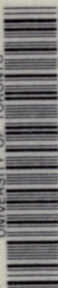
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Portfolio Papers

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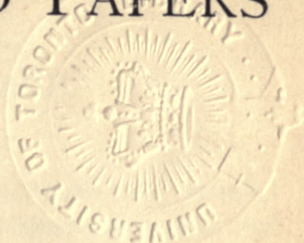
PORTFOLIO PAPERS



BY

PHILIP GILBERT HAMERTON

Editor of The Portfolio

AUTHOR OF "ETCHING AND ETCHERS," "THE GRAPHIC ARTS," "LANDSCAPE," ETC.

[Vol. 10]

With a Portrait of the Author etched from the life, by Henri Manesse

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PREFACE.

THE publishers of the PORTFOLIO have reminded me that there were several short biographies and essays of mine in old numbers of that periodical which it might be well to republish in a handier form. I have made a selection on the principle of keeping only what was of permanent interest, at least, as to its subject.

Perhaps a short account of the PORTFOLIO itself may not be out of place here. The success of 'Etching and Etchers,' first published in 1868, led me to think that a periodical might be founded in Englnd in which the original arts of design might be represented, either by original etchings or reproductions of drawings by the photographic processes which were then beginning to be applicable to the fine arts. Before the publication of 'Etching and Etchers' there was not a single periodical in England that would admit an etching, and so little were publishers in sympathy with original artistic expression that they looked unfavourably

upon pen-drawing, which could be reproduced even at that time. To be considered presentable to the public in a printed form, every picture or drawing had to be translated by an engraver on steel, copper, or wood, too frequently at the cost of the artist's touch and sentiment, and sometimes even with little respect for his drawing or light-and-shade. At the same time, and as though there had been really a dislike to originality on its own account, there was no public demand for original engravings executed either with the burin or the etching-needle. These were appreciated by a very small cultivated class, which kept its Rembrandts and Dürers in private portfolios or cabinets, and did not even show them to the ordinary visitor. It seemed to me, in 1869, and subsequent experience has fully confirmed the idea, that there was no reason in the nature of things why this small cultivated class should not be increased and extended, so I conceived the idea of a periodical that would admit etchings, with reproductions of drawings and sketches by old and modern masters, whilst the literary half of it might be devoted to the propagation of essentially artistic ideas. I thought that it might be possible to admit the public to the inner temple of Art, and not to treat it eternally

as a *profanum vulgus*, for whose use everything had to be previously adapted.

A London publisher, Mr. Richmond Seeley, entered into these views, and we resolved to start a periodical together. I proposed two or three titles, and from these Mr. Seeley selected the PORTFOLIO, which had the advantage of conveying, by association, the idea of quietly accumulating works to be kept and studied. Our enterprise had very little relation to journalism, or to any temporary excitement or sensation; the past and present were equally important to us when their arts were equally good, and our only real object was to make the PORTFOLIO a collection of permanent value.

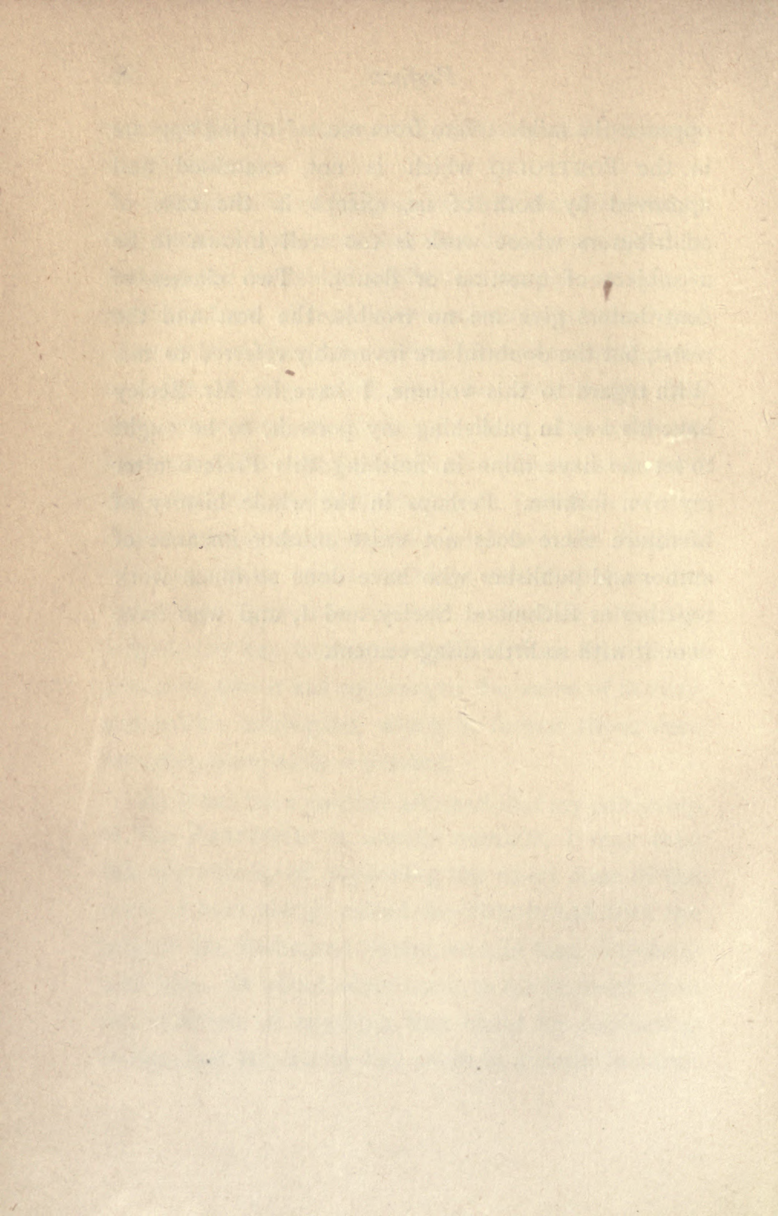
A natural consequence of this entire absence of the sensational element, and of the want of *actualité*, was that the PORTFOLIO had to make its way slowly, and in the earlier years it at one time seemed doubtful whether the young periodical would live. However, both editor and publisher made some sacrifices, and made them, as it turned out, at the right time, for the circulation rose and has since maintained itself sufficiently for a healthy existence. In fact, at the present day, the PORTFOLIO is the only Art periodical in the English language maintaining the

price which is necessary for its especial purposes in illustration.

I think we may fairly claim that the PORTFOLIO has been of some use and has done some good in making the 'outside' public less on the outside in matters of art. There is now certainly not that gulf of separation that once existed between the artistic and the reading world, and the PORTFOLIO has done something to bridge it over. Its influence has extended to other periodicals. The great French magazine, *L'Art*, was obviously an imitation of the PORTFOLIO on a larger scale, and now the English Art magazines admit etchings, which before our time were rigorously tabooed. Besides this, the PORTFOLIO has had some influence on illustration generally, and it has encouraged the union of literary and artistic cultivation, which in former times were too often completely separated.

As it has been publicly affirmed that my editorship of the PORTFOLIO is merely nominal, I may take this opportunity of explaining the exact state of the case. I have always edited the PORTFOLIO with the help of Mr. Richmond Seeley, and, in fact, conjointly with him. It would never occur to me to insist upon the insertion of anything that could be displeasing to him, and Mr. Seeley has never in a single instance

opposed the mildest veto from me. Nothing appears in the PORTFOLIO which is not examined and approved by both of us, except in the case of contributors whose work is too well known to be a subject of question or doubt. Two classes of contributors give me no trouble, the best and the worst, but the doubtful are invariably referred to me. With regard to this volume, I have let Mr. Seeley have his way in publishing my portrait, so he ought to let me have mine in finishing this Preface after my own fashion. Perhaps in the whole history of literature there does not exist another instance of author and publisher who have done so much work together as Richmond Seeley and I, and who have done it with so little disagreement.



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Part I.

NOTICES OF ARTISTS

PORTFOLIO PAPERS.

CONSTABLE.

THE 'Life of Constable,' by Mr. Leslie, was rather a collection of well-arranged material than a true biography. Leslie's desire was to make Constable the narrator of his own story by means of his private letters; but the difficulty for the reader is that this material, though carefully put in order for his convenience, is still in the raw state, so that he has the trouble of extracting the essence of it for himself, which is not very easy on a first perusal, nor even on a second reading, unless with the help of notes. The recent acquisition of two pictures by Constable for the Louvre, and the increasing importance of his name in the history of landscape art, have induced me to attempt a short biography of him, with Leslie's material for a basis.

John Constable was born in the summer of 1776, at East Bergholt, a pleasant village in the most cultivated part of Suffolk, 'situated,' as Con-

stable himself describes it, 'on a spot which overlooks the fertile valley of the Stour, which river separates that county, on the south, from Essex. The beauty of the surrounding scenery, its gentle declivities, its luxuriant meadow flats, sprinkled with flocks and herds, its well-cultivated uplands, its woods and rivers, with numerous scattered villages and churches, farms, and picturesque cottages, all impart to this particular spot an amenity and elegance hardly anywhere else to be found.' In the whole history of art there does not exist a single instance of a landscape-painter who loved his native scenery with a passion at once so intense and so exclusive; and whether it was the scenery that made the artist, or the artist who lent to the land of his birth that poetical consecration which is the fountain of all that is most charming in pictorial creation, it is certain that there existed such a harmony between the place and the man, that the two belonged to each other, and are henceforth inseparable in our memory. That expression of Constable's, 'An amenity and elegance *hardly anywhere else to be found*,' contains the utterance of a life-long passion. He found in his Suffolk scenery that which for him was not discoverable elsewhere, the grace and charm of the native land. His distinction above other natives of East Bergholt was to have perceived the capabilities of the trees, and fields, and mills, and streams about his birthplace'

as material with which a painter might remain permanently satisfied, and build the edifice of an enduring reputation.

The early teaching which Constable received was determined for him inevitably by the position of his family in the well-to-do rural middle class. He was taught Latin in the grammar-school kept by Dr. Grimwood at Dedham, and this master saw the signs of genius in his pupil, although the youth attained proficiency in nothing but penmanship. After this he took some lessons in French, but without advancing far. In short, his literary education was so limited that it only occupied a corner of his mind, and left plenty of space for painting, which, at the age of seventeen, had already fixed itself there, never afterwards to be dislodged. At this time of life Constable's most intimate friend was John Dunthorne, a plumber and glazier, who lived in a cottage close to the gate of his father's house. Dunthorne was an enthusiastic amateur of art, who gave all his leisure to the practice of landscape-painting from nature, and this similarity of tastes was the cause of a close alliance.

Mr. Golding Constable, the young artist's father, who had a fair property in land and mills, at first desired to have him educated for the Church, and then resolved to make a miller of him. Constable did not feel inclined to go through the studies necessary for the clerical life, though he was always

an attached member of the Church of England, and there was an ecclesiastical element in his subsequent tastes and friendships. So he became a miller in his father's mills, and followed the business in a quite satisfactory way for twelve months. Leslie points out that this experience may have had an appreciable influence on his subsequent work as an artist, since the management of a windmill involves continual attention to the weather, and therefore to the state of the sky, which was afterwards of great importance in Constable's pictures. Yes, it is probable that this space of life passed in the windmill was a part of that general experience and education which formed the artist in Constable. Other influences soon afterwards began to operate. Sir George Beaumont's mother was living at Dedham, and Constable was introduced to her and her well-known son, a man who really loved art, though there was a trong element of conventionalism in his nature. It was at Dedham that Constable first beheld a picture by Claude (now in the National Gallery, with the title of *The Annunciation*) which Sir George often carried about with him when he travelled, and he ever after remembered the first sight of a landscape by so famous an artist as an important epoch in his life. Fortunately for Constable, Sir George also possessed about thirty water-colour drawings by Girtin, which the young artist diligently studied by his new friend's recommenda-

tion, 'as examples of great breadth and truth.' These early examples retained to the last their high place in Constable's veneration, for his life was a continuous development of early-received principles and impressions, unbroken by any violence of revolution.

