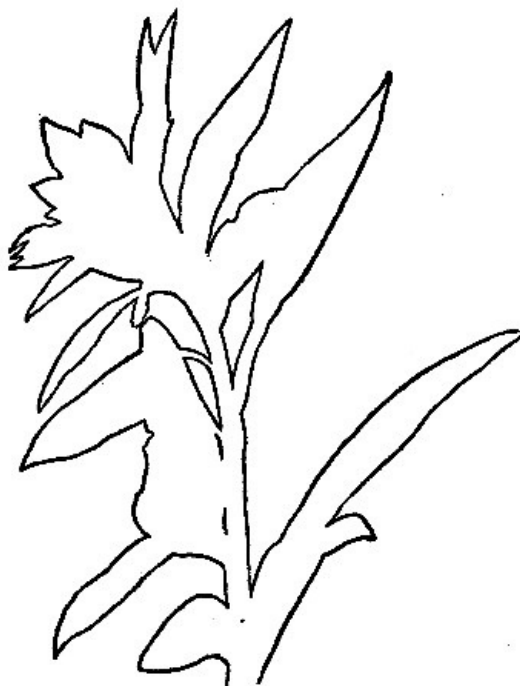
**BRANCH OF PHILLYREA.**

- A. If a portion of the surface is absolutely flat, you have the first order—Flat Relief. [Pg 109]
- B. If every portion of the surface is rounded, but none undercut, you have Round Relief—essentially that of seals and coins.
- C. If any part of the edges be undercut, but the general protection of solid form reduced, you have what I think you may conveniently call Foliate Relief,—the parts of the design overlapping each other, in places, like edges of leaves.
- D. If the undercutting is bold and deep, and the projection of solid form unreduced, you have Full Relief.

Learn these four names at once by heart:—

Flat Relief.  
Round Relief.  
Foliate Relief.  
Full Relief.

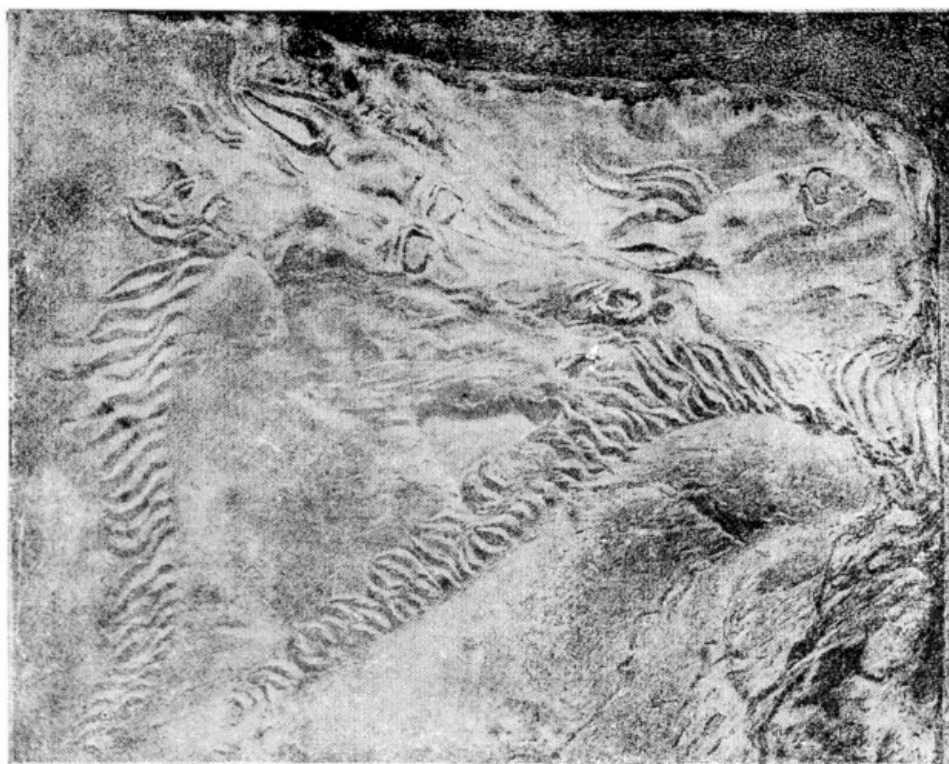
And whenever you look at any piece of sculpture, determine first to which of these classes it belongs; and then consider how the sculptor has treated it with reference to the necessary structure—that reference, remember, being partly to the mechanical conditions of the material, partly to the means of light and shade at his command.



**Fig. 9.**

177. To take a single instance. You know, for these many years, I have been telling our architects, with all the force of voice I had in me, that they could design nothing until they could carve natural forms rightly. Many imagined that work was easy; but judge for yourselves whether it be or not. In Plate XII., I have drawn, with approximate accuracy, a cluster of Phillyrea leaves as they grow. Now, if we wanted to cut them in bas-relief, the first thing we should have to consider would be the position of their outline on the marble;—here it is, as far down as the spring of the leaves. But do you suppose that is what an ordinary sculptor could either lay for his first sketch, or contemplate as a limit to be worked down to? Then consider how the interlacing and springing of the leaves can be expressed within this outline. It must be done by leaving such projection in the marble as will take the light in the same proportion as the drawing does;—and a Florentine workman could do it, for close sight, without driving one incision deeper, or raising a single surface higher, than the eighth of an inch. Indeed, no sculptor of the finest time would design such a complex cluster of leaves as this, except for bronze or iron work; they would take simpler contours for marble; but the laws of treatment would, under these conditions, remain just as strict: and you may, perhaps, believe me now when I tell you that, in any piece of fine structural sculpture by the great masters, there is more subtlety and noble obedience to lovely laws than could be explained to you if I took twenty lectures to do it in, instead of one.

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**XIII.**

**GREEK FLAT RELIEF, AND SCULPTURE BY EDGED INCISION.**

178. There remains yet a point of mechanical treatment on which I have not yet touched at all;

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nor that the least important,—namely, the actual method and style of handling. A great sculptor uses his tool exactly as a painter his pencil, and you may recognize the decision of his thought, and glow of his temper, no less in the workmanship than the design. The modern system of modeling the work in clay, getting it into form by machinery, and by the hands of subordinates, and touching it at last, if indeed the (so-called) sculptor touch it at all, only to correct their inefficiencies, renders the production of good work in marble a physical impossibility. The first result of it is that the sculptor thinks in clay instead of marble, and loses his instinctive sense of the proper treatment of a brittle substance. The second is that neither he nor the public recognize the touch of the chisel as expressive of personal feeling of power, and that nothing is looked for except mechanical polish.

179. The perfectly simple piece of Greek relief represented in Plate XIII., will enable you to understand at once,—examination of the original, at your leisure, will prevent you, I trust, from ever forgetting,—what is meant by the virtue of handling in sculpture.

The projection of the heads of the four horses, one behind the other, is certainly not more, altogether, than three-quarters of an inch from the flat ground, and the one in front does not in reality project more than the one behind it, yet, by mere drawing,<sup>[35]</sup> you see the sculptor has got them to appear to recede in due order, and by the soft rounding of the flesh surfaces, and modulation of the veins, he has taken away all look of flatness from the necks. He has drawn the eyes and nostrils with dark incision, careful as the finest touches of a painter's pencil: and then, at last, when he comes to the manes, he has let fly hand and chisel with their full force; and where a base workman, (above all, if he had modeled the thing in clay first,) would have lost himself in laborious imitation of hair, the Greek has struck the tresses out with angular incisions, deep driven, every one in appointed place and deliberate curve, yet flowing so free under his noble hand that you cannot alter, without harm, the bending of any single ridge, nor contract, nor extend, a point of them. And if you will look back to Plate IX. you will see the difference between this sharp incision, used to express horse-hair, and the soft incision with intervening rounded ridge, used to express the hair of Apollo Chrysocomes; and, beneath, the obliquely ridged incision used to express the plumes of his swan; in both these cases the handling being much more slow, because the engraving is in metal; but the structural importance of incision, as the means of effect, never lost sight of. Finally, here are two actual examples of the work in marble of the two great schools of the world; one, a little Fortune, standing tiptoe on the globe of the Earth, its surface traced with lines in hexagons; not chaotic under Fortune's feet; Greek, this, and by a trained workman;—dug up in the temple of Neptune at Corfu;—and here, a Florentine portrait-marble, found in the recent alterations, face downwards, under the pavement of Sta. Maria Novella; both of them first-rate of their kind; and both of them, while exquisitely finished at the telling points, showing, on all their unregarded surfaces, the rough furrow of the fast-driven chisel, as distinctly as the edge of a common paving-stone.

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180. Let me suggest to you, in conclusion, one most interesting point of mental expression in these necessary aspects of finely executed sculpture. I have already again and again pressed on your attention the beginning of the arts of men in the make and use of the plowshare. Read more carefully—you might indeed do well to learn at once by heart,—the twenty-seven lines of the Fourth Pythian, which describe the plowing of Jason. There is nothing grander extant in human fancy, nor set down in human words: but this great mythical expression of the conquest of the earth—clay and brute-force by vital human energy, will become yet more interesting to you when you reflect what enchantment has been cut, on whiter clay, by the tracing of finer furrows;—what the delicate and consummate arts of man have done by the plowing of marble, and granite, and iron. You will learn daily more and more, as you advance in actual practice, how the primary manual art of engraving, in the steadiness, clearness, and irrevocableness of it, is the best art-discipline that can be given either to mind or hand;<sup>[36]</sup> you will recognize one law of right, pronouncing itself in the well-resolved work of every age; you will see the firmly traced and irrevocable incision determining, not only the forms, but, in great part, the moral temper, of all vitally progressive art; you will trace the same principle and power in the furrows which the oblique sun shows on the granite of his own Egyptian city,—in the white scratch of the stylus through the color on a Greek vase—in the first delineation, on the wet wall, of the groups of an Italian fresco; in the unerring and unalterable touch of the great engraver of Nuremberg,—and in the deep-driven and deep-bitten ravines of metal by which Turner closed, in embossed limits, the shadows of the Liber Studiorum.

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Learn, therefore, in its full extent, the force of the great Greek word *χαρᾶσσω*—and give me pardon, if you think pardon needed, that I ask you also to learn the full meaning of the English word derived from it. Here, at the Ford of the Oxen of Jason, are other furrows to be driven than these in the marble of Pentelicus. The fruitfulest, or the fatalest, of all plowing is that by the thoughts of your youth, on the white field of its Imagination. For by these, either down to the disturbed spirit, "κεκοπται και χαρᾶσσεται πεδον;" or around the quiet spirit, and on all the laws of conduct that hold it, as a fair vase its frankincense, are ordained the pure colors, and engraved the just characters, of Æonian life.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- [29] Nothing is more wonderful, or more disgraceful, among the forms of ignorance engendered by modern vulgar occupations in pursuit of gain, than the unconsciousness, now total, that fine art is essentially Athletic. I received a letter from Birmingham, some



little time since, inviting me to see how much, in glass manufacture, "machinery excelled rude hand-work." The writer had not the remotest conception that he might as well have asked me to come and see a mechanical boat-race rowed by automata, and "how much machinery excelled rude arm-work."