In the year 1795 Mr. Golding Constable allowed his son to go to London, with a view of ascertaining 'what might be his chances of success as a painter.' He became acquainted with Farrington, a landscape-painter, and John Thomas Smith, an engraver and antiquary, whom people called 'Antiquity Smith.' Both these men encouraged Constable to perseverance, and gave him valuable advice. Mr. Leslie quotes an excellent saying of 'Antiquity Smith,' which Constable ever afterwards remembered — a saying marked with sterling good sense, and that preference for *the suitable* which is one of the secrets of the profoundest harmony in art. 'Do not,' said Smith, 'set about inventing figures for a landscape taken from nature; for you cannot remain an hour in any spot, however solitary, without the appearance of some living thing that will in all probability accord better with the scene and time of day than will any invention of your own.'

After this Constable lived alternately in London and at Bergholt, giving up all his evenings to the study of anatomy. Still he was not yet finally and irrevocably devoted to art, for in 1797 he looks forward, not without regret, to a life of steady business

work, which he appears to have resumed as an assistant to his father. It is only in 1799 that the decision is made by which he abandons business for ever, and enters as a student at the Royal Academy, where he made many chalk-drawings and oil-paintings from the living model. He seems to have taken to copying from the elder masters, which is excellent practice for a young artist when he has the patience for it. During Constable's early career he is always either copying something, or intending or wishing to do so. In 1800 he goes to Helmingham Park, and makes sketches there, and in 1801 he visits Derbyshire. In one of his letters from London about this time he speaks with intense affection of the scenery about his native place, saying that 'he even loves every stile and stump, and every lane in the village.' In 1802 he takes great interest in anatomy, attends lectures on the subject regularly, and makes many accurate and beautiful coloured anatomical drawings of a large size. He exhibited for the first time in the Academy of 1802.

Amongst the favourable influences of this period must be mentioned the encouragement and good advice given him by the President of the Academy, West. The effect on the career of an artist of a single sentence spoken to him in his youth by a man whom he reverences as an authority, may be such as to affect the whole course of it. Here is

one of West's recommendations—'Always remember, sir, that light and shadow *never stand still.*' Constable never forgot this, and any one who knows his pictures will recognise the doctrine in his work. Besides this, West told his young friend to keep in mind the prevailing character of every object that he painted, rather than its accidental appearance—a piece of advice full of the most comprehensive wisdom, for it contains the whole principle of the artistic interpretation of nature.* These doctrines fell like seed on a good soil, and Constable had other obligations to Mr. West, but the chief of them was this. Dr. Fisher, an ecclesiastical friend of the artist, had found him the situation of drawing-master in a school, but West used all his influence to prevent Constable from accepting it, and answered Dr. Fisher himself. The elder artist well knew how impossible it would have been to combine the drudgery of perpetually teaching rudiments to boy-amateurs with the serious studies which are necessary to success in art. In a letter of Constable's, written in 1802,

* I mean as West intended it. He was not arguing against what the criticism of the last century called 'accidents,' and considered, as such, beneath the notice of serious art. He meant that an artist ought not to forget the prevailing qualities of things; and he gave as an example, that although the sky was sometimes solemn or lowering, we ought not to forget its prevailing quality of brightness. The best modern art has owed many of its most unquestionable successes to a kind of study in harmony with this precept of 'the venerable President.'

he says that for the two years preceding he has been running after pictures and seeking the truth at second-hand, and he adds, '*I shall return to Bergholt, where I shall endeavour to get a pure and unaffected manner of representing the scenes that may employ me.*' In this sentence we have the one great resolution of his life, the resolution which he fulfilled by the entire devotion of his time and faculties through many laborious years. Notwithstanding his reverence for Claude, and other great artists of the past, Constable had little respect for the landscape art which appeared in the annual exhibitions. He thought that its pervading vice was '*bravura*, an attempt to do something beyond the truth,' and therefore he set to work from nature in a spirit which, though not rebellious against the traditions of the past, was entirely independent of contemporary practice. This is the characteristic in the very peculiar temper of Constable which is so easily misunderstood, and has been so unfairly misrepresented. He was much less rebellious against the tradition of the great masters than our own Pre-Raphaelites have been, but at the same time he was positively more isolated than any single member of that fraternity. His position was like that of an only child, who has ancestors but no brothers. Of this, however, I shall have more to say when his life has been fully told.

In 1803 he made a sea-voyage from London to

Deal, and was about a month on board ship, occupying himself during nearly the whole time in making drawings of ships in all situations, and seeing all sorts of weather. During this excursion Constable visited the British fleet at Chatham, when he sketched the *Victory* in three views. The *Victory* had just been repaired. 'She was the flower of the flock,' he said. 'She looked very beautiful, fresh out of dock and newly painted. When I saw her they were bending the sails; which circumstance, added to a very fine evening, made a charming effect.' This was two years and a half before her rigging was shattered by the cannon of Trafalgar. The artists of that day were more fortunate than their successors of the present in the beauty of war-ships. We, who see things like the *Devastation* encumbering the ocean with their ugliness, may envy Constable his sight of that fleet which could delight the eyes of painters as it stirred the hearts of poets. These sketches of the *Victory* were used by Constable afterwards for an illustration of the great battle. On leaving the ship he sailed in the artist lost all his sketches, a hundred and thirty in number, but recovered them later. Of all losses, that of sketches is the most trying to artists: they bear even money losses with greater equanimity.

In 1806 Constable's maternal uncle recommended him to make a tour in Westmoreland and Cumberland, and paid his expenses. He spent about two

months in the north, and made many sketches of a large size, with fine effects of light, and shade, and colour. Still, the scenery of the Lake District appears to have left little impression on his mind, and instead of wishing to have a residence there, as Dr. Arnold did, he never revisited those hills and lakes; nor did he afterwards care to go into any mountainous country, for he never saw the Highlands, nor Switzerland, nor Wales. What an absolute difference, in the need or taste for landscape, between the mind of Constable and the mind of Dr. Arnold! The landscape-painter said 'that the solitude of mountains oppressed his spirits;' and his biographer, Leslie, who so intimately knew his tastes and feelings, tells us that 'his nature was peculiarly social, and could not feel satisfied with scenery, however grand in itself, that did not abound in human associations. He required villages, churches, farmhouses, and cottages.' On the other hand, we find Dr. Arnold in Warwickshire, gazing on the dull expanse of fields eastward from Rugby, and expressing his despair in the pathetic complaint—'It is no wonder we do not like looking that way, when one considers that there is nothing fine between us and the Ural mountains.' Now it so happens that the Constable country, the paradise of East Bergholt, Dedham, Lavenham, and the other little places that the artist loved so dearly, *did* lie in that very space

between Dr. Arnold and the Ural mountains, which that lover of hill-scenery considered so hopelessly vacant. In all disputed matters of taste, when affection has any considerable influence, the man whom we ought to believe is he who speaks from love. Arnold is a better authority than Constable on the merits of the Lake District, but Constable, on the other hand, is a better authority than Arnold on the charms and qualities of eastern England. 'N'écoutez parler,' says Legouvé, 'que ceux qui adorent. Les froides et pâles déesses qu'on appelle l'équité, l'impartialité, ne voient qu'à travers des lunettes, l'amour seul voit avec des yeux.' If a painter loves a class of scenery which we look upon with indifference, all the knowledge is certain to be on his side of the question; and unless we resolutely shut our eyes against his teaching, he will be able to make us see beauties that we were blind to.

Constable's study of the figure led to two attempts in sacred history, altar-pieces for Brantham and Neyland churches. I have never seen these paintings, but Leslie, who knew what good figure-drawing was, and who certainly had no prejudice against the painter of these works, says that it is evident, from visible deficiencies, that a long course of study and practice would have been required before Constable could have done justice, if ever, to subjects of that class. He was by instinct a landscape-painter, and

therefore, in all probability, little adapted for an entirely different branch of art; it may be, even less so than if his special gift had been weaker, for a special gift, as it grows into predominance, always atrophies the less decided gifts of its possessor. After the Neyland altar-piece Constable made no further attempt in that direction, but confined himself entirely to landscape, and landscape of the class that had fixed his affections from the beginning. His Westmoreland excursion had led to the production of two or three pictures of mountain scenery, but these were hardly more Constable's own subjects than sacred history, and his truest enthusiasm was awakened by such scenery as that of Hampshire. 'I spent ten days,' he says, 'in Hants, and was delighted beyond measure with the New Forest. I think it indescribably beautiful.' Yes, that was more likely to charm and interest Constable than the utmost glory of mountainous landscape. Though he entirely abandoned historical painting, he still occasionally executed a portrait, but, as Leslie tells us, with very unequal success; for his best works of the kind, 'though always agreeable in colour and breadth, were surpassed, in more common qualities, by men far inferior to him in genius.' And yet it may be presumed that the practice of portrait, though limited, was not without good effect upon his own especial labour as an artist; for portrait is the best and most satisfactory kind of painting

from nature, and an excellent training in the study of object-painting, with certain limited effects of light and shade.

At the age of thirty-five Constable fell in love, and became greatly depressed both in body and mind in consequence of what appeared to be the hopelessness of his attachment. The lady was Miss Maria Bicknell, daughter of a solicitor to the Admiralty, and granddaughter of the Rector of Bergholt, who opposed the match very decidedly, and with reason, for at that time Constable's profession was profitless. The lovers were engaged for five years, and wrote each other many letters. In the beginning of this correspondence the lady speaks frankly of her kind and friendly feelings, but discourages every gleam of hope, and writes with that saddened wisdom which is to a lover as depressing as any tone that a lady can possibly assume. 'Let me, then,' she says, 'entreat that you will cease to think of me. Forget that you have ever known me, and I will willingly resign all pretensions to your regard, or even acquaintance, to facilitate the tranquillity and peace of mind which is so essential to your success in a profession which will ever be in itself a source of continued delights.' The artist's father also gives him some excellent practical advice, in which (probably as a consequence of his own observation) he hits upon the commonest imprudences of unsuccessful painters. 'If my opinion were

asked,' he says, 'it would be to defer all thoughts of marriage for the present. I would farther advise a close application to your profession, and to such parts as may pay best. When you have hit on a subject, finish it in the best manner you are able, and do not in despair put it aside, and so fill your room with lumber.' This is really excellent, but what follows contains a pearl of good sense, which I shall put in italics for the especial benefit of young artists who are dissatisfied with themselves and their performances:—'I fear your great anxiety to excel may have carried you too far above yourself, *and that you make too serious a matter of the business, and thereby render yourself less capable. Think less, and finish as you go.*' Not to make too serious a matter of the business is one of the secrets of happy and effective workmanship in the fine arts. Quiet and light-hearted labour, with something of the spirit of play, carries an artist farther, and wears his mind much less, than the strain of intense effort and anxiety.