- [30] Such as the Sculptureless arch of Waterloo Bridge, for instance, referred to in the Third Lecture, § 84.
- [31] It is strange, at this day, to think of the relation of the Athenian Ceramicus to the French Tile-fields, Tileries, or Tuileries: and how these last may yet become—have already partly become—"the Potter's field," blood-bought. (*December, 1870.*)
- [32] This relief is now among the other casts which I have placed in the lower school in the University galleries.
- [33] The reference is to a cast from a small and low relief of Florentine work in the Kensington Museum.
- [34] The actual bas-relief is on a coin, and the projection not above the twentieth of an inch, but I magnified it in photograph, for this Lecture, so as to represent a relief with about the third of an inch for maximum projection.
- [35] This plate has been executed from a drawing by Mr. Burgess, in which he has followed the curves of incision with exquisite care, and preserved the effect of the surface of the stone, where a photograph would have lost it by exaggerating accidental stains.
- [36] That it was also, in some cases, the earliest that the Greeks gave, is proved by Lucian's account of his first lesson at his uncle's; the *εγκοπευς*, literally 'in cutter'—being the first tool put into his hand, and an earthenware tablet to cut upon, which the boy, pressing too hard, presently breaks;—gets beaten—goes home crying, and becomes, after his dream above quoted, (§§ 35, 36,) a philosopher instead of a sculptor.

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## LECTURE VI.

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### THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS.

*December, 1870.*

181. It can scarcely be needful for me to tell even the younger members of my present audience, that the conditions necessary for the production of a perfect school of sculpture have only twice been met in the history of the world, and then for a short time; nor for short time only, but also in narrow districts,—namely, in the valleys and islands of Ionian Greece, and in the strip of land deposited by the Arno, between the Apennine crests and the sea.

All other schools, except these two, led severally by Athens in the fifth century before Christ, and by Florence in the fifteenth of our own era, are imperfect; and the best of them are derivative: these two are consummate in themselves, and the origin of what is best in others.

182. And observe, these Athenian and Florentine schools are both of equal rank, as essentially original and independent. The Florentine, being subsequent to the Greek, borrowed much from it; but it would have existed just as strongly—and, perhaps, in some respects more nobly—had it been the first, instead of the latter of the two. The task set to each of these mightiest of the nations was, indeed, practically the same, and as hard to the one as to the other. The Greeks found Phœnician and Etruscan art monstrous, and had to make them human. The Italians found Byzantine and Norman art monstrous, and had to make them human. The original power in the one case is easily traced; in the other it has partly to be unmasked, because the change at Florence was, in many points, suggested and stimulated by the former school. But we mistake in supposing that Athens taught Florence the laws of design; she taught her, in reality, only the duty of truth.

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183. You remember that I told you the highest art could do no more than rightly represent the human form. This is the simple test, then, of a perfect school,—that it has represented the human form, so that it is impossible to conceive of its being better done. And that, I repeat, has been accomplished twice only: once in Athens, once in Florence. And so narrow is the excellence even of these two exclusive schools, that it cannot be said of either of them that they represented the entire human form. The Greeks perfectly drew, and perfectly molded, the body and limbs; but there is, so far as I am aware, no instance of their representing the face as well as any great Italian. On the other hand, the Italian painted and carved the face insuperably; but I believe there is no instance of his having perfectly represented the body, which, by command of his religion, it became his pride to despise and his safety to mortify.

184. The general course of your study here renders it desirable that you should be accurately acquainted with the leading principles of Greek sculpture; but I cannot lay these before you without giving undue prominence to some of the special merits of that school, unless I previously indicate the relation it holds to the more advanced, though less disciplined, excellence of Christian art.

In this and the last Lecture of the present course,<sup>[37]</sup> I shall endeavor, therefore, to mass for you,

in such rude and diagram-like outline as may be possible or intelligible, the main characteristics of the two schools, completing and correcting the details of comparison afterwards; and not answering, observe, at present, for any generalization I give you, except as a ground for subsequent closer and more qualified statements.

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And in carrying out this parallel, I shall speak indifferently of works of sculpture, and of the modes of painting which propose to themselves the same objects as sculpture. And this, indeed, Florentine, as opposed to Venetian, painting, and that of Athens in the fifth century, nearly always did.

185. I begin, therefore, by comparing two designs of the simplest kind—engravings, or, at least, linear drawings both; one on clay, one on copper, made in the central periods of each style, and representing the same goddess—Aphrodite. They are now set beside each other in your Rudimentary Series. The first is from a patera lately found at Camirus, authoritatively assigned by Mr. Newton, in his recent catalogue, to the best period of Greek art. The second is from one of the series of engravings executed, probably, by Baccio Bandini, in 1485, out of which I chose your first practical exercise—the Scepter of Apollo. I cannot, however, make the comparison accurate in all respects, for I am obliged to set the restricted type of the Aphrodite Urania of the Greeks beside the universal Deity conceived by the Italian as governing the air, earth, and sea; nevertheless, the restriction in the mind of the Greek, and expatiation in that of the Florentine, are both characteristic. The Greek Venus Urania is flying in heaven, her power over the waters symbolized by her being borne by a swan, and her power over the earth by a single flower in her right hand; but the Italian Aphrodite is rising out of the actual sea, and only half risen: her limbs are still in the sea, her merely animal strength filling the waters with their life; but her body to the loins is in the sunshine, her face raised to the sky; her hand is about to lay a garland of flowers on the earth.

186. The Venus Urania of the Greeks, in her relation to men, has power only over lawful and domestic love; therefore, she is fully dressed, and not only quite dressed, but most daintily and trimly: her feet delicately sandaled, her gown spotted with little stars, her hair brushed exquisitely smooth at the top of her head, trickling in minute waves down her forehead; and though, because there is such a quantity of it, she can't possibly help having a chignon, look how tightly she has fastened it in with her broad fillet. Of course she is married, so she must wear a cap with pretty minute pendent jewels at the border; and a very small necklace, all that her husband can properly afford, just enough to go closely round her neck, and no more. On the contrary, the Aphrodite of the Italian, being universal love, is pure-naked; and her long hair is thrown wild to the wind and sea.

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These primal differences in the symbolism, observe, are only because the artists are thinking of separate powers: they do not necessarily involve any national distinction in feeling. But the differences I have next to indicate are essential, and characterize the two opposed national modes of mind.

187. First, and chiefly. The Greek Aphrodite is a very pretty person, and the Italian a decidedly plain one. That is because a Greek thought no one could possibly love any but pretty people; but an Italian thought that love could give dignity to the meanest form that it inhabited, and light to the poorest that it looked upon. So his Aphrodite will not condescend to be pretty.

188. Secondly. In the Greek Venus the breasts are broad and full, though perfectly severe in their almost conical profile;—(you are allowed on purpose to see the outline of the right breast, under the chiton;—also the right arm is left bare, and you can just see the contour of the front of the right limb and knee; both arm and limb pure and firm, but lovely. The plant she holds in her hand is a branching and flowering one, the seed-vessel prominent. These signs all mean that her essential function is child-bearing.

On the contrary, in the Italian Venus the breasts are so small as to be scarcely traceable; the body strong, and almost masculine in its angles; the arms meager and unattractive, and she lays a decorative garland of flowers on the earth. These signs mean that the Italian thought of love as the strength of an eternal spirit, forever helpful; and forever crowned with flowers, that neither know seedtime nor harvest; and bloom where there is neither death nor birth.

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189. Thirdly. The Greek Aphrodite is entirely calm, and looks straight forward. Not one feature of her face is disturbed, or seems ever to have been subject to emotion. The Italian Aphrodite looks up, her face all quivering and burning with passion and wasting anxiety. The Greek one is quiet, self-possessed, and self-satisfied: the Italian incapable of rest; she has had no thought nor care for herself; her hair has been bound by a fillet like the Greek's; but it is now all fallen loose, and clotted with the sea, or clinging to her body; only the front tress of it is caught by the breeze from her raised forehead, and lifted, in the place where the tongues of fire rest on the brows, in the early Christian pictures of Pentecost, and the waving fires abide upon the heads of Angelico's seraphim.

190. There are almost endless points of interest, great and small, to be noted in these differences of treatment. This binding of the hair by the single fillet marks the straight course of one great system of art method, from that Greek head which I showed you on the archaic coin of the seventh century before Christ, to this of the fifteenth of our own era;—nay, when you look close, you will see the entire action of the head depends on one lock of hair falling back from the ear, which it does in compliance with the old Greek observance of its being bent there by the pressure of the helmet. That rippling of it down her shoulders comes from the Athena of Corinth; the

raising of it on her forehead, from the knot of the hair of Diana, changed into the vestal fire of the angels. But chiefly, the calmness of the features in the one face, and their anxiety in the other, indicate first, indeed, the characteristic difference in every conception of the schools, the Greek never representing expression, the Italian primarily seeking it; but far more, mark for us here the utter change in the conception of love; from the tranquil guide and queen of a happy terrestrial domestic life, accepting its immediate pleasures and natural duties, to the agonizing hope of an infinite good, and the ever mingled joy and terror of a love divine in jealousy, crying, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave."



XIV.

**APOLLO AND THE PYTHON.  
HERACLES AND THE  
NEMEAN LION.**

The vast issues dependent on this change in the conception of the ruling passion of the human soul, I will endeavor to show you on a future occasion: in my present Lecture, I shall limit myself to the definition of the temper of Greek sculpture, and of its distinctions from Florentine in the treatment of any subject whatever, be it love or hatred, hope or despair.

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These great differences are mainly the following.

191. First. A Greek never expresses momentary passion; a Florentine looks to momentary passion as the ultimate object of his skill.

When you are next in London, look carefully in the British Museum at the casts from the statues in the pediment of the Temple of Minerva at Ægina. You have there Greek work of definite date—about 600 B. C., certainly before 580—of the purest kind; and you have the representation of a noble ideal subject, the combats of the Æacidæ at Troy, with Athena herself looking on. But there is no attempt whatever to represent expression in the features, none to give complexity of action or gesture; there is no struggling, no anxiety, no visible temporary exertion of muscles. There are fallen figures, one pulling a lance out of his wound, and others in attitudes of attack and defense; several kneeling to draw their bows. But all inflict and suffer, conquer or expire, with the same smile.

192. Plate XIV. gives you examples, from more advanced art, of true Greek representation; the subjects being the two contests of leading import to the Greek heart—that of Apollo with the Python, and of Hercules with the Nemean Lion. You see that in neither case is there the slightest effort to represent the *λυσσα*, or agony of contest. No good Greek artist would have you behold the suffering either of gods, heroes, or men; nor allow you to be apprehensive of the issue of their contest with evil beasts, or evil spirits. All such lower sources of excitement are to be closed to you; your interest is to be in the thoughts involved by the fact of the war; and in the beauty or rightness of form, whether active or inactive. I have to work out this subject with you afterwards, and to compare with the pure Greek method of thought that of modern dramatic passion, ingrafted on it, as typically in Turner's contest of Apollo and the Python: in the meantime, be content with the statement of this first great principle—that a Greek, as such, never expresses momentary passion.

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XV.

**HERA OF ARGOS.  
ZEUS OF SYRACUSE.**



XVI.

**DEMETER OF MESSENE.  
HERA OF CNOSSUS.**



XVII.

**ATHENA OF THURIUM.  
SIREN LIGEIA OF TERINA.**

193. Secondly. The Greek, as such, never expresses personal character, while a Florentine holds it to be the ultimate condition of beauty. You are startled, I suppose, at my saying this, having had it often pointed out to you, as a transcendent piece of subtlety in Greek art, that you could distinguish Hercules from Apollo by his being stout, and Diana from Juno by her being slender. That is very true; but those are general distinctions of class, not special distinctions of personal character. Even as general, they are bodily, not mental. They are the distinctions, in fleshly aspect, between an athlete and a musician,—between a matron and a huntress; but in nowise distinguish the simple-hearted hero from the subtle Master of the Muses, nor the willful and fitful girl-goddess from the cruel and resolute matron-goddess. But judge for yourselves. In the successive plates, XV.-XVIII., I show you, [38] typically represented as the protectresses of nations, the Argive, Cretan, and Lacinian Hera, the Messenian Demeter, the Athena of Corinth, the Artemis of Syracuse; the fountain Arethusa of Syracuse, and the Siren Ligeia of Terina. Now, of these heads, it is true that some are more delicate in feature than the rest, and some softer in expression: in other respects, can you trace any distinction between the Goddesses of Earth and Heaven, or between the Goddess of Wisdom and the Water Nymph of Syracuse? So little can you do so, that it would have remained a disputed question—had not the name luckily been inscribed on some Syracusan coins—whether the head upon them was meant for Arethusa at all; and, continually, it becomes a question respecting finished statues, if without attributes, "Is this Bacchus or Apollo—Zeus or Poseidon?" There is a fact for you; noteworthy, I think! There is no personal character in true Greek art:—abstract ideas of youth and age, strength and swiftness, virtue and vice,—yes: but there is no individuality; and the negative holds down to the revived conventionalism of the Greek school by Leonardo, when he tells you how you are to paint young women, and how old ones; though a Greek would hardly have been so discourteous to age as the Italian is in his canon of it,—"old women should be represented as passionate and hasty, after the manner of Infernal Furies."

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194. "But at least, if the Greeks do not give character, they give ideal beauty?" So it is said, without contradiction. But will you look again at the series of coins of the best time of Greek art, which I have just set before you? Are any of these goddesses or nymphs very beautiful? Certainly the Junos are not. Certainly the Demeters are not. The Siren, and Arethusa, have well-formed and regular features; but I am quite sure that if you look at them without prejudice, you will think neither reaches even the average standard of pretty English girls. The Venus Urania suggests at first the idea of a very charming person, but you will find there is no real depth nor sweetness in the contours, looked at closely. And remember, these are chosen examples,—the best I can find of art current in Greece at the great time; and if even I were to take the celebrated statues, of which only two or three are extant, not one of them excels the Venus of Melos; and she, as I have already asserted, in the 'Queen of the Air,' has nothing notable in feature except dignity and simplicity. Of Athena I do not know one authentic type of great beauty; but the intense ugliness which the Greeks could tolerate in their symbolism of her will be convincingly proved to you by the coin represented in Plate VI. You need only look at two or three vases of the best time to assure yourselves that beauty of feature was, in popular art, not only unattained, but unattempted; and, finally,—and this you may accept as a conclusive proof of the Greek insensitiveness to the most subtle beauty,—there is little evidence even in their literature, and

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none in their art, of their having ever perceived any beauty in infancy, or early childhood.

195. The Greeks, then, do not give passion, do not give character, do not give refined or naïve beauty. But you may think that the absence of these is intended to give dignity to the gods and nymphs; and that their calm faces would be found, if you long observed them, instinct with some expression of divine mystery or power.

I will convince you of the narrow range of Greek thought in these respects, by showing you, from the two sides of one and the same coin, images of the most mysterious of their deities, and the most powerful,—Demeter, and Zeus.

Remember that just as the west coasts of Ireland and England catch first on their hills the rain of the Atlantic, so the Western Peloponnese arrests, in the clouds of the first mountain ranges of Arcadia, the moisture of the Mediterranean; and over all the plains of Elis, Pylos, and Messene, the strength and sustenance of men was naturally felt to be granted by Zeus; as, on the east coast of Greece, the greater clearness of the air by the power of Athena. If you will recollect the prayer of Rhea, in the single line of Callimachus—"Ταταφιλη, τεκε και συ τεαι δ' ωδινες ελαφραι," (compare Pausanias, iv. 33, at the beginning,)—it will mark for you the connection, in the Greek mind, of the birth of the mountain springs of Arcadia with the birth of Zeus. And the centers of Greek thought on this western coast are necessarily Elis, and, (after the time of Epaminondas,) Messene.



XVIII.

**ARTEMIS OF SYRACUSE.  
HERA OF LACINIAN CAPE.**

196. I show you the coin of Messene, because the splendid height and form of Mount Ithome were more expressive of the physical power of Zeus than the lower hills of Olympia; and also because it was struck just at the time of the most finished and delicate Greek art—a little after the main strength of Phidias, but before decadence had generally pronounced itself. The coin is a silver didrachm, bearing on one side a head of Demeter, (Plate XVI., at the top); on the other a full figure of Zeus Aietophoros, (Plate XIX., at the top); the two together signifying the sustaining strength of the earth and heaven. Look first at the head of Demeter. It is merely meant to personify fullness of harvest; there is no mystery in it, no sadness, no vestige of the expression which we should have looked for in any effort to realize the Greek thoughts of the Earth Mother, as we find them spoken by the poets. But take it merely as personified Abundance,—the goddess of black furrow and tawny grass,—how commonplace it is, and how poor! The hair is grand, and there is one stalk of wheat set in it, which is enough to indicate the goddess who is meant; but, in that very office, ignoble, for it shows that the artist could only inform you that this was Demeter by such a symbol. How easy it would have been for a great designer to have made the hair lovely with fruitful flowers, and the features noble in mystery of gloom, or of tenderness. But here you have nothing to interest you, except the common Greek perfections of a straight nose and a full chin.

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197. We pass, on the reverse of the die, to the figure of Zeus Aietophoros. Think of the invocation to Zeus in the Suppliants, (525,) "King of Kings, and Happiest of the Happy, Perfectest of the Perfect in strength, abounding in all things, Jove—hear us, and be with us;" and then, consider what strange phase of mind it was, which, under the very mountain-home of the god, was content with this symbol of him as a well-fed athlete, holding a diminutive and crouching eagle on his fist.

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The features and the right hand have been injured in this coin, but the action of the arm shows that it held a thunderbolt, of which, I believe, the twisted rays were triple. In the presumably earlier coin engraved by Millingen, however,<sup>[39]</sup> it is singly pointed only; and the added inscription "IΘΩΜ," in the field, renders the conjecture of Millingen probable, that this is a rude representation of the statue of Zeus Ithomates, made by Ageladas, the master of Phidias; and I think it has, indeed, the aspect of the endeavor, by a workman of more advanced knowledge, and more vulgar temper, to put the softer anatomy of later schools into the simple action of an archaic figure. Be that as it may, here is one of the most refined cities of Greece content with the figure of an athlete as the representative of their own mountain god; marked as a divine power merely by the attributes of the eagle and thunderbolt.

198. Lastly. The Greeks have not, it appears, in any supreme way, given to their statues character, beauty, or divine strength. Can they give divine sadness? Shall we find in their art-work any of that pensiveness and yearning for the dead which fills the chants of their tragedy? I suppose, if anything like nearness or firmness of faith in after-life is to be found in Greek legend, you might look for it in the stories about the Island of Leuce, at the mouth of the Danube, inhabited by the ghosts of Achilles, Patroclus, Ajax the son of Oïleus, and Helen; and in which the pavement of the Temple of Achilles was washed daily by the sea-birds with their wings, dipping them in the sea.

Now it happens that we have actually on a coin of the Locrians the representation of the ghost of the Lesser Ajax. There is nothing in the history of human imagination more lovely than their leaving always a place for his spirit, vacant in their ranks of battle. But here is their sculptural representation of the phantom, (lower figure, Plate XIX.); and I think you will at once agree with me in feeling that it would be impossible to conceive anything more completely unspiritual. You might more than doubt that it could have been meant for the departed soul, unless you were aware of the meaning of this little circllet between the feet. On other coins you find his name inscribed there, but in this you have his habitation, the haunted Island of Leuce itself, with the waves flowing round it.



XIX.

**ZEUS OF MESSENE.  
AJAX OF OPUS.**

199. Again and again, however, I have to remind you, with respect to these apparently frank and simple failures, that the Greek always intends you to think for yourself, and understand, more than he can speak. Take this instance at our hands, the trim little circllet for the Island of Leuce. The workman knows very well it is not like the island, and that he could not make it so; that, at its best, his sculpture can be little more than a letter; and yet, in putting this circllet, and its encompassing fretwork of minute waves, he does more than if he had merely given you a letter L, or written 'Leuce.' If you know anything of beaches and sea, this symbol will set your imagination at work in recalling them; then you will think of the temple service of the novitiate sea-birds, and of the ghosts of Achilles and Patroclus appearing, like the Dioscuri, above the storm-clouds of the Euxine. And the artist, throughout his work, never for an instant loses faith in your sympathy and passion being ready to answer his;—if you have none to give, he does not care to take you into his counsel; on the whole, would rather that you should not look at his work.

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200. But if you have this sympathy to give, you may be sure that whatever he does for you will be

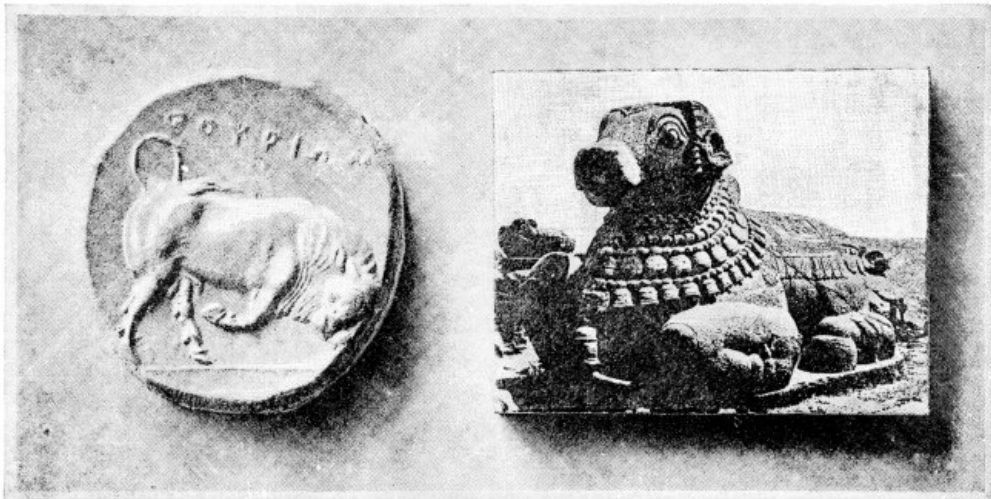
right, as far as he can render it so. It may not be sublime, nor beautiful, nor amusing; but it will be full of meaning, and faithful in guidance. He will give you clue to myriads of things that he cannot literally teach; and, so far as he does teach, you may trust him. Is not this saying much?