Notwithstanding Miss Bicknell's injunctions, the lover continued his correspondence, and the lady continued her friendly and sensible replies. The quiet good sense of both, a little warmed, on one side at least, by the fire of a very powerful though suppressed passion, gives a sort of old-world charm to these letters, which a modern novelist might be proud to imitate completely if his art were equal

to a nature so pure and delicate as this. Miss Bicknell is the wiser of the two lovers, and perceives with great regret that Constable is unsettled in his work by his attachment to herself. 'By a sedulous attention to your profession' she writes to him, 'you will very much help to bestow calm on my mind, which I shall look for in vain while I see with sorrow how unsettled you appear, and consequently unfitted to attend to a study that requires the incessant application of the heart and head. You will allow others, without half your abilities, to outstrip you in the race of fame, and then look back with sorrow on time neglected and opportunities lost, and perhaps blame me as the cause of all this woe. Exert yourself while it is yet in your power; the path of duty is alone the path of happiness.'

In the year 1813 Constable's letters to Miss Bicknell become more cheerful. He says that he is leaving London for the only time in his life with his pockets full of money, and is entirely free from debt. He is quite delighted to find himself so well, though he paints so many hours, but 'his mind is happy when so engaged.' In 1814 he sells two pictures, a rare event with him; but these pictures are landscapes fairly sold in the open market of art, not portraits commissioned by friends and patrons. This greatly encouraged him to persevere in his own department of the art. In 1815 Miss Bicknell

writes a delightful little note, informing her lover that the parental interdict is at last removed, and he may see her under her father's roof. Such, however, is the mixture of gladness and sorrow in the lives of mortals, that within a very short time from this increase of happiness Constable lost his mother, and a few days after this great bereavement Miss Bicknell lost hers. The relation between Constable and his mother had always been one of the most tender attachment, and she had furthered, with true and kindly sympathy, the interests which touched him most nearly, and were dearest to his heart and his ambition. It is sad that no far-seeing prophet could predict to her, with the assurance which makes doubt impossible, the present lustre of her son's name, his place in public and private collections, and the contests over his once-neglected landscapes in the great sale-rooms of the world.

The correspondence between the lovers went on in the same virtuous and amiable manner. Here is a little specimen of it, curiously illustrating the mixture of moral and religious feeling with devoted affection and severe self-government which predominates in these letters:—'I am happy to hear that your father is so friendly and kind to you. I shall always venerate him for his goodness to you, who are all the world to me. I am sure you will believe me, my dear Maria, when I say that I allow no bad disposition, nor any wrong feeling, to remain

in my heart towards any one, for both our sakes. For should it be, as I trust it is, God's good pleasure that we should pass our lives together, it will be but sensible conduct, as well as a religious duty, to have as little to disturb our peace as possible; for as life advances our trials will increase, and at the end all our ill-conduct must be accounted for.' The quaint, old-fashioned simplicity of thought and feeling in this passage, so different from the tone of to-day, so impossible for us, may seem rather odd and strange, and not altogether remote from the ridiculous; yet how thoroughly good, and sound, and respectable a state of feeling it is! In all that is known to us about the love-affairs of men of genius, there is no story of constancy and fidelity more charming than this of John Constable and Maria Bicknell. There is more to excite emotion in the sadder history of Ampère and his Julie, but no one who has read the two correspondences with attention will doubt that Constable was better loved than Ampère, or certainly better understood. Constable's engagement might have been prolonged until the death of Miss Bicknell's grandfather, Dr. Rhudde, the Rector of Bergholt, who always persistently opposed it, had not the lady herself fixed the wedding-day (2nd October, 1816) on her own responsibility. Three years later, the irreconcilable Dr. Rhudde died, and bequeathed them 4000*l.*

Leslie tells us that Constable's fondness for

children exceeded that of any man he ever knew, and he was kept very happily supplied with these treasures, which he nursed with untiring zeal. He attained his utmost skill as a landscape-painter in the earlier years of his marriage, and yet remained altogether unnoticed by the public, which had its own favourites, now for the most part forgotten. In 1819 his large picture, *A Scene on the River Stour* (the picture with a white horse), attracted some attention, but it was purchased by a friend, Archdeacon Fisher; partly, no doubt, from a sincere appreciation of its merits, but also from a desire to be of service to an artist for whom Mr. Fisher had the warmest personal regard. The same good friend and admirer bought another large Constable in the year 1820, as a present for a solicitor who had rendered him some services. The price of these pictures was a hundred guineas each, which is the lowest price that can be considered remunerative for works of that size. The money, no doubt, was useful to Constable, but Mr. Fisher's intelligent appreciation was even still more beneficial to him at a time when he greatly needed a little moral support and encouragement. 'Believe me, my dear Fisher,' he says in a letter, 'I should almost faint by the way when I am standing before my large canvasses, were I not cheered and encouraged by your friendship and approbation. I now fear I shall never make a popular artist.' Then we find those

little bitter bits that come from the unsuccessful. '*The art will go out,*' Constable writes; 'there will be no genuine painting in England in thirty years;' and in another letter he says, 'Should there be a National Gallery (which is talked of), there will be an end of the art in poor old England, and she will become, in all that relates to painting, as much a nonentity as every other country that has one.' Then he asks, with reference to a picture just finished, whether he had not better grime it down with slime and soot, as a connoisseur would probably prefer filth and dirt to freshness and beauty. This last *boutade* was fully justified by what happened much later, when a dealer or auctioneer actually *did* cover one of Constable's pictures (the *Waterloo Bridge*) with a coat of common blacking, fixed with varnish, to please the connoisseurs, who considered it a decided improvement. Still, in spite of much discouragement, he believes in his own powers and appreciates his own work, as every true artist both does and ought to do. 'My *Cathedral,*' he writes to Fisher, 'looks uncommonly well; it is much approved of by the Academy, and, moreover, in Seymour Street. I think you will say, when you see it, that I have fought a better battle with the Church than old H——e, B——m, and all their coadjutors put together. It was the most difficult subject in landscape I ever had on my easel. I have not flinched at the windows, buttresses, &c.,

but I have still kept to my grand organ colour, and have as usual made my escape in the evanescence of the chiaroscuro. Calcott admires my *Cathedral;* he says I have managed it well.'

Constable enjoyed his visits to friends who were interested in art, especially to Archdeacon Fisher and Sir George Beaumont. At Cole-Orton Hall (Sir George's house) the artist cordially appreciated the good social qualities of his host, and enjoyed the works of art that were collected there; but the two friends did not exactly agree on artistic questions, Sir George being much more traditional in his tastes than Constable was, though even Constable, as a critic, was more traditional than is generally supposed. The host believed in pictures as he found them; the guest did not avow that open infidelity which startled the world at a later period in the writings of a Graduate of Oxford; but he doubted whether the works of the infallible Poussin had reached us in such condition that we might receive that unquestionable teaching in its purity. Sir George placed a small landscape by Poussin on his easel close to a picture he was painting, and said: 'Now, if I can match these tints I am sure to be right.' 'But suppose, Sir George,' replied Constable, 'Gaspar could rise from his grave, do you think he would know his own picture in its present state? or if he did, should we not find it difficult to persuade him that somebody had not

smeared tar or cart-grease over its surface, and then wiped it imperfectly off?' This is one anecdote out of several in which these two figures of the amateur and the painter stand for and represent the two distinct and hostile classes of the conventionalists and the naturalists in art. The power of conventional beliefs over the human mind considerably surpasses that of ocular evidence (well-known instances of this might be cited from the history of medicine), and it is not surprising that a man like Sir George Beaumont, who had the genuine conventional disposition, should have believed that a painted landscape ought to look like a Cremona fiddle, or should have retained his opinion after Constable had laid such an instrument on the green lawn in front of Cole-Orton Hall. It is in this part of Constable's life that we have the famous anecdote about the brown tree. Everybody interested in landscape-painting knows that Sir George Beaumont asked Constable whether he did not find it very difficult to determine where to place his brown tree, and that Constable replied, 'Not in the least, for I never put such a thing into a picture!' These stories help us to understand Constable's true position in the history of art; his work was a practical revolt against the conventionalism of the eighteenth century, and one of many dissolvent or delivering forces which have at length enabled us to see nature without spectacles. Sir George Beaumont's spectacles

were coloured brown, and we who have been accustomed for twenty years to colour of an exceeding frankness (not to say crudity) can, of course, very easily see that the elegant amateur of Cole-Orton had half blinded himself by prejudices that do not impede our eyesight in the least. It may be well for us, however, to remember that conventionalism may take an infinite variety of forms, and that it may establish itself just as easily in the crudest and rawest greens as in the dullest of browns or greys. Constable was not conventional, and yet a conventional school might be established in imitation of him. Even the most rigid and absolute naturalism would become conventional so soon as it interfered with the free expression of individual preferences and feelings. Sir George loved both art and nature, but there was a deferential and traditional element in his mind which led him to respect certain artists who were considered authoritative with a degree of veneration which limited his insight into nature. Indeed, although Sir George Beaumont was a sincere amateur of art, a man capable by constitution of taking the most unaffected delight in the works of great artists whom he appreciated, he was not himself an original artist, and entirely lacked that audacity which, as Goethe observed, is one of the characteristics of true artists. Constable, on the other hand, possessed this quality of audacity in the most eminent degree, and was as well fitted in

this respect as either Turner or Wordsworth to be a soldier in the great struggle by which living artists have been emancipated from the authority of the dead, or rather from the tyranny of contemporary conventionalism which made use of dead men's names to hinder the work and repress the aspirations of the living.

The most valuable of Constable's friendships appears to have been that of Archdeacon Fisher. The Archdeacon really appreciated Constable's art, which Sir George Beaumont did not, and he loved Constable with a warm, personal affection. He was very keen and intelligent—his letters prove this—and his conversation must have been very interesting, for he was closely observant of human nature. Here is a phase of his, rather severe, yet containing a great deal of truth,—'Men do not purchase pictures because they admire them, but because others covet them.' Fisher encouraged Constable when hardly any one else did, and the encouragement came in the most helpful of all forms, for it was not material wholly, nor yet wholly spiritual, but the happiest mixture of cheques and kind, intelligent letters. Constable would sometimes give himself an invitation to Fisher's house, which is quite enough to prove the delicacy of his friend's encouragement; for Constable was a proud and sensitive person, with all the characteristics of those who know that they are not adequately appreciated.

In 1826 he painted the *Cornfield*, which may be

mentioned more particularly than his other works of that time, as it is now in the National Gallery. Constable writes in a letter,—'I have despatched a large landscape to the Academy, upright, of the size of the *Lock*, but a subject of a very different nature—inland cornfields, a close lane forming the foreground. It is not neglected in any part. The trees are more than usually studied, the extremities well defined, as well as the stems. They are shaken by a pleasant and healthful breeze at noon:

> "While now a fresher gale,
> Sweeping with shadowy gusts the fields of corn," &c.

I am not, however, without my anxieties, though I have not neglected my work or been sparing of my pains. . . . My picture occupied me wholly. I could think of and speak to no one.' It might have been some consolation to Constable to know that the *Cornfield* would represent him in the National Gallery, if he had not been so strongly prejudiced against all National Galleries.

He loved his children with all that true parental feeling which no mere sense of duty can ever imitate. He called them pet names, of course, and these pet names have all that wonderful originality which marks the true creations of the innermost sentiment of home. Thus he calls his boy William, not Billy, according to ordinary custom, but Belim ; and there is a charming anecdote of Belim which is worth pre-

serving, even in so brief a biography as this. He was staying with Archdeacon Fisher, and the Archdeacon writes to his papa,—'When your pet, Belim, repeats his Catechism, we cannot make him say otherwise than, "and walk in the *same fields* all the days of my life." He might have a worse idea of happiness.' To this Constable answers,—'The anecdote of dear Belim is very pretty. Depend upon it, the love of nature is strongly implanted in man. I have lately been in Suffolk, and have had some delightful walks "in the same fields." Bless the dear boy! our ideas of happiness are the same, and I join with you in praying that he may never seek it in less hallowed places.'