And as he strove only to teach what was true, so, in his sculptured symbol, he strove only to carve what was—Right. He rules over the arts to this day, and will forever, because he sought not first for beauty, not first for passion, or for invention, but for Rightness; striving to display, neither himself nor his art, but the thing that he dealt with, in its simplicity. That is his specific character as a Greek. Of course every nation's character is connected with that of others surrounding or preceding it; and in the best Greek work you will find some things that are still false, or fanciful; but whatever in it is false, or fanciful, is not the Greek part of it—it is the Phœnician, or Egyptian, or Pelasgian part. The essential Hellenic stamp is veracity:—Eastern nations drew their heroes with eight legs, but the Greeks drew them with two;—Egyptians drew their deities with cats' heads, but the Greeks drew them with men's; and out of all fallacy, disproportion, and indefiniteness, they were, day by day, resolutely withdrawing and exalting themselves into restricted and demonstrable truth.

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201. And now, having cut away the misconceptions which incumbered our thoughts, I shall be able to put the Greek school into some clearness of its position for you, with respect to the art of the world. That relation is strangely duplicate; for, on one side, Greek art is the root of all simplicity; and, on the other, of all complexity.

On one side, I say, it is the root of all simplicity. If you were for some prolonged period to study Greek sculpture exclusively in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and were then suddenly transported to the Hôtel de Cluny, or any other museum of Gothic and barbarian workmanship, you would imagine the Greeks were the masters of all that was grand, simple, wise, and tenderly human, opposed to the pettiness of the toys of the rest of mankind.



XX.

### GREEK AND BARBARIAN SCULPTURE.

202. On one side of their work they are so. From all vain and mean decoration—all wreak and monstrous error, the Greeks rescue the forms of man and beast, and sculpture them in the nakedness of their true flesh, and with the fire of their living soul. Distinctively from other races, as I have now, perhaps to your weariness, told you, this is the work of the Greek, to give health to what was diseased, and chastisement to what was untrue. So far as this is found in any other school, hereafter, it belongs to them by inheritance from the Greeks, or invests them with the brotherhood of the Greek. And this is the deep meaning of the myth of Dædalus as the giver of motion to statues. The literal change from the binding together of the feet to their separation, and the other modifications of action which took place, either in progressive skill, or often, as the mere consequence of the transition from wood to stone, (a figure carved out of one wooden log must have necessarily its feet near each other, and hands at its sides,) these literal changes are as nothing, in the Greek fable, compared to the bestowing of apparent life. The figures of monstrous gods on Indian temples have their legs separate enough; but they are infinitely more dead than the rude figures at Branchidæ sitting with their hands on their knees. And, briefly, the work of Dædalus is the giving of deceptive life, as that of Prometheus the giving of real life; and I can put the relation of Greek to all other art, in this function, before you, in easily compared and remembered examples.

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203. Here, on the right, in Plate XX., is an Indian bull, colossal, and elaborately carved, which you may take as a sufficient type of the bad art of all the earth. False in form, dead in heart, and loaded with wealth, externally. We will not ask the date of this; it may rest in the eternal obscurity of evil art, everywhere, and forever. Now, beside this colossal bull, here is a bit of Dædalus-work, enlarged from a coin not bigger than a shilling: look at the two together, and you ought to know, henceforward, what Greek art means, to the end of your days.

204. In this aspect of it, then, I say it is the simplest and nakedest of lovely veracities. But it has another aspect, or rather another pole, for the opposition is diametric. As the simplest, so also it

is the most complex of human art. I told you in my Fifth Lecture, showing you the spotty picture of Velasquez, that an essential Greek character is a liking for things that are dappled. And you cannot but have noticed how often and how prevalently the idea which gave its name to the Porch of Polygnotus, "στοα ποικιλη," occurs to the Greeks as connected with the finest art. Thus, when the luxurious city is opposed to the simple and healthful one, in the second book of Plato's Polity, you find that, next to perfumes, pretty ladies, and dice, you must have in it "ποικιλια," which observe, both in that place and again in the third book, is the separate art of joiners' work, or inlaying; but the idea of exquisitely divided variegation or division, both in sight and sound—the "ravishing division to the lute," as in Pindar's "ποικιλοι ὕμνοι"—runs through the compass of all Greek art-description; and if, instead of studying that art among marbles, you were to look at it only on vases of a fine time, (look back, for instance, to Plate IV. here,) your impression of it would be, instead of breadth and simplicity, one of universal spottiness and checkeredness, "ἐν ἀγγεῶν ἔρκεσιν παμποικίλους;" and of the artist's delighting in nothing so much as in crossed or starred or spotted things; which, in right places, he and his public both do unlimitedly. Indeed they hold it complimentary even to a trout, to call him a 'spotty.' Do you recollect the trout in the tributaries of the Ladon, which Pausanias says were spotted, so that they were like thrushes, and which, the Arcadians told him, could speak? In this last ποικιλια, however, they disappointed him. "I, indeed, saw some of them caught," he says, "but I did not hear any of them speak, though I waited beside the river till sunset."

205. I must sum roughly now, for I have detained you too long.

The Greeks have been thus the origin, not only of all broad, mighty, and calm conception, but of all that is divided, delicate, and tremulous; "variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made." To them, as first leaders of ornamental design, belongs, of right, the praise of glistenings in gold, piercings in ivory, stainings in purple, burnishings in dark blue steel; of the fantasy of the Arabian roof,—quartering of the Christian shield,—rubric and arabesque of Christian scripture; in fine, all enlargement, and all diminution of adorning thought, from the temple to the toy, and from the mountainous pillars of Agrigentum to the last fineness of fretwork in the Pisan Chapel of the Thorn.



XXI.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF CHIVALRY.

And in their doing all this, they stand as masters of human order and justice, subduing the animal nature, guided by the spiritual one, as you see the Sicilian Charioteer stands, holding his horse-reins, with the wild lion racing beneath him, and the flying angel above, on the beautiful coin of early Syracuse; (lowest in Plate XXI.)

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And the beginnings of Christian chivalry were in that Greek bridling of the dark and the white horses.

206. Not that a Greek never made mistakes. He made as many as we do ourselves, nearly;—he died of his mistakes at last—as we shall die of them; but so far as he was separated from the herd of more mistaken and more wretched nations—so far as he was Greek—it was by his rightness. He lived, and worked, and was satisfied with the fatness of his land, and the fame of his deeds, by his justice, and reason, and modesty. He became Græculus esuriens, little, and hungry, and every man's errand-boy, by his iniquity, and his competition, and his love of talk. But his Græcism was

in having done, at least at one period of his dominion, more than anybody else, what was modest, useful, and eternally true; and as a workman, he verily did, or first suggested the doing of, everything possible to man.

Take Dædalus, his great type of the practically executive craftsman, and the inventor of expedients in craftsmanship, (as distinguished from Prometheus, the institutor of moral order in art). Dædalus invents,—he, or his nephew,

The potter's wheel, and all work in clay;  
The saw, and all work in wood;  
The masts and sails of ships, and all modes of motion;  
(wings only proving too dangerous!)  
The entire art of minute ornament;  
And the deceptive life of statues.

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By his personal toil, he involves the fatal labyrinth for Minos; builds an impregnable fortress for the Agrigentines; adorns healing baths among the wild parsley-fields of Selinus; buttresses the precipices of Eryx, under the temple of Aphrodite; and for her temple itself—finishes in exquisiteness the golden honeycomb.

207. Take note of that last piece of his art: it is connected with many things which I must bring before you when we enter on the study of architecture. That study we shall begin at the foot of the Baptistery of Florence, which, of all buildings known to me, unites the most perfect symmetry with the quaintest ποικιλία. Then, from the tomb of your own Edward the Confessor, to the farthest shrine of the opposite Arabian and Indian world, I must show you how the glittering and iridescent dominion of Dædalus prevails; and his ingenuity in division, interposition, and labyrinthine sequence, more widely still. Only this last summer I found the dark red masses of the rough sandstone of Furness Abbey had been fitted by him, with no less pleasure than he had in carving them, into wedged hexagons—reminiscences of the honeycomb of Venus Erycina. His ingenuity plays around the framework of all the noblest things; and yet the brightness of it has a lurid shadow. The spot of the fawn, of the bird, and the moth, may be harmless. But Dædalus reigns no less over the spot of the leopard and snake. That cruel and venomous power of his art is marked, in the legends of him, by his invention of the saw from the serpent's tooth; and his seeking refuge, under blood-guiltiness, with Minos, who can judge evil, and measure, or remit, the penalty of it, but not reward good; Rhadamanthus only can measure *that*; but Minos is essentially the recognizer of evil deeds "conoscitor delle peccata," whom, therefore, you find in Dante under the form of the ερπετον. "Cignesi con la coda tante volte, quantunque gradi vuol che giu sia messa."

And this peril of the influence of Dædalus is twofold; first, in leading us to delight in glitterings and semblances of things, more than in their form, or truth;—admire the harlequin's jacket more than the hero's strength; and love the gilding of the missal more than its words;—but farther, and worse, the ingenuity of Dædalus may even become bestial, an instinct for mechanical labor only, strangely involved with a feverish and ghastly cruelty:—(you will find this distinct in the intensely Dædal work of the Japanese); rebellious, finally, against the laws of nature and honor, and building labyrinths for monsters,—not combs for bees.

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208. Gentlemen, we of the rough northern race may never, perhaps, be able to learn from the Greek his reverence for beauty; but we may at least learn his disdain of mechanism:—of all work which he felt to be monstrous and inhuman in its imprudent dexterities.

We hold ourselves, we English, to be good workmen. I do not think I speak with light reference to recent calamity, (for I myself lost a young relation, full of hope and good purpose, in the foundered ship *London*,) when I say that either an Æginetan or Ionian shipwright built ships that could be fought from, though they were under water; and neither of them would have been proud of having built one that would fill and sink helplessly if the sea washed over her deck, or turn upside-down if a squall struck her topsail.

Believe me, gentlemen, good workmanship consists in continence and common sense, more than in frantic expatiation of mechanical ingenuity; and if you would be continent and rational, you had better learn more of Art than you do now, and less of Engineering. What is taking place at this very hour,<sup>[40]</sup> among the streets, once so bright, and avenues, once so pleasant, of the fairest city in Europe, may surely lead us all to feel that the skill of Dædalus, set to build impregnable fortresses, is not so wisely applied as in framing the τρητον πονον,—the golden honeycomb.

#### FOOTNOTES:

[37] The closing Lecture, on the religious temper of the Florentine, though necessary for the complete explanation of the subject to my class, at the time, introduced new points of inquiry which I do not choose to lay before the general reader until they can be examined in fuller sequence. The present volume, therefore, closes with the Sixth Lecture, and that on Christian art will be given as the first of the published course on Florentine Sculpture.

[38] These plates of coins are given for future reference and examination, not merely for the use made of them in this place. The Lacinian Hera, if a coin could be found unworn in surface, would be very noble; her hair is thrown free because she is the goddess of the



cape of storms, though in her temple, there, the wind never moved the ashes on its altar. (Livy, xxiv. 3.)

[39] 'Ancient Cities and Kings,' Plate IV., No. 20.

[40] The siege of Paris, at the time of the delivery of this Lecture, was in one of its most destructive phases.

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## LECTURE VII.

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### THE RELATION BETWEEN MICHAEL ANGELO AND TINTORET. [41]

209. In preceding lectures on sculpture I have included references to the art of painting, so far as it proposes to itself the same object as sculpture, (idealization of form); and I have chosen for the subject of our closing inquiry, the works of the two masters who accomplished or implied the unity of these arts. Tintoret entirely conceives his figures as solid statues: sees them in his mind on every side; detaches each from the other by imagined air and light; and foreshortens, interposes, or involves them as if they were pieces of clay in his hand. On the contrary, Michael Angelo conceives his sculpture partly as if it were painted; and using (as I told you formerly) his pen like a chisel, uses also his chisel like a pencil; is sometimes as picturesque as Rembrandt, and sometimes as soft as Correggio.

It is of him chiefly that I shall speak to-day; both because it is part of my duty to the strangers here present to indicate for them some of the points of interest in the drawings forming part of the University collections; but still more, because I must not allow the second year of my professorship to close, without some statement of the mode in which those collections may be useful or dangerous to my pupils. They seem at present little likely to be either; for since I entered on my duties, no student has ever asked me a single question respecting these drawings, or, so far as I could see, taken the slightest interest in them.

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210. There are several causes for this which might be obviated—there is one which cannot be. The collection, as exhibited at present, includes a number of copies which mimic in variously injurious ways the characters of Michael Angelo's own work; and the series, except as material for reference, can be of no practical service until these are withdrawn, and placed by themselves. It includes, besides, a number of original drawings which are indeed of value to any laborious student of Michael Angelo's life and temper; but which owe the greater part of this interest to their being executed in times of sickness or indolence, when the master, however strong, was failing in his purpose, and, however diligent, tired of his work. It will be enough to name, as an example of this class, the sheet of studies for the Medici tombs, No. 45, in which the lowest figure is, strictly speaking, neither a study nor a working drawing, but has either been scrawled in the feverish languor of exhaustion, which cannot escape its subject of thought; or, at best, in idly experimental addition of part to part, beginning with the head, and fitting muscle after muscle, and bone after bone, to it, thinking of their place only, not their proportion, till the head is only about one-twentieth part of the height of the body: finally, something between a face and a mask is blotted in the upper left-hand corner of the paper, indicative, in the weakness and frightfulness of it, simply of mental disorder from over-work; and there are several others of this kind, among even the better drawings of the collection, which ought never to be exhibited to the general public.

211. It would be easy, however, to separate these, with the acknowledged copies, from the rest; and, doing the same with the drawings of Raphael, among which a larger number are of true value, to form a connected series of deep interest to artists, in illustration of the incipient and experimental methods of design practiced by each master.

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I say, to artists. Incipient methods of design are not, and ought not to be, subjects of earnest inquiry to other people; and although the re-arrangement of the drawings would materially increase the chance of their gaining due attention, there is a final and fatal reason for the want of interest in them displayed by the younger students;—namely, that these designs have nothing whatever to do with present life, with its passions, or with its religion. What their historic value is, and relation to the life of the past, I will endeavor, so far as time admits, to explain to-day.

212. The course of Art divides itself hitherto, among all nations of the world that have practiced it successfully, into three great periods.

The first, that in which their conscience is undeveloped, and their condition of life in many respects savage; but, nevertheless, in harmony with whatever conscience they possess. The most powerful tribes, in this stage of their intellect, usually live by rapine, and under the influence of vivid, but contracted, religious imagination. The early predatory activity of the Normans, and the confused minglings of religious subjects with scenes of hunting, war, and vile grotesque, in their first art, will sufficiently exemplify this state of a people; having, observe, their conscience undeveloped, but keeping their conduct in satisfied harmony with it.

The second stage is that of the formation of conscience by the discovery of the true laws of social order and personal virtue, coupled with sincere effort to live by such laws as they are discovered.

All the Arts advance steadily during this stage of national growth, and are lovely, even in their deficiencies, as the buds of flowers are lovely by their vital force, swift change, and continent beauty.

213. The third stage is that in which the conscience is entirely formed, and the nation, finding it painful to live in obedience to the precepts it has discovered, looks about to discover, also, a compromise for obedience to them. In this condition of mind its first endeavor is nearly always to make its religion pompous, and please the gods by giving them gifts and entertainments, in which it may piously and pleasurably share itself; so that a magnificent display of the powers of art it has gained by sincerity, takes place for a few years, and is then followed by their extinction, rapid and complete exactly in the degree in which the nation resigns itself to hypocrisy.

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The works of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Tintoret belong to this period of compromise in the career of the greatest nation of the world; and are the most splendid efforts yet made by human creatures to maintain the dignity of states with beautiful colors, and defend the doctrines of theology with anatomical designs.

Farther, and as an universal principle, we have to remember that the Arts express not only the moral temper, but the scholarship, of their age; and we have thus to study them under the influence, at the same moment of, it may be, declining probity, and advancing science.

214. Now in this the Arts of Northern and Southern Europe stand exactly opposed. The Northern temper never accepts the Catholic faith with force such as it reached in Italy. Our sincerest thirteenth-century sculptor is cold and formal compared with that of the Pisani; nor can any Northern poet be set for an instant beside Dante, as an exponent of Catholic faith: on the contrary, the Northern temper accepts the scholarship of the Reformation with absolute sincerity, while the Italians seek refuge from it in the partly scientific and completely lascivious enthusiasms of literature and painting, renewed under classical influence. We therefore, in the north, produce our Shakspeare and Holbein; they their Petrarch and Raphael. And it is nearly impossible for you to study Shakspeare or Holbein too much, or Petrarch and Raphael too little.

I do not say this, observe, in opposition to the Catholic faith, or to any other faith, but only to the attempts to support whatsoever the faith may be, by ornament or eloquence, instead of action. Every man who honestly accepts, and acts upon, the knowledge granted to him by the circumstances of his time, has the faith which God intends him to have;—assuredly a good one, whatever the terms or form of it—every man who dishonestly refuses, or interestedly disobeys the knowledge open to him, holds a faith which God does not mean him to hold, and therefore a bad one, however beautiful or traditionally respectable.

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215. Do not, therefore, I entreat you, think that I speak with any purpose of defending one system of theology against another; least of all, reformed against Catholic theology. There probably never was a system of religion so destructive to the loveliest arts and the loveliest virtues of men, as the modern Protestantism, which consists in an assured belief in the Divine forgiveness of all your sins, and the Divine correctness of all your opinions. But in the first searching and sincere activities, the doctrines of the Reformation produced the most instructive art, and the grandest literature, yet given to the world; while Italy, in her interested resistance to those doctrines, polluted and exhausted the arts she already possessed. Her iridescence of dying statesmanship—her magnificence of hollow piety,—were represented in the arts of Venice and Florence by two mighty men on either side—Titian and Tintoret,—Michael Angelo and Raphael. Of the calm and brave statesmanship, the modest and faithful religion, which had been her strength, I am content to name one chief representative artist at Venice, John Bellini.

216. Let me now map out for you roughly the chronological relations of these five men. It is impossible to remember the minor years, in dates; I will give you them broadly in decades, and you can add what finesse afterwards you like.

Recollect, first, the great year 1480. Twice four's eight—you can't mistake it. In that year Michael Angelo was five years old; Titian, three years old; Raphael, within three years of being born.

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So see how easily it comes. Michael Angelo five years old—and you divide six between Titian and Raphael,—three on each side of your standard year, 1480.

Then add to 1480, forty years—an easy number to recollect, surely; and you get the exact year of Raphael's death, 1520.

In that forty years all the new effort and deadly catastrophe took place. 1480 to 1520.

Now, you have only to fasten to those forty years, the life of Bellini, who represents the best art before them, and of Tintoret, who represents the best art after them.

217. I cannot fit you these on with a quite comfortable exactness, but with very slight inexactness I can fit them firmly.

John Bellini was ninety years old when he died. He lived fifty years before the great forty of change, and he saw the forty, and died. Then Tintoret is born; lives eighty<sup>[42]</sup> years after the forty, and closes, in dying, the sixteenth century, and the great arts of the world.

Those are the dates, roughly; now for the facts connected with them.

John Bellini precedes the change, meets, and resists it victoriously to his death. Nothing of flaw

or failure is ever to be discerned in him.

Then Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Titian, together, bring about the deadly change, playing into each other's hands—Michael Angelo being the chief captain in evil; Titian, in natural force.

Then Tintoret, himself alone nearly as strong as all the three, stands up for a last fight; for Venice, and the old time. He all but wins it at first; but the three together are too strong for him. Michael Angelo strikes him down; and the arts are ended. "Il disegno di Michael Agnolo." That fatal motto was his death-warrant.

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218. And now, having massed out my subject, I can clearly sketch for you the changes that took place from Bellini, through Michael Angelo, to Tintoret.

The art of Bellini is centrally represented by two pictures at Venice: one, the Madonna in the Sacristy of the Frari, with two saints beside her, and two angels at her feet; the second, the Madonna with four Saints, over the second altar of San Zaccaria.

In the first of these, the figures are under life size, and it represents the most perfect kind of picture for rooms; in which, since it is intended to be seen close to the spectator, every right kind of finish possible to the hand may be wisely lavished; yet which is not a miniature, nor in any wise petty, or ignoble.

In the second, the figures are of life size, or a little more, and it represents the class of great pictures in which the boldest execution is used, but all brought to entire completion. These two, having every quality in balance, are as far as my present knowledge extends, and as far as I can trust my judgment, the two best pictures in the world.

219. Observe respecting them—

First, they are both wrought in entirely consistent and permanent material. The gold in them is represented by painting, not laid on with real gold. And the painting is so secure, that four hundred years have produced on it, so far as I can see, no harmful change whatsoever, of any kind.

Secondly, the figures in both are in perfect peace. No action takes place except that the little angels are playing on musical instruments, but with uninterrupted and effortless gesture, as in a dream. A choir of singing angels by La Robbia or Donatello would be intent on their music, or eagerly rapturous in it, as in temporary exertion: in the little choirs of cherubs by Luini in the Adoration of the Shepherds, in the Cathedral of Como, we even feel by their dutiful anxiety that there might be danger of a false note if they were less attentive. But Bellini's angels, even the youngest, sing as calmly as the Fates weave.

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220. Let me at once point out to you that this calmness is the attribute of the entirely highest class of art: the introduction of strong or violently emotional incident is at once a confession of inferiority.

Those are the two first attributes of the best art. Faultless workmanship, and perfect serenity; a continuous, not momentary, action,—or entire inaction. You are to be interested in the living creatures; not in what is happening to them.

Then the third attribute of the best art is that it compels you to think of the spirit of the creature, and therefore of its face, more than of its body.

And the fourth is that in the face you shall be led to see only beauty or joy;—never vileness, vice, or pain.

Those are the four essentials of the greatest art. I repeat them, they are easily learned.

1. Faultless and permanent workmanship.
2. Serenity in state or action.
3. The Face principal, not the body.
4. And the Face free from either vice or pain.

221. It is not possible, of course, always literally to observe the second condition, that there shall be quiet action or none; but Bellini's treatment of violence in action you may see exemplified in a notable way in his St. Peter Martyr. The soldier is indeed striking the sword down into his breast; but in the face of the Saint is only resignation, and faintness of death, not pain—that of the executioner is impassive; and, while a painter of the later schools would have covered breast and sword with blood, Bellini allows no stain of it; but pleases himself by the most elaborate and exquisite painting of a soft crimson feather in the executioner's helmet.