Up to the close of the year 1827 Constable's life had been decidedly a happy, though often an anxious one. The world's neglect had no doubt, to some extent stiffened and hardened his character (not towards those he loved, I do not mean that, but towards the world), but he had such an extraordinary gift of self-reliance that he could work on in spite of this. He had also been extremely fortunate in his marriage, and his paternal instincts were so strong that his family of seven children gave him a happiness far surpassing any anxiety they may have cost him. The year 1828, however, brought a shadow on his life that never afterwards quitted it. His beloved wife, Maria, became seriously ill of a malady which turned out to be pulmonary consumption, and after the usual suffer-

ings she died. Their union had been too perfect for the happiness of the survivor, and although Constable inherited a good fortune from his wife's father, and was elected a Royal Academician in the following year, he could never fully enjoy either wealth or dignity without the companionship of her who had been to him so true a wife and friend. The irony of fortune has seldom been more strikingly illustrated than in the concurrence of these events. Ease and dignity come at last to the long-neglected artist; at last he can stand before a large canvas without anxiety, sure that it will be well hung in the Academy, and indifferent to the sale of it; but then the wife who had shared with him the long years of discouragement is no longer there to congratulate him, as a loving woman only *can* congratulate, and to give sweetness to his peace. He had peace and dignity for his declining years, but the dignity was lonely, and the peace a sudden calm. On the day of his election he said, 'It has been delayed until I am solitary, and cannot impart it.'

Many will remember the very fine mezzotint engravings which were executed by that admirable engraver, Mr. Lucas, from various pictures or designs by Constable, and published under the title 'English Landscape.' This was a scheme of Constable's, intended by him to perpetuate and extend the knowledge of his peculiar art, and to present his labours to the world in that mutually helpful association

which is impossible with scattered canvases. The plan, in a word, was a collected and cheaper edition of Constable's *œuvre*, designed to be accessible to the general public; but it soon became evident that the general public cared very little for 'English landscape,' and the want of success attending this publication was certainly one of the bitterest disappointments of the artist's life, though he bore it, of course, with the fortitude of a manly nature. The failure in sale cannot be attributed to want of merit, either in the painter or the engraver. Constable's work was admirably adapted for engraving, from its fine arrangements of light and shade, and of all the kinds of engraving mezzotint was most suitable to it, whilst of all the mezzotint engravers who ever lived, David Lucas was the most thoroughly competent for such a piece of work as that which Constable entrusted to his accomplished hand. The project had everything in its favour except popular interest, but the want of this made it commercially a failure. The truth is, that any serious interest in that purest landscape art which is dependent upon the art alone for its attraction, presupposes a degree of culture which is rare even in our own day, and which in Constable's time, when England had half her present population and a quarter of her present wealth, must have been quite insufficient to pay for a work like that which he undertook. He felt the neglect, however, very keenly. One day he

wrote to Lucas: 'Bring me another large *Castle*, or two, or three, for it is mighty fine . . . . everybody likes it. But I should recollect that none but friends see my things; I have no doubt the world despises them.' A little later, the feeling of discouragement determines the painter (who was his own publisher) to limit the extent of his venture to the work already begun. 'My plan is to confine the number of plates to those now on hand; I see we have about twenty. . . . It harasses my days, and disturbs my rest at nights. The expense is too enormous for a work that has nothing but your beautiful feeling and execution to recommend it. *The painter himself is totally unpopular, and ever will be on this side the grave; the subjects nothing but the art, and the buyers wholly ignorant of that.* . . . I want to relieve my mind of that which harasses it like a disease.' This is not a happy state of feeling for an artist towards the close of his career, who knows that he has completely expressed himself, and that his utmost skill has failed to awaken any general interest in the public. Constable was heartily appreciated by a few friends, such as Leslie and Fisher, and a few others, and his pictures had been understood in France by the younger artists of the day; but he had not touched the public in his own country, and knew that he 'could never be popular on this side the grave.' In 1832 he wrote, 'My limited and abstracted art

is to be found under every hedge and in every lane, and therefore nobody thinks it worth picking up; but I have my admirers, each of whom I consider a host.' Sometimes, in moments of depression, the want of popularity was felt more keenly: 'Every gleam of sunshine is withdrawn from me, in the art at least. Can it be wondered at, then, that I paint continual storms?' However, the sturdy, self-reliant independence of vulgar opinion, remained with him to the last. He knew the value of his own work, and had a proper contempt for the judgment of the ignorant. 'Mr. ——, an admirer of commonplace, called to see my picture, and did not like it at all, *so I am sure there is something good in it.*' In another letter he says, 'I have lately painted a heath that I prefer to any of my former efforts; it is about two feet six, painted for a very old friend, an amateur, who well knows how to appreciate it, *for I cannot paint down to ignorance.*' In the year 1825 he wrote, 'My *Lock* is now on my easel; it is silvery, windy, and delicious; all health, and the absence of everything stagnant, and is wonderfully got together: the print will be fine.' Happily for Constable, he was sustained in his labour by the certain knowledge that his work was good in its own kind; that knowledge which is the truest and best consolation, often indeed the only consolation, of those who are endowed with the isolating gift of originality.

He had not looked forward to a happy old age, but he did not attain old age. He died on the 31st of March, 1837, in his sixty-first year, and suddenly, from the effects of indigestion, there being no disease (as was afterwards ascertained by a post-mortem examination) sufficient to account for the accident. The day before his death Constable had been busy finishing a picture of *Arundel Mill and Castle*, one of his best and brightest works, which clearly proves that there could have been no mental decadence. A painfully remarkable coincidence is noticed by Mr. Leslie, which has almost the character of a presentiment of approaching death. In his very last letter of invitation to his attached friend the landscape-painter writes, 'Prithee come, "*life is short, friendship is sweet;*" these were the last words of poor Fisher to me in his last invitation.' And so Constable quoted them in *his* last invitation.

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The life that we have just been studying, though not very rich either in incident or in variety of feeling, must ever retain a deep interest of a peculiar kind. Constable was a discoverer in art, and, like every innovator, had to wait long for any public recognition. Even at the time of his death his reputation was as nothing in comparison with what it is to-day; and unless he had attained the utmost limits of human longevity he could

never have taken, as a living artist, that place which now belongs to him as a name in the history of painting. Was he a great artist? I see that Mr. Wilson, in giving the *Bay of Weymouth* to the Louvre, calls the author of that picture 'the greatest of English landscape-painters,' but this is the exaggeration of a worshipper. The rank of Constable may be ascertained by a serious examination of his claims, but it cannot be settled by what amounts simply to the statement of a strong preference, as in Mr. Wilson's case, or an equally decided repugnance, as in the case of Mr. Ruskin. The qualities which mark true *greatness* in the fine arts are high imaginative power in combination with splendid executive accomplishment, and they always include a strong sense of the sublime in nature. Now it would be unjust to affirm that Constable was entirely destitute of the imaginative faculty, for there is considerable originality of invention in the use of his materials; but in the whole range of his works which are known to me there certainly does not occur one single instance, either of that noble imagination which elevates the mind of the spectator to the exalted region of sublimity, or of that deeply and tenderly sympathetic imagination which can plunge us in melancholy reverie and moisten our eyes with tears. Leslie said that the art of Constable gave him 'a great delight, a delight distinct from, and

he almost thought superior to, that which he received from any other pictures whatever;' and when Leslie said this we may be sure that he felt it, and that it was not any temporary feeling, but a feeling which had formed a part, and an essential part, of his own aesthetic experience. But the secret of this delight may be expressed in a single word—*refreshment.* Leslie was himself continually occupied with a kind of study which impelled him, by an inevitable reaction, to seek refreshment in pastorals; and as he had the keenest appreciation of the genuine, the pastorals of Constable delighted him, as being the most genuine of pastorals. The life which Leslie constantly studied in drawing-rooms and in the theatre was a refined and artificial existence, and he went from this to the landscape world of Constable as a Londoner goes out into the country, finding everything there which was not to be found in the polished society that he painted, and in the inventions of tailors, milliners, architects, and gardeners, with which that society was clothed, and sheltered, and surrounded. Constable had the strongest dislike to all the things that Leslie habitually worked with; he said that the great world was not made for him, nor he for it, and that a gentleman's park was his aversion. He was rustic to the heart, a Suffolk miller, knowing rural things down to the minutest detail, and loving them with an intense, a concentrated, and an exclusive

affection. And of all pictures that ever were painted, Constable's pictures are the most thoroughly and purely rural. He painted the crops and the weather, and windmills that would turn round, and water-mills that could be tenanted, and canals with locks and barges that were good for their rough service. Even in his very manner of work, so utterly original that there is no precedent for it in any former style of painting, there was a strange and profound harmony with the rusticity of the painter's heart. It may be rude and empirical, as if some farmer endowed with genius had got palette and brushes, and set to work by the light of nature and inspiration, but it is always perfectly clear from the one vice which is most out of harmony with rural feeling, for at least it is never superfine. These pastorals are not the pastorals of Florian, but are redolent of the genuine English country, with its fresh spring verdure, its gusty winds, its frequent showers, its flying shadows, and foliage restlessly glittering.

The influence of Constable in the history of landscape may be found ultimately to be one of the most widely traceable and one of the most enduring of all such personal influences. He is the father of modern French landscape, which in its turn affects more or less decidedly the practice of every other nation. Indeed, although Turner has been a great deal more engraved than Constable, and much more

talked about, and although Turner's life-work contains a thousand times the quantity of suggestive ideas that Constable's does, still it may be found ultimately that Constable has a greater effect upon practical landscape-painting. No influence could be healthier than his. He saw the kind of landscape which Nature had formed him to appreciate, with the originality of perception which belongs to genuine feeling alone, and he brought the art of painting much more into harmony with certain aspects of natural landscape—common aspects, but not the less worth painting on that account—than it had ever been before his novel and rather perilous experiments. No one who has reflected upon the nature of artistic discovery will suspect me of any desire to detract from the honour which is due to Constable, if I venture to express the opinion that the best effects of his innovations have not been displayed so much in his own works as in those of some subsequent artists, who have profited by his originality and courage, and worked out in tranquillity the problems that he suggested. His greatest merit is to have so clearly perceived that landscape was not simple in its texture, like surfaces of ebony or marble, but had a spotted complexity quite peculiar to itself, in which there was an endless variety of colour and a moving play of light. His trees are never conventional in any way, though he painted at a time when conventionalism in foliage was established in great authority.

It is a mistake to suppose, as Mr. Ruskin supposed, that Constable had an entire contempt for the works of others because he dreaded the effects of a National Gallery, and did not, in his own painting, adopt the manner of any of his predecessors. The truth is, that Constable had a degree of reverence for those who were reputed to be great masters in landscape, which curiously contrasts with the avowed heresy of the author of 'Modern Painters.' He studied Claude whenever he could, and copied him very industriously, always with the most profound respect. Constable believed that the famous landscape-painters of the seventeenth century were men to be held in high honour, but only imitated in their habits of reference to nature. Indeed, to most artists of the present day, Constable's respect for classical landscape would appear rather excessive, and few now living would share it unreservedly. Notwithstanding his originality, his mind was in many respects a traditional and not a sceptical mind. It was strongly imbued with the traditions of religion and patriotism; it was at the same time imbued with the traditions of art. But he had that practical independence which is compatible with respect for what has been done by others, and quite distinct from the narrowness of obstinacy or the stupidity of unteachableness. So far from resisting the teaching of Claude and Poussin, he sought it with reverent labour; but in the presence of Nature he

made no conscious reference to picture-galleries, willingly, indeed, forgetting them, yet retaining the general effects of the education he had gathered there. It may fairly be added, in defence of Constable, that, so far from going to nature in a spirit of unteachableness, he went there in the hope and belief that, if his mind were but sufficiently humble and observant, God would reveal to him something both beautiful and new. Indeed, the whole temper and character of Constable were admirable for their combination of unshakable self-reliance with the heartiest respect for merit in other men. He was not entirely free from certain acerbities, which are the natural and almost inevitable consequence of giving one's best energies to a pursuit which few are qualified to appreciate; but it is agreeable to remember, that though he never knew the sweets of popularity, he enjoyed for many years what is far better worth having—the entire devotion of a high-minded and admirable woman, and the life-long friendship of two or three earnest and cultivated men.