222. Now the changes brought about by Michael Angelo—and permitted, or persisted in calamitously, by Tintoret—are in the four points these:

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1st. Bad workmanship.

The greater part of all that these two men did is hastily and incompletely done; and all that they did on a large scale in color is in the best qualities of it perished.

2d. Violence of transitional action.

The figures flying,—falling,—striking,—or biting. Scenes of Judgment,—battle,—martyrdom,—massacre; anything that is in the acme of instantaneous interest and violent gesture. They cannot any more trust their public to care for anything but that.

3d. Physical instead of mental interest. The body, and its anatomy, made the entire subject of interest: the face, shadowed, as in the Duke Lorenzo,<sup>[43]</sup> unfinished, as in the Twilight, or entirely foreshortened, backshortened, and despised, among labyrinths of limbs, and mountains of sides and shoulders.

4th. Evil chosen rather than good. On the face itself, instead of joy or virtue, at the best, sadness, probably pride, often sensuality, and always, by preference, vice or agony as the subject of thought. In the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, and the Last Judgment of Tintoret, it is the wrath of the Dies Iræ, not its justice, in which they delight; and their only passionate thought of the coming of Christ in the clouds, is that all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.

Those are the four great changes wrought by Michael Angelo. I repeat them:

Ill work for good.  
Tumult for Peace.  
The Flesh of Man for his Spirit.  
And the Curse of God for His blessing.

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223. Hitherto, I have massed, necessarily, but most unjustly, Michael Angelo and Tintoret together, because of their common relation to the art of others. I shall now proceed to distinguish the qualities of their own. And first as to the general temper of the two men.

Nearly every existing work by Michael Angelo is an attempt to execute something beyond his power, coupled with a fevered desire that his power may be acknowledged. He is always matching himself either against the Greeks whom he cannot rival, or against rivals whom he cannot forget. He is proud, yet not proud enough to be at peace; melancholy, yet not deeply enough to be raised above petty pain; and strong beyond all his companion workmen, yet never strong enough to command his temper, or limit his aims.

Tintoret, on the contrary, works in the consciousness of supreme strength, which cannot be wounded by neglect, and is only to be thwarted by time and space. He knows precisely all that art can accomplish under given conditions; determines absolutely how much of what can be done he will himself for the moment choose to do; and fulfills his purpose with as much ease as if, through his human body, were working the great forces of nature. Not that he is ever satisfied with what he has done, as vulgar and feeble artists are satisfied. He falls short of his ideal, more than any other man; but not more than is necessary; and is content to fall short of it to that degree, as he is content that his figures, however well painted, do not move nor speak. He is also entirely unconcerned respecting the satisfaction of the public. He neither cares to display his strength to them, nor convey his ideas to them; when he finishes his work, it is because he is in the humor to do so; and the sketch which a meaner painter would have left incomplete to show how cleverly it was begun, Tintoret simply leaves because he has done as much of it as he likes.

224. Both Raphael and Michael Angelo are thus, in the most vital of all points, separate from the great Venetian. They are always in dramatic attitudes, and always appealing to the public for praise. They are the leading athletes in the gymnasium of the arts; and the crowd of the circus cannot take its eyes away from them, while the Venetian walks or rests with the simplicity of a wild animal; is scarcely noticed in his occasionally swifter motion; when he springs, it is to please himself; and so calmly, that no one thinks of estimating the distance covered.

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I do not praise him wholly in this. I praise him only for the well-founded pride, infinitely nobler than Michael Angelo's. You do not hear of Tintoret's putting any one into hell because they had found fault with his work. Tintoret would as soon have thought of putting a dog into hell for laying his paws on it. But he is to be blamed in this—that he thinks as little of the pleasure of the public, as of their opinion. A great painter's business is to do what the public ask of him, in the way that shall be helpful and instructive to them. His relation to them is exactly that of a tutor to a child; he is not to defer to their judgment, but he is carefully to form it;—not to consult their pleasure for his own sake, but to consult it much for theirs. It was scarcely, however, possible that this should be the case between Tintoret and his Venetians; he could not paint for the people, and in some respects he was happily protected by his subordination to the Senate. Raphael and Michael Angelo lived in a world of court intrigue, in which it was impossible to escape petty irritation, or refuse themselves the pleasure of mean victory. But Tintoret and Titian, even at the height of their reputation, practically lived as craftsmen in their workshops, and sent in samples of their wares, not to be praised or caviled at, but to be either taken or refused.

225. I can clearly and adequately set before you these relations between the great painters of Venice and her Senate—relations which, in monetary matters, are entirely right and exemplary for all time—by reading to you two decrees of the Senate itself, and one petition to it. The first document shall be the decree of the Senate for giving help to John Bellini, in finishing the compartments of the great Council Chamber; granting him three assistants—one of them Victor Carpaccio.

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The decree, first referring to some other business, closes in these terms:<sup>[44]</sup>

"There having moreover offered his services to this effect our most faithful citizen, Zuan Bellin, according to his agreement employing his skill and all speed and diligence for the completion of this work of the three pictures aforesaid, provided he be assisted by the under-written painters.

"Be it therefore put to the ballot, that besides the aforesaid Zuan Bellin in person, who will assume the superintendence of this work, there be added Master Victor Scarpaza, with a monthly salary of five ducats; Master Victor, son of the late Mathio, at four ducats per month; and the painter, Hieronymo, at two ducats per month; they rendering speedy and diligent assistance to the aforesaid Zuan Bellin for the painting of the pictures aforesaid, so that they be completed well and carefully as speedily as possible. The salaries of the which three master painters aforesaid, with the costs of colors and other necessaries, to be defrayed by our Salt Office with the moneys of the great chest.

"It being expressly declared that said pensioned painters be tied and bound to work constantly and daily, so that said three pictures may be completed as expeditiously as possible; the artists aforesaid being pensioned at the good pleasure of this Council.

"Ayes23

"Noes3

"Neutrals 0"

This decree is the more interesting to us now, because it is the precedent to which Titian himself refers, when he first offers his services to the Senate.

The petition which I am about to read to you, was read to the Council of Ten, on the last day of May, 1513, and the original draft of it is yet preserved in the Venice archives.

"Most Illustrious Council of Ten.

"Most Serene Prince and most Excellent Lords.

"I, Titian of Serviete de Cadore, having from my boyhood upwards set myself to learn the art of painting, not so much from cupidity of gain as for the sake of endeavoring to acquire some little fame, and of being ranked amongst those who now profess the said art.

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"And altho heretofore, and likewise at this present, I have been earnestly requested by the Pope and other potentates to go and serve them, nevertheless, being anxious as your Serenity's most faithful subject, for such I am, to leave some memorial in this famous city; my determination is, should the Signory approve, *to undertake, so long as I live, to come and paint in the Grand Council with my whole soul and ability*; commencing, provided your Serenity think of it, with the battle-piece on the side towards the "Piazza," that being the most difficult; nor down to this time has any one chosen to assume so hard a task.

"I, most excellent Lords, should be better pleased to receive as recompense for the work to be done by me, such acknowledgments as may be deemed sufficient, and much less; but because, as already stated by me, I care solely for my honor, and mere livelihood, should your Serenity approve, you will vouchsafe to grant me for my life, the next brokers-patent in the German factory,<sup>[45]</sup> by whatever means it may become vacant; notwithstanding other expectancies; with the terms, conditions, obligations, and exemptions, as in the case of Messer Zuan Bellini; besides two youths whom I purpose bringing with me as assistants; they to be paid by the Salt Office; as likewise the colors and all other requisites, as conceded a few months ago by the aforesaid most Illustrious Council to the said Messer Zuan; for I promise to do such work and with so much speed and excellency as shall satisfy your lordships to whom I humbly recommend myself."

226. "This proposal," Mr. Brown tells us, "in accordance with the petitions presented by Gentil Bellini and Alvise Vivarini, was immediately put to the ballot," and carried thus—the decision of the Grand Council, in favor of Titian, being, observe, by no means unanimous:

"Ayes10

"Noes6

"Neutrals 0"

Immediately follows on the acceptance of Titian's services, this practical order:

"We, Chiefs of the most Illustrious Council of Ten, tell and inform you Lords Proveditors for the State; videlicet the one who is cashier of the Great Chest, and his successors, that for the execution of what has been decreed above in the most

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Illustrious Council aforesaid, you do have prepared all necessaries for the above written Titian according to his petition and demand, and as observed with regard to Juan Bellini, that he may paint ut supra; paying from month to month the two youths whom said Titian shall present to you at the rate of four ducats each per month, as urged by him because of their skill and sufficiency in said art of painting, tho' we do not mean the payment of their salary to commence until they begin work; and thus will you do. Given on the 8th of June, 1513."

This is the way, then, the great workmen wish to be paid, and that is the way wise men pay them for their work. The perfect simplicity of such patronage leaves the painter free to do precisely what he thinks best: and a good painter always produces his best, with such license.

227. And now I shall take the four conditions of change in succession, and examine the distinctions between the two masters in their acceptance of, or resistance to, them.

(I.) The change of good and permanent workmanship for bad and insecure workmanship.

You have often heard quoted the saying of Michael Angelo, that oil-painting was only fit for women and children.

He said so, simply because he had neither the skill to lay a single touch of good oil-painting, nor the patience to overcome even its elementary difficulties.

And it is one of my reasons for the choice of subject in this concluding lecture on Sculpture, that I may, with direct reference to this much quoted saying of Michael Angelo, make the positive statement to you, that oil-painting is the Art of arts;<sup>[46]</sup> that it is sculpture, drawing, and music, all in one, involving the technical dexterities of those three several arts; that is to say—the decision and strength of the stroke of the chisel;—the balanced distribution of appliance of that force necessary for graduation in light and shade;—and the passionate felicity of rightly multiplied actions, all unerring, which on an instrument produce right sound, and on canvas, living color. There is no other human skill so great or so wonderful as the skill of fine oil-painting; and there is no other art whose results are so absolutely permanent. Music is gone as soon as produced—marble discolors,—fresco fades,—glass darkens or decomposes—painting alone, well guarded, is practically everlasting.

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Of this splendid art Michael Angelo understood nothing; he understood even fresco, imperfectly. Tintoret understood both perfectly; but he—when no one would pay for his colors (and sometimes nobody would even give him space of wall to paint on)—used cheap blue for ultramarine; and he worked so rapidly, and on such huge spaces of canvas, that between damp and dry, his colors must go, for the most part; but any complete oil-painting of his stands as well as one of Bellini's own: while Michael Angelo's fresco is defaced already in every part of it, and Lionardo's oil-painting is all either gone black, or gone to nothing.

228. (II.) Introduction of dramatic interest for the sake of excitement. I have already, in the *Stones of Venice*, illustrated Tintoret's dramatic power at so great length, that I will not, to-day, make any farther statement to justify my assertion that it is as much beyond Michael Angelo's as Shakspeare's is beyond Milton's—and somewhat with the same kind of difference in manner. Neither can I speak to-day, time not permitting me, of the abuse of their dramatic power by Venetian or Florentine; one thing only I beg you to note, that with full half of his strength, Tintoret remains faithful to the serenity of the past; and the examples I have given you from his work in S. 50,<sup>[47]</sup> are, one, of the most splendid drama, and the other, of the quietest portraiture ever attained by the arts of the Middle Ages.