ETTY.

THE reader, in this age of communication, has probably visited the dignified old capital of Yorkshire, made the curious and interesting circuit of the mediaeval walls, passed under the great 'bars' or gates, and admired the famous Minster; but did the reader ever, whilst studying these remains of the second mediaeval city in the kingdom, give a thought, to a child that was born there in quite recent times and who returned there in mature manhood to die, after having become a famous painter in the capital? I humbly confess, that during several visits to York I never once thought of William Etty; and yet he loved the city with a proud, affectionate sense of citizenship, which never left him. There must be a reason for this, of course, as there is for everything. Nobody could go to Melrose without thinking of Scott, to Rydal without thinking of Wordsworth, to Weimar without thinking of Goethe; and even in the case of much less celebrated people the sight of the place where they were born and died has a decided tendency to refresh our memory about them, and induce us to learn more than we knew before. In these cases there is, however, some stronger association of ideas than the mere facts of death

and birth. The local hero has belonged to the locality by his life and work, as well as by the accident of being born there. It is very possible that a cultivated Englishman might not think of Gibbon at Putney, where he was born; but it is impossible for him to forget Gibbon at Lausanne, where he pursued his most profitable studies and wrote his most important work. The artistic connexion between Etty and York is untraceable. He had a passionate admiration for York Minster, but its architecture had no influence on his painting, nor was there any visible influence of the surrounding landscape upon his art. We may go even farther than that, and say that although Etty was a figure-painter, the life of the men and women he had known in Yorkshire does not appear to have interested him in any picturesque aspect. Thus there is no land of Etty as there is a land of Scott, a land of Burns, or, as in connexion with painting, there is a land of Constable; and there is no special reason why we should be more reminded of him at York than at Manchester: indeed, we are more likely to think of him at the Lancashire town, on account of the large picture possessed by the Royal Institution there.

William Etty was born in York on the 10th of March, 1787, the house being No. 20 Feasegate. This house was still standing in 1855, but I do not know whether it has been preserved since then,

and (having always forgotten all about Etty when in York) am not able to describe it. All we know is, that Etty's birthplace was not one of the now rare mediaeval houses ; it belonged to the eighteenth century, like his father and mother. During the painter's infancy Feasegate was a good street for business, and his parents carried on an active trade in gingerbread. His father was a miller, and his mother managed the shop-keeping part of their trade. She worked hard, taking her full share of those labours and duties which are laid upon a poor couple with a large family. There is a little romance about her history, which may be told even in a brief biography of this kind. Her father, William Calverley, was a ropemaker at the village of Hayton, near York, but he was a distant relative of the lady of the place, Mrs. Cutler, a widow, and daughter of a baronet, Sir Thomas Rudstone. Having quarrelled with her nephew, who was to have inherited the Hayton property, this lady looked out for another heir, and adopted the ropemaker's son, Etty's uncle, then a boy, who had been prudently christened Rudstone Calverley. Thus it came to pass that, although the artist was the son of a miller and dealer in gingerbread, he was the nephew of the Squire of Hayton ; but this near relationship to gentility was never of the least use to him in life. His mother offended the Squire of Hayton by her plebeian marriage, for he judged things

from the point of view of his present rather than his original rank in life ; he had taken the surname of Rudstone after his own ; was now Rudstone Calverley Rudstone ; had had time to get accustomed to his new position, and was not unnaturally angry that his sister, instead of helping him by some social ambition of her own, should be a hindrance to him by the choice of a much lower condition. In these cases the feeling of biographers and their readers is almost always against the aristocrat, but it is only fair to consider that he incurs a definite injury when a near relation chooses to make a marriage which, in a worldly sense, is degrading, and that he may fairly be allowed to defend himself, so far as circumstances will permit, by the negative measure of refusing to receive the relations which the objectionable marriage entails upon him against his will. Mr. Rudstone went rather too far in dismissing his sister's husband from the mill which he occupied under him, as a punishment for his marriage, but he had a fair right to decide for himself whether he would invite the miller to his own house or not. In some respects, perhaps, it may have been unfortunate for Etty that his relationship with the Squire should not have been acknowledged ; it might have been a help to him in his artistic career, but it might also, very possibly, have been a hindrance. The intense prejudice against the pursuit of fine art

which existed at that time in the aristocracy would probably be shared to the full by one newly admitted into the class, so that Etty might have been dissuaded from adopting art as a profession. However this might have turned out, the aristocratic connexion was for Etty exactly as if it had never existed; and always remained so, for neither he nor his brothers ever claimed relationship with their genteel cousins. He made his way in life, not by unaided effort, but by efforts which, as we shall see, were quite independent of any assistance from the Hayton family.

Etty's mother had ten children, five of whom died in infancy. His uncle William had a talent for drawing in pen and ink, and Etty believed that he would have become an excellent engraver had he passed through the necessary course of study. Our hero himself showed the usual early tendency to draw—not that this proves much, for all boys draw for their amusement: the question is, Will their love of drawing resist the irksomeness of real study? Etty did not receive much literary education, and this was certainly a misfortune for him, even as an artist, for a more cultivated mind would have directed his artistic energies to better purposes. He was a shy boy, and not good-looking, and the little education he got was ended before he was twelve years old. For two years he was a boarder at Pocklington, near Hayton, and after that was

sent to Hull, as apprentice to a printer, where for seven years he led a life of perfect slavery, not having even the Sundays for rest.

This Hull apprenticeship is one of the most important times in Etty's experience of life. It is sharply severed from the two other happier times of childhood and manhood, and divides them as the night divides day from day. In thinking of this career, in some respects (as I have already hinted) an unsatisfying career, we must always remember that during those very years when he ought to have been acquiring culture, and when he could have assimilated it with least effort had he been better situated, the future artist was kept from morning till night to the drudgery of putting types together for the 'Hull Packet,' or to more servile work in the house. It was perhaps rather in Etty's favour that his trade induced him to read, whatever may have been his choice of literature, for during his apprenticeship he spent his rare hours of leisure in reading and drawing. It is even possible that the printing may have led more directly to painting than another occupation would have done. He became aware that there was such an art as painting, and that there were men living who pursued it. Very likely all printers' compositors know this, for the work they have to do is sure to reveal to them the existence of art and artists, even if they labour on the humblest provincial newspaper. Etty

might therefore have been less favourably, as he might have been more favourably, situated. He might have been employed on some farm near Hayton, or even within a mile or two of York, and have remained in the condition of the agricultural population, to whom the world of art is as much unknown as the inhabitants of another planet. At Hull he read about painters and saw prints in the shop-windows, already a beginning of artistic education; and besides this, he made rude attempts of his own. Yet so small was his natural faculty for enjoying paintable things round about him, that his residence at Hull seems to have left no artistic impression derived from surrounding objects. In later life he spoke of Hull as a place 'memorable for mud and train-oil.' Certainly the town itself is not beautiful, but the expanse of the Humber, and the various kinds of shipping to be seen upon it, offer in themselves quite as good an artistic education as that enjoyed by the most eminent Dutch marine-painters; whilst within a very few miles of Hull, at such places as Welton, for example, there is most lovely scenery of rather a quiet kind, scenery which would in itself have supplied ample material for the education of a great English landscape-painter.

His apprenticeship ended in October, 1805, and ever afterwards he kept the day, the twenty-third of the month, as the 'anniversary of emancipation

from slavery.' An apprentice bound to a trade which he does not intend to pursue in after-life can never be happy, and must always look to the day of his deliverance as the day of emancipation; but few such apprentices have looked forward to that day with such intensity of longing as Etty did, and perhaps there never was another who kept the sensation of deliverance so fresh and ever present in his memory. There is often compensation where it is least observed by the ordinary looker-on; there are even compensations of which those who benefit by them are scarcely conscious. Etty had a hard time of it as an apprentice, but those years of 'slavery' gave him a sense of liberty in after-life which is very rarely felt by mature men, whether they have to earn a living, in which case they feel the bondage, or are independent in fortune, when they are too much accustomed to liberty to feel the delight of it. Once rid of his compositor's apron, which he would not take with him to London, Etty went through life with the feelings of a schoolboy in the first fortnight of the holidays—a happiness well worth paying for, especially as the payment had been made *before* the pleasure, and therefore could not spoil it by the apprehension of a penalty to be exacted afterwards. He had also a certain severe and noble satisfaction in looking back upon the hard years of his apprenticeship; he could think with self-respect, and did

so quite consciously all his life, that those years had been endured without the slightest breach o duty on his part: he had borne the burden, heavy as it was, with fortitude and patience. Etty had an honourable pride in the performance of duty, and always preserved his master's testimonial along with his diplomas.

The future artist's father had a brother in London, a gold-lace merchant, to whom he wrote with requests for help in the pursuit of painting. It is worth noting that Etty worked at his first profession for three weeks as a journeyman, whilst awaiting an answer to his letters. The answer came at last, inviting him to his uncle's house to stay a few months as a visitor. Then began the long and beautiful history of Etty's dependence upon friends and relations. It would be difficult to find in the lives of those who have at any time been dependent upon others a more charming example of steady and persistent giving of help, united to quiet dignity in its acceptance. He had now three friends willing and able to assist him, both with money and the encouragement of unfailing kindness—his uncle Etty, the gold-lace merchant; his uncle's partner, Mr. Bodley; and his brother Walter. These three protected him, gave him peace and affection, enabled him to live in London and pursue his studies. Neither the Squire of Hayton nor the King of England could have done anything better for him just then.

Etty's artistic education is of course an especially interesting subject to us who care for art. He began alone, drawing from prints or objects, including plaster-casts, which he went to copy in a shop kept by an Italian, Gianelli. Towards the end of the year 1806 he made a drawing of Cupid and Psyche from the antique, which was shown to Opie. Opie sent Etty to Fuseli, who admitted him as an Academy student. The young artist's career as a student began in the middle of January, 1807, and may be quite truly said to have ended only with the decline of his health at the close of his artistic life. The history of English art does not offer another example of such persistent studentship. On the second of July in the same year occurred another event of considerable importance in the artist's history. His uncle, the gold-lace merchant, paid Sir Thomas Lawrence a hundred guineas to take Etty as a pupil for one year. The pupil had liberty to work in his master's house, copy his pictures, and ask advice. Nothing could have been more kindly intended than this arrangement on the part of Etty's uncle, who had gone to the most famous painter of the day as he would have taken a beloved patient to the most famous physician of the day : but the more fashionable a professional man is, the less time will he probably be able to bestow on either patient or pupil; and in art there is another thing to be considered, which is most difficult to discover beforehand—the natural sympathy of the

pupil with his master's execution. Does such a sympathy exists, or does it not exist? If not, the apprenticeship will be of little use. If the execution of the master is of a kind which expresses an idiosyncrasy quite different from that of the pupil, the latter will have to do one of two things inevitably—either he must put on an execution which does not naturally belong to him, which does not express his ideas, or else he must resist and reject his master's influence, which isan in crease of toil instead of an alleviation of it. The style of Lawrence could never, as we all easily see now, express the mind of Etty. Lawrence was a most skilful artist, manually; and his skill was just of the very kind which a young beginner cannot profitably emulate. Lawrence had the kind of light, free touch, which comes to clever artists after a very great deal of practice, but which nobody can ever really possess without the same practice which they have given. The attempt to get his results by copying without going through his experience, would be sure to discourage a young artist, and Etty was profoundly discouraged; so profoundly, indeed, that he speaks of 'despondency' and 'despair.' He held on, however, with the determination which was a part of his character, strengthened, no doubt, in the present difficulty by a feeling of duty towards his uncle, and finally came to produce fairly accurate copies from Lawrence. The result of this part of his education was an increased technical facility, but

nothing more ; but it got him some employment in copies after his year's pupilage was over. Etty returned to his studies from the old masters and from nature, pursuing his education henceforth in his own way, and enjoying his recovered liberty.

In these early days of studentship occurs one of the pathetic incidents in the painter's life. His kind uncle, who had protected him for about four years, dies in 1809; of course in the most perfect ignorance of his nephew's future celebrity, which no one at that time could possibly foresee. We have often to regret similar circumstances in the history of men of genius, but in most cases it is the father and mother who pass away before knowing the results of a young man's toil and of their own protecting help, and for them it is a duty which brings at least a partial reward from the very beginning, even though ultimate consequences can only be dimly guessed at. An uncle is quite differently situated. Etty's uncle was no more obliged to help him than was his equally near aristocratic relative at Hayton. He had children of his own, and his kindness to his nephew William came entirely from the goodness of his heart. We regret, then, that he did not live long enough to see the fruits of it, and to enjoy more of his nephew's success than the doubtful pleasure of an anxiety for his welfare which could scarcely ever have given place to any definite anticipation. His uncle not only helped his nephew William, but all his

sister's children, and left them legacies when he died. The painter's legacy was of infinite value to him.

Etty's good fortune in his relations on his father's side continued, however, after his uncle's death. Walter Etty, the painter's elder brother, became a partner in the gold-lace trade, and acted toward him in the most beautifully fraternal way. He needed all the encouragement of such affection, and the material support that accompanied it also, for he could neither win medals in the contests amongst the students nor get pictures received into the exhibitions; in short, he could not win the slightest external success of any kind whatever, and had every appearance of being that total failure in art which the French call '*un fruit sec*.' The bitterness of such a position for a young artist who has in him the consciousness of a true natural impulse is always great indeed; he sees so many mediocre works admitted into the public exhibitions that it is hard to accept the verdict that his own are worse than the worst of these, and that he himself is less than the least of those who are considered worthy of being presented to the public. The humiliation is great for any artist, however independent he may be in fortune—so great that the richer ones, after two or three rejections, often retire from the field in disgust and give their lives either wholly to amusement or to some more accessible ambition. But in the case of a young artist situated as Etty was, that is, living in dependence upon the kindness of

a brother, the humiliation is incalculably greater. William Etty could not help thinking, what the delicacy of Walter Etty would never permit either of them to express, that if, indeed, the vocation had been a mistaken one, as all the constituted authorities seemed to agree, the money advanced to him was thrown away, and he had no right to accept any more of it.

His early defects or repulses at the Academy exhibitions hurt Etty's self-love, but did not shake his resolution. The greatest danger to a young artist when he undergoes this ordeal of refusal, is to hear nothing definite against his work, to know simply that he is refused without being told why. It would be too much to ask of the Academicians that they should give reasons for the exclusion of refused pictures, but it is probable that if they had time to do so, however severe their *critique motivée* might be, it would stimulate the energies of young artists when silent refusals only benumb them. What the Council of the Academy has not time to do in its official capacity is, however, often very kindly and effectually done by some individual Academician, who knows the young aspirant, and frankly tells him why his work has not been admitted. Lawrence did this for Etty. 'My master,' Etty says, 'told me the truth, in no flattering terms. He said I had a very good eye for colour, but that I was lamentably deficient in all other respects almost.' The effect of this straight-

forward expression of opinion was to stimulate rather than discourage. We have not seen those early-refused pictures which Lawrence criticised in these terms, but we infer that the criticism was just, because it might be applied to maturer works by Etty, who remained for many years perfectly capable of shocking trained eyes by the insufficiency of his drawing. If anything surprises us in the criticism by Lawrence, it is rather that he should have been able to recognise Etty's colour faculty at so early a period of his career, when his work appears to have shown few signs of it. The transaction is honourable to both parties. Instead of shrinking from the responsibility of criticism, Lawrence gives his opinion with a friendly openness, and Etty, recognising the justice of it, and feeling grateful for the wholesome bitterness of the truth, at once applied himself manfully to correct what was defective in his art, and add to it what was wanting. 'I lit the lamp,' he tell us, 'at both ends of the day. I studied the skeleton, the origin and insertion of the muscles. I sketched from Albinus. I drew in the morning; I painted in the evening; and after the Royal Academy went and drew from the prints of the antique statues of the Capitolini, the Clementina, Florentine, and other galleries, finishing the extremities in black-lead pencil with great care. This I did at the London Institution in Moorfields. I returned home, kept in my fire all night, to the great dismay of my landlord, that I might get up early next morning

before daylight, to draw. In short, I worked with such energy and perseverance to conquer my radical defects, that at last a better state of things began to dawn, like the sun through a November fog.'

The consequence of all this labour was that he was admitted as an exhibitor at the Academy in 1811, the title of his picture being, *Telemachus rescues the Princess Antiope from the Wild Boar.* He exhibited again in 1812, and continued in subsequent years. It is unnecessary to burden a short biography of this kind with the names of pictures which are quite unknown to fame, and in all probability deserve to remain obscure. Let us content ourselves for the present with noting the important fact that our hero has, by dint of great labour, forced his way into the Academy as an exhibitor,—the first great step in an English artist's life. The temper of resolution which had achieved this remained with him in after years. His note-books contain such entries as the proverb, 'The continual dropping of water weareth away stones,' not that such a proverb as this would be quite satisfactory to the critical sense as a reason for expecting success in art, for it does not affirm that friction will give artistic genius; however Etty derived strength from it. An entry more decidedly applicable to his case is, 'Study and labour are the price of improvement.' This is not so questionable a doctrine as the extreme one of Reynolds, that nothing was denied to labour. Other

entries about industry and idleness, early rising, &c., occur in the note-books, and show that certain truths, so familiar that we too often neglect them, had for Etty a vital freshness and significance. There is, no doubt, a certain simplicity and *naïveté* in the temper of a man who could be so struck with the value of these scraps of familiar wisdom as to copy them out in a book; but it is evident that he lived in a state of moral effort, which gave them a peculiar intensity of meaning with reference to his own career. Thus, when he writes down that 'Early rising is a shorter path to eminence than sleep,' he is thinking that if William Etty will only have the courage to get up soon, he will shorten the road to Academical honours. The phrase is probably his own; it is not very accurate, though we see what he means. The length of ground to be gone over is the same for the early riser and the late one; but the first has the advantage of doing a greater distance every day, if both leave off at sunset, and have been working with equal speed.

Etty is now twenty-nine years old, a strenuous student, but not much more than that; not a cultivated man outside the limits of his profession, and in painting itself only beginning to be cultivated. He is not yet able to earn his living by painting, though the exhibitions are open to him. His mind is most earnestly determined upon improvement in his art; there is, indeed, perhaps too much earnestness about

him, for we see more accurately when our faculties are not quite so much concentrated, or so constantly on the stretch. The most hopeful element in him at this period does not seem to be genius, of which little or nothing is discernible, but a fine strength of will and a steady perseverance in labour; this last very probably an acquired habit, due in part to the discipline of his apprenticeship to printing. All through life he attached especial importance to perseverance, and attributed many failures simply to the want of it.

In 1816 Etty goes abroad. The story of his travels seems to us of this generation like a fragment of ancient history. He crosses from Brighton to Dieppe, is twenty-four hours at sea, much of the time in a narrow berth, and finally lands in an adventurous, unforeseen manner, by moonlight. However brief may be this biography, however simple the scheme of it, we cannot omit the artist's teapot, his constant friend and companion. He loves tea much too well to trust Continental grocers or tea-makers, but carries his own materials and apparatus; tea for twelve months, sugar, *two* kettles, in case of accident to one of them, and the rest. Of course such supplies and apparatus are a stumbling-block to the minds of Continental custom-house officers, who will never understand how one man can need them all for his own use. Etty's troubles begin at Dieppe, where one of the tea-kettles is confiscated as super-

fluous, but restored afterwards. Etty goes to Rouen in the 'diligence,' and sees the Cathedral, which he naturally thinks inferior to York; and we may be sure that he will never meet with any ecclesiastical building in Europe which, to him, will appear equal to the great Minster. He arrives at Paris, enters by what, in his barbarous French, he calls the 'Barrier d'Neuilly,' then lands at 'le bureau de diligence.' He does not like Paris very much, and soon leaves for Switzerland. He crosses the Jura, 'passing through ravines such as Salvator Rosa would have delighted to paint,' the stock allusion to Salvator Rosa being still, at that time, unexhausted. He is not happy in the country inns, and becomes especially indignant about custom-house people on the frontier of Switzerland, because they make him pay duty on his stock of sugar. Continental habits put him out: he wants his English breakfast, and does not approve of the *déjeuner à la fourchette*, with 'sour wine.' He complains that he can get 'no milk, no tea, nor anything genial.' We should have thought that the great canister in the portmanteau ought to have lasted into Switzerland; perhaps it was packed up and inaccessible for the present. The bright teapot is kept out, however, and Etty characteristically refuses the substantial French *déjeuner* to go and make himself patriotic cups of tea and slices of bread and butter in the kitchen of the roadside inns, where the 'diligence' halts. After a brief astonishment at

the majesty of Switzerland he crosses the Simplon, and finds himself in Italy, where the vineyards delight him 'with grapes dropping in clusters, rich, black, and luxuriant, creeping fantastically over alleys of trellis-work, forming a cool and delicious walk beneath.' He comes to Florence with the intention of staying and studying there; but finds himself in a state of extreme mental depression, which has a bad effect upon his health. This depression is due to two different causes. He left England in love—anxiously, rather than hopefully, in love; and this disturbs his peace: but it is evident, also, that he was too intensely national in his habits and feelings to enjoy a residence on the Continent. A man who cannot stop at an *auberge* without producing an English teapot, who thinks that *vin ordinaire* is sour, and who prefers bread and butter to a substantial *déjeuner*, ought to remain in some English home. At Florence he 'feels unequal to the task of going to Rome or Naples,' and decidedly says, 'I am *certain* it is not in my power to reside abroad.' He says that Florence has a character of gloom about it that he cannot bear. 'I am sick to death,' he adds, 'of travelling in a country where the accommodations are such as no Englishman can have any idea of.' He stays just four days at Florence, then leaves it in disgust, and turns back homewards by Pisa, Leghorn, Genoa, Turin, Mont Cenis, Chambery, Lyons, and Paris—homesick all

the time, and doing little or nothing but getting as quickly as possible over the long leagues which separate Italy from England. At Paris he determines to work in Regnault's *atelier*, but finds the students a rude set, and the place a perfect bear-garden—which, from similar experiences, we can well believe. Being 'very uncomfortable' in Regnault's *atelier*, he stays there only three days, and very soon gets to Calais, crossing the channel as quickly as possible in a French vessel, and travelling to London in a Deal coach, with sentiments of love and affection for every brick in the English metropolis.