Note also this respecting his picture of the Judgment, that, in spite of all the violence and wildness of the imagined scene, Tintoret has not given, so far as I remember, the spectacle of any one soul under infliction of actual pain. In all previous representations of the Last Judgment there had at least been one division of the picture set apart for the representation of torment; and even the gentle Angelico shrinks from no orthodox detail in this respect; but Tintoret, too vivid and true in imagination to be able to endure the common thoughts of hell, represents indeed the wicked in ruin, but not in agony. They are swept down by flood and whirlwind—the place of them shall know them no more, but not one is seen in more than the natural pain of swift and irrevocable death.

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229. (III.) I pass to the third condition; the priority of flesh to spirit, and of the body to the face.

In this alone, of the four innovations, Michael Angelo and Tintoret have the Greeks with them;—in this, alone, have they any right to be called classical. The Greeks gave them no excuse for bad workmanship; none for temporary passion; none for the preference of pain. Only in the honor done to the body may be alleged for them the authority of the ancients.

You remember, I hope, how often in my preceding lectures I had to insist on the fact that Greek sculpture was essentially *ἀπροσωπος*;—independent, not only of the expression, but even of the beauty of the face. Nay, independent of its being so much as seen. The greater number of the finest pieces of it which remain for us to judge by, have had the heads broken away;—we do not seriously miss them either from the Three Fates, the Ilissus, or the Torso of the Vatican. The face of the Theseus is so far destroyed by time that you can form little conception of its former aspect. But it is otherwise in Christian sculpture. Strike the head off even the rudest statue in the porch of Chartres and you will greatly miss it—the harm would be still worse to Donatello's St. George:—and if you take the heads from a statue of Mino, or a painting of Angelico—very little but

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drapery will be left;—drapery made redundant in quantity and rigid in fold, that it may conceal the forms, and give a proud or ascetic reserve to the actions, of the bodily frame. Bellini and his school, indeed, rejected at once the false theory, and the easy mannerism, of such religious design; and painted the body without fear or reserve, as, in its subordination, honorable and lovely. But the inner heart and fire of it are by them always first thought of, and no action is given to it merely to show its beauty. Whereas the great culminating masters, and chiefly of these, Tintoret, Correggio, and Michael Angelo, delight in the body for its own sake, and cast it into every conceivable attitude, often in violation of all natural probability, that they may exhibit the action of its skeleton, and the contours of its flesh. The movement of a hand with Cima or Bellini expresses mental emotion only; but the clustering and twining of the fingers of Correggio's S. Catherine is enjoyed by the painter just in the same way as he would enjoy the twining of the branches of a graceful plant, and he compels them into intricacies which have little or no relation to St. Catherine's mind. In the two drawings of Correggio (S. 13 and 14) it is the rounding of limbs and softness of foot resting on cloud which are principally thought of in the form of the Madonna; and the countenance of St. John is foreshortened into a section, that full prominence may be given to the muscles of his arms and breast.

So in Tintoret's drawing of the Graces (S. 22), he has entirely neglected the individual character of the Goddesses, and been content to indicate it merely by attributes of dice or flower, so only that he may sufficiently display varieties of contour in thigh and shoulder.

230. Thus far, then, the Greeks, Correggio, Michael Angelo, Raphael in his latter design, and Tintoret in his scenic design (as opposed to portraiture), are at one. But the Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, are also together in this farther point; that they all draw the body for true delight in it, and with knowledge of it living; while Michael Angelo and Raphael draw the body for vanity, and from knowledge of it dead.

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The Venus of Melos,—Correggio's Venus, (with Mercury teaching Cupid to read),—and Tintoret's Graces, have the forms which their designers truly *liked* to see in women. They may have been wrong or right in liking those forms, but they carved and painted them for their pleasure, not for vanity.

But the form of Michael Angelo's Night is not one which he delighted to see in women. He gave it her, because he thought it was fine, and that he would be admired for reaching so lofty an ideal. [48]

231. Again. The Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, learn the body from the living body, and delight in its breath, color, and motion. [49]

Raphael and Michael Angelo learned it essentially from the corpse, and had no delight in it whatever, but great pride in showing that they knew all its mechanism; they therefore sacrifice its colors, and insist on its muscles, and surrender the breath and fire of it, for what is—not merely carnal,—but osseous, knowing that for one person who can recognize the loveliness of a look, or the purity of a color, there are a hundred who can calculate the length of a bone.

The boy with the doves, in Raphael's cartoon of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, is not a child running, but a surgical diagram of a child in a running posture.

Farther, when the Greeks, Correggio, and Tintoret, draw the body active, it is because they rejoice in its force, and when they draw it inactive, it is because they rejoice in its repose. But Michael Angelo and Raphael invent for it ingenious mechanical motion, because they think it uninteresting when it is quiet, and cannot, in their pictures, endure any person's being simple-minded enough to stand upon both his legs at once, nor venture to imagine anyone's being clear enough in his language to make himself intelligible without pointing.

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In all these conditions, the Greek and Venetian treatment of the body is faithful, modest, and natural; but Michael Angelo's dishonest, insolent, and artificial.

232. But between him and Tintoret there is a separation deeper than all these, when we examine their treatment of the face. Michael Angelo's vanity of surgical science rendered it impossible for him ever to treat the body as well as the Greeks treated it; but it left him wholly at liberty to treat the face as ill; and he did: and in some respects very curiously worse.

The Greeks had, in all their work, one type of face for beautiful and honorable persons; and another, much contrary to it, for dishonorable ones; and they were continually setting these in opposition. Their type of beauty lay chiefly in the undisturbed peace and simplicity of all contours; in full roundness of chin; in perfect formation of the lips, showing neither pride nor care; and, most of all, in a straight and firm line from the brow to the end of the nose.

The Greek type of dishonorable persons, especially satyrs, fauns, and sensual powers, consisted in irregular excrescence and decrement of features, especially in flatness of the upper part of the nose, and projection of the end of it into a blunt knob.

By the most grotesque fatality, as if the personal bodily injury he had himself received had passed with a sickly echo into his mind also, Michael Angelo is always dwelling on this satyric form of countenance;—sometimes violently caricatures it, but never can help drawing it; and all the best profiles in this collection at Oxford have what Mr. Robinson calls a "nez retroussé;" but what is, in reality, the nose of the Greek Bacchic mask, treated as a dignified feature.

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233. For the sake of readers who cannot examine the drawings themselves, and lest I should be thought to have exaggerated in any wise the statement of this character, I quote Mr. Robinson's description of the head, No. 9—a celebrated and entirely authentic drawing, on which, I regret to say, my own pencil comment in passing is merely "brutal lower lip, and broken nose":—

"This admirable study was probably made from nature, additional character and more powerful expression having been given to it by a slight exaggeration of details, bordering on caricature (observe the protruding lower lip, 'nez retroussé,' and overhanging forehead). The head, in profile, turned to the right, is proudly planted on a massive neck and shoulders, and the short tufted hair stands up erect. The expression is that of fierce, insolent self-confidence and malevolence; it is engraved in facsimile in Ottley's 'Italian School of Design,' and it is described in that work, p. 33, as 'Finely expressive of scornfulness and pride, and evidently a study from nature.'

"Michel Angelo has made use of the same ferocious-looking model on other occasions—see an instance in the well-known 'Head of Satan' engraved in Woodburn's Lawrence Gallery (No. 16), and now in the Malcolm Collection.

"The study on the reverse of the leaf is more lightly executed; it represents a man of powerful frame, carrying a hog or boar in his arms before him, the upper part of his body thrown back to balance the weight, his head hidden by that of the animal, which rests on the man's right shoulder.

"The power displayed in every line and touch of these drawings is inimitable—the head was in truth one of the 'teste divine,' and the hand which executed it the 'mano terribile,' so enthusiastically alluded to by Vasari."

234. Passing, for the moment, by No. 10, a "young woman of majestic character, marked by a certain expression of brooding melancholy," and "wearing on her head a fantastic cap or turban;"—by No. 11, a bearded man, "wearing a conical Phrygian cap, his mouth wide open," and his expression "obstreperously animated;"—and by No. 12, "a middle-aged or old man, with a snub nose, high forehead, and thin, scrubby hair," we will go on to the fairer examples of Divine heads in No. 32.

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"This splendid sheet of studies is probably one of the 'carte stupendissime di teste divine,' which Vasari says (Vita, p. 272) Michel Angelo executed, as presents or lessons for his artistic friends. Not improbably it is actually one of those made for his friend Tommaso dei Cavalieri, who, when young, was desirous of learning to draw."

But it is one of the chief misfortunes affecting Michael Angelo's reputation, that his ostentatious display of strength and science has a natural attraction for comparatively weak and pedantic persons. And this sheet of Vasari's "teste divine" contains, in fact, not a single drawing of high quality—only one of moderate agreeableness, and two caricatured heads, one of a satyr with hair like the fur of animals, and one of a monstrous and sensual face, such as could only have occurred to the sculptor in a fatigued dream, and which in my own notes I have classed with the vile face in No. 45.

235. Returning, however, to the divine heads above it, I wish you to note "the most conspicuous and important of all," a study for one of the Genii behind the Sibylla Libyca. This Genius, like the young woman of a majestic character, and the man with his mouth open, wears a cap, or turban; opposite to him in the sheet, is a female in profile, "wearing a hood of massive drapery." And, when once your attention is directed to this point, you will perhaps be surprised to find how many of Michael Angelo's figures, intended to be sublime, have their heads bandaged. If you have been a student of Michael Angelo chiefly, you may easily have vitiated your taste to the extent of thinking that this is a dignified costume; but if you study Greek work, instead, you will find that nothing is more important in the system of it than a finished disposition of the hair; and as soon as you acquaint yourself with the execution of carved marbles generally, you will perceive these massy fillets to be merely a cheap means of getting over a difficulty too great for Michael Angelo's patience, and too exigent for his invention. They are not sublime arrangements, but economies of labor, and reliefs from the necessity of design; and if you had proposed to the sculptor of the Venus of Melos, or of the Jupiter of Olympia, to bind the ambrosial locks up in towels, you would most likely have been instantly bound, yourself; and sent to the nearest temple of Æsculapius.

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236. I need not, surely, tell you,—I need only remind,—how in all these points, the Venetians and Correggio reverse Michael Angelo's evil, and vanquish him in good; how they refuse caricature, rejoice in beauty, and thirst for opportunity of toil. The waves of hair in a single figure of Tintoret's (the Mary Magdalen of the Paradise) contain more intellectual design in themselves alone than all the folds of unseemly linen in the Sistine chapel put together.

In the fourth and last place, as Tintoret does not sacrifice, except as he is forced by the exigencies of display, the face for the body, so also he does not sacrifice happiness for pain. The chief reason why we all know the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo, and not the "Paradise" of Tintoret, is the same love of sensation which makes us read the *Inferno* of Dante, and not his *Paradise*; and the choice, believe me, is our fault, not his; some farther evil influence is due to the fact that Michael Angelo has invested all his figures with picturesque and palpable elements of

effect, while Tintoret has only made them lovely in themselves and has been content that they should deserve, not demand, your attention.