Once more in England Etty resumes work very heartily, and exhibits regularly at the British Gallery and the Academy. One picture of this period may be specially mentioned, the *Cupid and Euphrosyne ;* this attracted some attention, the 'Literary Gazette' praised it, and Lawrence called it a 'work of splendid promise.' Etty wrote lists of 'Subjects to Paint,' which he divided into 'Subjects of Grandeur,' 'Subjects of Terror and Emotion,' 'Subjects of Poetry,' and 'Subjects of Feeling,' a division which curiously illustrates the non-literary character of his mind, and his difficulty in establishing accurate distinctions by words, for it is evident that there is no reason why a subject of grandeur should not be poetical at the same time, or why a subject of emotion should not be a subject of feeling. By 'Subjects of Poetry,' he seems rather to have understood illustrations of the

poets. He speaks, too, of 'La Grande Historique,' an original sort of French, yet intelligible. He was not altogether illiterate, however, and made memoranda of 'books to be read,' as he did of pictures to be painted; but it is remarkable that his mind should have remained, as it did, quite without that ease and dexterity in thought and expression which is the ordinary result of a very moderate literary culture.

In 1820, Etty exhibited a *Pandora* at the British Gallery, and the *Coral Finders* at the Academy. In the *Coral Finders* Venus and her youthful satellites arrive at the Isle of Paphos, according to the description in the catalogue. The subject, therefore, gave free play to the kind of imagination which was the genuine gift of the painter, and which afterwards found a more complete expression in works of greater importance, an imagination dwelling very willingly upon the beauty of the naked figure, and deeply enjoying its own fancies of colour and graces of composition. The *Coral Finders* had the good luck to be appreciated and bought for 30*l.*, the price fixed by the artist, in itself a sufficient evidence of his modest professional standing at that time. Another amateur, Sir Francis Freeling, recognised the merits of the work, and offered a commission to Etty, who suggested Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra on the Cydnus as a subject. This picture being finished, was exhibited in the Academy for 1821, and made a sensation. Until the *Coral*

Finders, Etty had been perfectly obscure, although he had exhibited for years. That picture gave him a little reputation, but now the *Cleopatra* raised him into a sudden celebrity. This work was sold to Sir Francis Freeling for less than 200 guineas, and has subsequently brought a thousand. In spite of the success of the *Cleopatra*, there seems to have been a disposition to keep Etty down a little longer, for the next year's picture, *Cupid sheltering his Darling*, was hung so low that its colour was reflected on people's boots.

Notwithstanding the misery and home-sickness of his first attempt at Continental travel, Etty determined in 1822 upon a new excursion in foreign lands, not by any means forgetting his teapot and English kettle, so necessary to fortify him against the perils of Continental life. This time he crosses the Channel in a steam-packet which gets to Calais in three hours and a half, but although there is steam upon the sea, there are no locomotives on the land yet; so Etty takes two days and a night to get to Paris. He stays three weeks in the French capital, and visits the Salon of that year, then open in the Louvre. At that time no English artist ever heartily approved of French painting, and Etty's tone about it is as favourable as that of other Englishmen used to be. He says, 'There are really some clever things:' he disapproves of the portraits; but thinks the historical pictures highly creditable

as an effort. The old galleries of the Louvre delight him, though since the defeat of Napoleon they are shorn of the incomparable treasures which he once concentrated there. Etty wishes England had anything like the Louvre—a wish that our grandchildren will probably see realised. During the rest of his time in Paris he studied every morning at the Academy; and at the end of his three weeks left for Italy, rather enjoying the grandeur of the mountainous landscapes—observing the beautiful colour of the distant mountains, and their fine masses of light and shade. He is also duly impressed by the grandeur of the Simplon, and then finds himself, for the second time, among the Italian vineyards—not so homesick as before.

The artist's second journey to Italy confirms the impression that he was not intended by nature for a traveller. He enjoyed little, and suffered intensely from all those discomforts at which the born traveller only laughs or shrugs his shoulders, or else quotes the proverb, '*A la guerre comme à la guerre!*' Etty's tea-kettle simmers in many an Italian inn, but even that dear friend cannot reconcile him to a land where the orthodox English breakfast is unknown. He travelled, too, in most unpleasantly hot weather; and we may well believe that three weeks in French and Italian diligences, under a burning southern midsummer sun, were enough to disgust him with locomotion. But once at Rome and in the Vatican

gallery he forgets these ills, and talks about the happy climate of Italy. 'Let us pass to the galleries of statues, lit by the light of Italian skies—that golden hue peculiar to her happy climate. From yon open balcony the eye steals from the wonders of Art to the beauties of Nature—the Alban mountains, the hills of Apennine. How balmy, genial, the air! how calm, how dignified the scene!' At this time he gets a little encouragement in the shape of commissions of 25*l.* each for pictures requiring considerable toil. He keeps a diary, and advises himself therein to study economy and not drink too much tea—always his great excess and self-indulgence. At Naples he is enchanted with the wondrous bay, and must needs ascend Vesuvius, which he does very courageously, with no companion but an Italian sailor and a guide. He eats grapes at Pompeii, and rambles all over the disinterred city. Returning to Rome, he sets to work in good earnest. Etty does not seem to have had that strong objection to copying other men's work which is very common with original artists. Many of them cannot endure to copy; it seems to them an intolerable servitude. Etty took to it willingly, as a good way of improving himself. He copied Veronese in the Borghese gallery, and made other studies or copies after Veronese, Titian, and Vandyke.

Before his departure from England, Etty had

managed to fall in love again, this time with a cousin of his; but, as usual, was unsuccessful. This makes him so miserable when at Rome that he writes: 'For six months past I have scarcely known Happiness, but by name; even now could almost exchange life with a dog, or resign it altogether, did not Hope whisper brighter days may yet dawn. I have only found existence tolerable by applying vigorously to my art, the strongest remedy my thoughts could suggest. Even *that* was insufficient.' Again he writes: 'My other loves were scratches; this, a wound.' However, he has to resign himself to his fate, and does so ultimately, turning to his tea-kettle for consolation. 'I have serious thoughts of paying my addresses to—my *tea-kettle.* I have found her a very warm friend. She sings, too. . . . Sweet is the song of the kettle, sweeter to a studious man than a crying child or a scolding wife.' This language, in Etty's case, was scarcely exaggeration.

From Rome he goes to Venice, passing through Ferrara, where he kisses Ariosto's chair and visits Tasso's dungeon. 'Here I am,' he writes from Venice, 'sitting by my fireside, if a pot of charcoal is worthy so sacred a title. On this concern I have just boiled my flat kettle, and indulged in a cup or two of tea.' It was a very happy thing for Etty that he went there. He grumbles at first about the rain, but afterwards writes: 'Venice arrested me! brought me back to a sense of honour and

duty.' His first intention was only to stay ten days: he ended by staying nearly a year, spending the time in a healthy state of ardent enthusiasm about the great Venetians whose names and works made the place sacred for him—Titian, Tintoret, Giorgione, and their great brother, the Veronese. He kneels at their tombs, and all but worships their memories. ,If a few masses would do their souls any good, I would pay for them,' he writes. Venice becomes a second home to him; out of England no place has had such an attraction for him as this. The English Vice-Consul, Mr. D'Orville, makes a friend of Etty, so that the painter is no longer in a solitude. He copies Tintoret, Veronese, and Titian, and works with great diligence from the life. The painters find out that he is a masterly workman, and delight in watching him as he colours with such enviable force and facility; they even make him an honorary member of their Academy. It is interesting to know what Etty thought of the Continental painters of his time. He did not think much of the Italians. 'When we have seen French art,' he said, 'we have seen the best of Continental art.' 'The *efforts* the French make are indeed great; and much that is desirable is mixed up with much that is bad. There is an agreeable choice of subject, a daring excursion into the regions of history and poetry, a knowledge of drawing and details, and a something in colour very respectable (not often), that altogether leave an impression of power.'

At Venice, Etty delighted in exploring all the nooks and corners of the city, which is rather surprising, as there are so few indications in his works of any particular pleasure in the picturesque of towns. Everybody who has been at Venice knows how easy it is to fall into a canal, especially if you walk with upturned eyes and are absorbed in the study of architecture. This happened to Etty, whose Venetian friends thenceforward called him 'Canal Etti,' a singularly perfect *sobriquet*, the only fault of which is that it suggests itself too easily.

From Venice he went to Florence, and copied there very energetically from Titian. He did not care to revisit Rome, but went back to Venice again, where he stayed two months, and then quitted it—this time regretfully—in October 1823, with much baggage of copies and studies. At Verona he stays to make a sketch of the *San Giorgio* by Veronese. After that he pushes on towards England by the St. Bernard, Vevay, and Geneva, to Paris. The diligence from Geneva to the French capital spent three days and three nights on the journey in those days. At Paris he makes studies and accumulates material, making a study from Rubens, and after it (of all things in the world!) the lead-coloured *Deluge* of Poussin, which always makes us wonde whether Poussin had ever seen anything so terrible as the smallest of French inundations. On his return to England, Etty looks back over his absence

of a year and a half with a sense of satisfaction with his own industry. He has made upwards of fifty copies or studies in oil, and has adhered to his original plan of being continually in the galleries, postponing original production till his return to his own studio at home. There he lands one frosty, moonshiny night in the winter of 1824; the next night found him at his post in the life-school of the Academy.

Etty is now thirty-seven. 'Years are rolling over my head,' he says; 'I ask myself, "What have I done?" Echo answers, "What?"' He really has done something, however little it may content him, and he has prepared himself for doing very much more. His plans enlarge: he takes spacious chambers in Buckingham Street on a twenty-one years' lease, at a rental of 120*l.*—a bold stroke, considering that his position is still very precarious, though it is beginning to be hopeful. There he paints big pictures, such as the *Combat*, bought by Martin the painter for 300*l.*; he paints the *Judgment of Paris* for Lord Darnley, who vexes him with many recommendations. Etty painted his *Judith* shortly afterwards (in 1827), for he had now reached his full maturity as an artist, a maturity greatly helped by the residence at Venice. The next year an important step was made by Etty's election as a member of the Royal Academy. This election gave him the utmost delight, which he was at no

pains to conceal. Happily, his mother was still alive, and could share in his satisfaction. It was a great thing for Etty to be an Academician, for his pictures were not sure of sale even yet. The *Judith* had gained his election, but remained on his hands. The Academic title is a wonderful help in picture-selling; besides this, it is a satisfaction to be recognised, however sure an artist may feel of his own powers. 'Even the pleasure of self-approbation,' said Stuart Mill, 'in the great majority, is mainly dependent on the opinion of others. . . . Nor is there, to most men, any proof so demonstrative of their own virtue or talent as that people in general seem to believe in it.' One thing, however, is so characteristic about Etty that the briefest of biographies ought not to omit it. He would not give up his studies from life in the Academy in deference to the opinion that they were derogatory to the dignity of an Academician; and he was so firm on this point, that if had been necessary to choose between the rights of the student and the Academic title, his mind was made up to decline the title, the importance of which no one knew better than himself. There is something very fine in this, but at the same time a reason given by Etty shows how simply professional was the condition of his mind. He says of the work from Academy models, 'It fills up a couple of hours in the evening I should be at a loss how else to employ.' Most men, not

so narrowly professional, are glad to have an hour or two in the evening for general culture, for the unbending of the mind in some study or pursuit entirely different from the professional one. It is no use to find fault with people for not being what they cannot be; yet it is probable enough that if Etty had been so constituted as to enjoy literature more, his artistic productions would have been more interesting. We know that he enjoyed literature to some extent, and had a certain enthusiasm about poets, since he kissed Ariosto's chair; but no one with the true passion for reading would have felt at a loss how to employ his evenings.