237. You are accustomed to think the figures of Michael Angelo sublime—because they are dark, and colossal, and involved, and mysterious—because in a word, they look sometimes like shadows, and sometimes like mountains, and sometimes like specters, but never like human beings. Believe me, yet once more, in what I told you long since—man can invent nothing nobler than humanity. He cannot raise his form into anything better than God made it, by giving it either the flight of birds or strength of beasts, by enveloping it in mist, or heaping it into multitude. Your pilgrim must look like a pilgrim in a straw hat, or you will not make him into one with cockle and nimbus; an angel must look like an angel on the ground, as well as in the air; and the much-denounced pre-Raphaelite faith that a saint cannot look saintly unless he has thin legs, is not more absurd than Michael Angelo's, that a Sybil cannot look Sibylline unless she has thick ones.

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238. All that shadowing, storming, and coiling of his, when you look into it, is mere stage decoration, and that of a vulgar kind. Light is, in reality, more awful than darkness—modesty more majestic than strength; and there is truer sublimity in the sweet joy of a child, or the sweet virtue of a maiden, than in the strength of Antæus, or thunder-clouds of Ætna.

Now, though in nearly all his greater pictures, Tintoret is entirely carried away by his sympathy with Michael Angelo, and conquers him in his own field;—outflies him in motion, outnumbered him in multitude, outwits him in fancy, and outflames him in rage,—he can be just as gentle as he is strong: and that Paradise, though it is the largest picture in the world, without any question, is also the thoughtfulest, and most precious.

The Thoughtfulest!—it would be saying but little, as far as Michael Angelo is concerned.

239. For consider of it yourselves. You have heard, from your youth up (and all educated persons have heard for three centuries), of this Last Judgment of his, as the most sublime picture in existence.

The subject of it is one which should certainly be interesting to you, in one of two ways.

If you never expect to be judged for any of your own doings, and the tradition of the coming of Christ is to you as an idle tale—still, think what a wonderful tale it would be, were it well told. You are at liberty, disbelieving it, to range the fields—Elysian and Tartarean—of all imagination. You may play with it, since it is false; and what a play would it not be, well written? Do you think the tragedy, or the miracle play, or the infinitely Divina Commedia of the Judgment of the astonished living who were dead;—the undeceiving of the sight of every human soul, understanding in an instant all the shallow, and depth of past life and future,—face to face with both,—and with God:—this apocalypse to all intellect, and completion to all passion, this minute and individual drama of the perfected history of separate spirits, and of their finally accomplished affections!—think you, I say, all this was well told by mere heaps of dark bodies curled and convulsed in space, and fall as of a crowd from a scaffolding, in writhed concretions of muscular pain?

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But take it the other way. Suppose you believe, be it never so dimly or feebly, in some kind of Judgment that is to be;—that you admit even the faint contingency of retribution, and can imagine, with vivacity enough to fear, that in this life, at all events, if not in another—there may be for you a Visitation of God, and a questioning—What hast thou done? The picture, if it is a good one, should have a deeper interest, surely on *this* postulate? Thrilling enough, as a mere imagination of what is never to be—now, as a conjecture of what *is* to be, held the best that in eighteen centuries of Christianity has for men's eyes been made;—Think of it so!

240. And then, tell me, whether you yourselves, or any one you have known, did ever at any time receive from this picture any, the smallest vital thought, warning, quickening, or help? It may have appalled, or impressed you for a time, as a thunder-cloud might: but has it ever taught you anything—chastised in you anything—confirmed a purpose—fortified a resistance—purified a passion? I know that, for you, it has done none of these things; and I know also that, for others, it has done very different things. In every vain and proud designer who has since lived, that dark carnality of Michael Angelo's has fostered insolent science, and fleshly imagination. Daubers and blockheads think themselves painters, and are received by the public as such, if they know how to foreshorten bones and decipher entrails; and men with capacity of art either shrink away (the best of them always do) into petty felicities and innocencies of genre painting—landscapes, cattle, family breakfasts, village schoolings, and the like; or else, if they have the full sensuous art-faculty that would have made true painters of them, being taught, from their youth up, to look for and learn the body instead of the spirit, have learned it, and taught it to such purpose, that at this hour, when I speak to you, the rooms of the Royal Academy of England, receiving also what of best can be sent there by the masters of France, contain *not one* picture honorable to the arts of their age; and contain many which are shameful in their record of its manners.

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241. Of that, hereafter. I will close to-day giving you some brief account of the scheme of Tintoret's Paradise, in justification of my assertion that it is the thoughtfulest as well as mightiest picture in the world.

In the highest center is Christ, leaning on the globe of the earth, which is of dark crystal. Christ is crowned with a glory as of the sun, and all the picture is lighted by that glory, descending through circle beneath circle of cloud, and of flying or throned spirits.

The Madonna, beneath Christ, and at some interval from Him, kneels to Him. She is crowned with the Seven stars, and kneels on a cloud of angels, whose wings change into ruby fire, where they are near her.

The three great Archangels meeting from three sides, fly towards Christ. Michael delivers up his scales and sword. He is followed by the Thrones and Principalities of the Earth; so inscribed—Throni—Principatus. The Spirits of the Thrones bear scales in their hands; and of the Princedoms, shining globes: beneath the wings of the last of these are the four great teachers and lawgivers, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Gregory, St. Augustine, and behind St. Augustine stands his mother, watching him, her chief joy in Paradise.

Under the Thrones, are set the Apostles, St. Paul separated a little from the rest, and put lowest, yet principal; under St. Paul, is St. Christopher, bearing a massive globe, with a cross upon it; but to mark him as the Christ-bearer, since here in Paradise he cannot have the Child on his shoulders, Tintoret has thrown on the globe a flashing stellar reflection of the sun the head of Christ.

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All this side of the picture is kept in glowing color,—the four Doctors of the church have golden miters and mantles; except the Cardinal, St. Jerome, who is in burning scarlet, his naked breast glowing, warm with noble life,—the darker red of his robe relieved against a white glory.

242. Opposite to Michael, Gabriel flies towards the Madonna, having in his hand the Annunciation lily, large, and triple-blossomed. Above him, and above Michael, equally, extends a cloud of white angels, inscribed "Serafini;" but the group following Gabriel, and corresponding to the Throni following Michael, is inscribed "Cherubini." Under these are the great prophets, and singers and foretellers of the happiness or of the sorrow of time. David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, and Amos of the herdsmen. David has a colossal golden psaltery laid horizontally across his knees;—two angels behind him dictate to him as he sings, looking up towards Christ; but one strong angel sweeps down to Solomon from among the cherubs, and opens a book, resting it on the head of Solomon, who looks down earnestly unconscious of it;—to the left of David, separate from the group of prophets, as Paul from the apostles, is Moses, dark-robed; in the full light, withdrawn far behind him, Abraham, embracing Isaac with his left arm, and near him, pale St. Agnes. In front, nearer, dark and colossal, stands the glorious figure of Santa Giustina of Padua; then a little subordinate to her, St. Catherine, and, far on the left, and high, St. Barbara leaning on her tower. In front, nearer, flies Raphael; and under him is the four-square group of the Evangelists. Beneath them, on the left, Noah; on the right, Adam and Eve, both floating unsupported by cloud or angel; Noah buoyed by the Ark, which he holds above him, and it is *this* into which Solomon gazes down, so earnestly. Eve's face is, perhaps, the most beautiful ever painted by Tintoret—full in light, but dark-eyed. Adam floats beside her, his figure fading into a winged gloom, edged in the outline of fig-leaves. Far down, under these, central in the lowest part of the picture, rises the Angel of the Sea, praying for Venice; for Tintoret conceives his Paradise as existing now, not as in the future. I at first mistook this soft Angel of the Sea for the Magdalen, for he is sustained by other three angels on either side, as the Magdalen is, in designs of earlier time, because of the verse, "There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth." But the Magdalen is on the right, behind St. Monica; and on the same side, but lowest of all, Rachel, among the angels of her children, gathered now again to her forever.

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243. I have no hesitation in asserting this picture to be by far the most precious work of art of any kind whatsoever, now existing in the world; and it is, I believe, on the eve of final destruction; for it is said that the angle of the great council-chamber is soon to be rebuilt; and that process will involve the destruction of the picture by removal, and, far more, by repainting. I had thought of making some effort to save it by an appeal in London to persons generally interested in the arts; but the recent desolation of Paris has familiarized us with destruction, and I have no doubt the answer to me would be, that Venice must take care of her own. But remember, at least, that I have borne witness to you to-day of the treasures that we forget, while we amuse ourselves with the poor toys, and the petty or vile arts, of our own time.

The years of that time have perhaps come, when we are to be taught to look no more to the dreams of painters, either for knowledge of Judgment, or of Paradise. The anger of Heaven will not longer, I think, be mocked for our amusement; and perhaps its love may not always be despised by our pride. Believe me, all the arts, and all the treasures of men, are fulfilled and preserved to them only, so far as they have chosen first, with their hearts, not the curse of God, but His blessing. Our Earth is now incumbered with ruin, our Heaven is clouded by Death. May we not wisely judge ourselves in some things now, instead of amusing ourselves with the painting of judgments to come?

#### FOOTNOTES:

[41] NOTE.—The separate edition of this lecture was prefaced by the following note:—

"I have printed this Lecture separately, that strangers visiting the Galleries may be able to use it for reference to the drawings. But they must observe that its business is only to point out what is to be blamed in Michael Angelo, and that it assumes the facts of his power to be generally known. Mr. Tyrwhitt's statement of these, in his 'Lectures on Christian Art,' will put the reader into possession of all that may justly be alleged in honor of him.

"*Corpus Christi College, 1st May, 1872.*"



- [42] If you like to have it with perfect exactitude, recollect that Bellini died at true ninety,—Tintoret at eighty-two; that Bellini's death was four years before Raphael's, and that Tintoret was born four years before Bellini's death.
- [43] Julian, rather. See Mr. Tyrwhitt's notice of the lately discovered error, in his *Lectures on Christian Art*.
- [44] From the invaluable series of documents relating to Titian and his times, extricated by Mr. Rawdon Brown from the archives of Venice, and arranged and translated by him.
- [45] Fondaco de Tedeschi. I saw the last wrecks of Giorgione's frescoes on the outside of it in 1845.
- [46] I beg that this statement may be observed with attention. It is of great importance, as in opposition to the views usually held respecting the grave schools of painting.
- [47] The upper photograph in S. 50 is, however, not taken from the great Paradise, which is in too dark a position to be photographed, but from a study of it existing in a private gallery, and every way inferior. I have vainly tried to photograph portions of the picture itself.
- [48] He had, indeed, other and more solemn thoughts of the Night than Correggio; and these he tried to express by distorting form, and making her partly Medusa-like. In this lecture, as above stated, I am only dwelling on points hitherto unnoticed of dangerous evil in the too much admired master.
- [49] Tintoret dissected, and used clay models, in the true academical manner, and produced academical results thereby; but all his fine work is done from life, like that of the Greeks.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ARATRA PENTELICI, SEVEN LECTURES ON THE ELEMENTS OF SCULPTURE \*\*\*

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