There is a great deal of charm in the simple character of the artist, which is evident in his almost unbounded exultation on the subject of his Academic election. Uncharitable judges of human nature are always very severe on this exultant spirit, which they call 'boasting' and 'vanity.' It is rather the mark of a simple and unworldly mind. Worldliness teaches us to retain the expression of our delight, and to affect to take good things that fall to us as nothing more than our deserts. Children exult openly, because their minds are unsophisticated; so did Etty, for the same reason. We may smile when a man of forty lets his delight be visible; ought we not rather to respect him for it?

A very important event occurred in 1829, when Etty was forty-two years old. Certain artists in

Scotland, who appreciated Etty in consequence of their visits to London, wished to have one of his most important pictures. They thought of buying the *Judith* for Edinburgh, but first they wanted to borrow it. Etty refused to lend it, on account of difficulties of carriage (at that time much greater than in our day). The Scotchmen do not give up their idea, but after the *Judith* has been exhibited at the British Institution in 1828 they offer to buy it for 210*l.* The original price was 525*l.* Etty accepts the offer on condition of being permitted to paint two pendants at 105*l.* each, to complete the story. The Scottish artists at once agree to this proposal, and the consequences of this decision were important for Etty's fame, as well as for art-education in Edinburgh. The purchasers really acted with great spirit, considering the difficulties of their own position. Their Academy was then in an infantine condition, so that the purchase was rather heroic. Since then the three *Judiths* have risen greatly in value, and at one time might have been sold for 4000*l.*, but it is probable that they would bring less at present. The Scottish Academy, however, has never shown any disposition to part with them, but has continued to value them on their own account. The transaction was deeply agreeable to Etty, who liked to be appreciated by artists for his real merits; yet the reader perceives that Etty's position, from the worldly point of view,

was still anything but brilliant, since he had to sell an important work for less than one-half the price originally asked for it. In 1829, again, he incurs a disappointment: another attempt in the grand style, *Benaiah*, is exhibited, but not sold.

The artist lost his mother in 1829. To his affectionate and filial nature this was a severe trial. He arrived at York after a hurried journey just in time for the funeral, and had the coffin opened to see his mother's face once more. Etty wrote very sadly and tenderly about this event, with the open expression of real feeling which was habitual with him. 'She went off quiet as a lamb, or as she is now, an angel. God bless her! At five to-day we saw her dear body laid, according to her anxious desire, near our dearest father, and thus accomplished her long-cherished hope, and with it dear father's also. They are happy, believe me; for they deserved it. Rest their souls in the peace of God till we all meet again! Mr. Flower, who christened me, read the prayers.'

Later he writes to his brother Walter, 'I yet linger here near the grave of my beloved mother.' During the rest of his life his mother's wedding-ring hung by his bedside. The filial feeling seems, after her death, to have sought expansion in kind attention to one of her nearest relations, her brother, old John Calverley the joiner. Etty went to see him at Beverley, which gave him much pleasure.

The joiner was now eighty-nine years old, with very white hair. Etty went to Hayton, too, in order to ascertain the exact age of his mother at the time of her death, but he did not visit the Squire of Hayton. He was proud of his mother, and believed that she had great qualities.

The burning of York Minster in 1829 was another great calamity of the year for Etty. The Minster was for him an object of love and pride. He said his heart was almost broken by the news. It is impossible to imagine anything that could happen to inanimate matter more likely to afflict Etty than the burning of York Minster. He took an active part in the discussions about its restoration, and it is partly in consequence of his exertions that the Dean and Chapter abandoned a fearful and wonderful scheme they had of removing the rood-screen, and setting it farther back. The reader who knows York Minster is sure to remember the screen, with its statues of the kings. The clergy seem to have thought that it would be an advantage to set it farther back in the choir, in order to disengage the bases of the pillars of the central tower. To effect this the screen was to have been shortened and lowered, or, in other words, completely spoiled. Etty saw at once the stupid folly of the proposal, and interfered energetically enough by all means in his power, writing in the newspapers and expostulating privately with influential persons.

In the summer of 1830, being now forty-three, Etty leaves England for the third time, and goes to Paris. This visit is interesting, because, without in the least anticipating any unusual excitement, Etty becomes witness of a French revolution. He does not like Paris much—not so much as he used to do. He discovers the defects of the French climate, and thinks it inferior to that of England. He visits the studios of the principal painters, and has strong prejudices against French art, which, however, do not prevent him from acknowledging certain qualities in handling and drawing. He thinks regretfully of home, and tea, and English ways. 'Oh, I am English to my heart's core!' he says, 'and would not exchange that honoured title,' &c. And again he writes, 'When once I get my foot on that honoured land, farewell all but it and my aim at glory!'

Etty always seems to have been urged to this excitement of the patriotic sentiments by his excursions abroad, and more particularly by foreign cookery and absence of proper tea and bread-and-butter. Something more serious occurs to annoy him on the present occasion. On the first of the three days Etty is at the house of an English friend at a distance from his lodging, and has to get home as he best can in the evening. Here is his own account:—

'A little after tea I thought I would be going. Much was expected that night. Out I trotted—the soldiers yet

waiting in the Place—went up the Rue de la Paix towards the Italian Boulevards. . . . . Just as I was about to turn the corner, on comes the mob in full cry, "*Vive la Charte!*" and a thousand other cries. Smash go the splendid lamps. On they come. A *porte-cochère*, just closing, afforded me and two or three others time to get in at the door (of a strange house) ere the porter closed it. With fierce cries they carry on the work of destruction. And there we were, not knowing what would become of us. In the course of a quarter of an hour they seemed at a greater distance, and we gladly escaped this nightly havoc.

'How can I give an adequate idea of those portentous and awful cries, that "like an exhalation" rose over Paris in the darkness, and broke the still silence of midnight? Mingled with the sounds of the tocsin, the deep-toned bell, and the shrill, hasty, smaller one, the rattle of musketry, the drums beating to arms, the crackling of fires—all formed a mixture, grand, yet awful in the extreme.'

Still he worked on at the Louvre, painting whilst he heard the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon, but as the guardians became uneasy, and only one or two students remained out of one or two hundred, Etty at last gave his things to be locked up and went out, going towards the Tuileries, but deviating from his line of march when he found that it led straight to the mouth of a cannon. On the third day he decided not to go to the Louvre, but went out, nevertheless, though at great risk. He had constantly to pass groups of armed revolutionists, to climb barricades. A day

later (Friday) there was no more fighting, but all Paris was in a state of great apprehension. On Saturday all is over, and the artists may go back to the Louvre. Etty recovers his studies, which have remained safe in a cupboard.

A stormy time, indeed, those days must have been for Etty! First, there was the revolution, with all its noise and horrors. 'It was indeed a scene of horrors,' he wrote, 'to tread on the bloodstained pavement of Paris, to see the wounded, the dying, and the heaps of dead with black and horrent hair; to smell the putrescent bodies as you passed the pits in which they were thrown.' Then came the most fearful thunderstorm Etty had ever experienced, intensified, perhaps, to the imagination by the excitement of civil war. 'An awful silence, and flashes of lightning every half or quarter minute; without rain, without thunder. Again, a wind that seemed to tear everything before it, sent glass, tiles, stones, tingling and rattling down. A dead and awful silence for a few seconds:—a distant roar of long-drawn thunder, like the far-distant roll of artillery. "It is the king's army, and the cannon of Marmont!" was the first thought. Then lightning every second, flash after flash, blue, vivid, and ghastly, till the heavens were one blaze of lurid light. Again the mighty wind, and a nearer roar of artillery, as we thought.'

A third cause of disturbance in the painter's

feelings at this time was the familiar one of being hopelessly in love; this time with a beautiful and accomplished young lady about twenty years younger than himself. He had painted her portrait several times, and this was the consequence. He was 'deeply and desperately' in love with this too interesting, and too charming, model. Finally, he overcame this passion, as he had overcome others, and remained as contented as an often-refused old bachelor can be expected to be.

About the age of forty-three Etty seems to have attained the perfection of his happiness. The wounds occasioned by the refusals of ladies he admired appear to have healed themselves, so that the artist could settle down to the peaceful existence of a confirmed old bachelor. Though he had not a wife and family of his own, he had near relations, and was not without the solace of affectionate intercourse, which is indispensable to natures such as his. He had the warmest affection for his brother Walter, to whom he owed much gratitude for help given when it was most necessary, and always given ungrudgingly. Etty had also a niece who kept house for him, and whom he describes as 'faithful, good, affectionate, and attentive to all my wishes.' Other elements of happiness were 'a quiet, delightful, cheerful residence,' his Academic rank, and his increasing public reputation. Some philosophers have denied altogether the possibility of happiness; but in all lives,

except the most unfortunate, it comes at times like fair weather in a long sea-voyage. One of these times for Etty was the year 1830. Towards the close of the year, however, he was again mixed up in stormy controversy about the screen of York Minster. There can be no doubt about Etty's earnestness in the cause. He wished to retain the screen where it was (and, happily, is still), in opposition to a foolish scheme for removing it farther eastwards, which at that time had many influential supporters. Etty was not an architect, but he perceived at once that if this plan were carried out the screen must of necessity be mutilated, and set in a much worse light, whilst the choir would be shortened. This roused him to anger, and made him write tremendous letters, which, in fact, won the battle, since they rallied many influential people to the same cause.

The next year (Etty being now forty-four) was very productive; but his prices even then seem to have been by no means excessive. The *Venetian Window* (now in the National collection) was bought by Mr. Vernon for 120*l*., and the *Sabina* for 100*l*. by Sir Francis Freeling. This does not indicate anything like ardent competition amongst collectors.

In 1831 Etty sent his last *Judith* to Edinburgh, and went there himself to retouch the set. He went by Leicester, Derby, and York, where, of course, he revisited the Minster, with all his old enthusiasm.

York Minster was a life-long passion with Etty, and he made a person of the building, as he did of his beloved tea-kettle. 'I always see new beauties in my loved Minster. Beautiful is she, and glorious: peerless amongst the temples of the Most High.'

He was well received in Edinburgh by the artists, where his completed *Judith* series were now visible together. He worked upon the pictures energetically for several days till they came quite to his mind, and then amused himself by making excursions in Scotland, to the Falls of Clyde, Loch Lomond, &c. The return to England was from Glasgow to Carlisle, whence he turned aside to see the English Lake District, in passing through which —from Keswick to Kendal—he saw little else than rain, like many another tourist before and since.

An important result of the esteem in which Etty was held by Scottish artists was the purchase of his large pictures—the *Benaiah* and the *Combat*—by the Scottish Academy. The *Benaiah* was bought directly from Etty himself for 136*l.* 10*s.*, including the frame. The *Combat* belonged to Martin the painter, from whom it was bought for its original price, 300*l.*, with interest from the time of its purchase by Martin from Etty.

The painter's conservative spirit in all that related to York antiquities was roused again by the conduct of the York Corporation about the old walls of the city with their grand gateways.

Municipalities, which generally look upon things from the utilitarian point of view, are never very favourably disposed towards old city walls, but look upon them as useless impediments to circulation in a modern town. Old gateways, too, are an impediment to traffic; so that there is a strong tendency to demolish them when they stand in a modern street. Artists and antiquaries, on the other hand, and all people who have either a love for the picturesque or a sentimental interest in the historical past, are eager to preserve such great visible relics of it as walls and towers, which speak of it to all men, and, once destroyed, can never be replaced. Etty's artistic and sentimental feelings were much excited in favour of the old walls of York. He and others who felt with him fought bravely in their defence; and not too soon, for in 1826 the barbican of Micklegate had been removed, to the great grief of Sir Walter Scott, who declared that he would have walked from Edinburgh to York to save it; which no doubt he would have done. In 1831 the Corporation wanted to destroy Bootham Bar, but Etty and others interfered energetically to save it, and subscribed 300*l.* for its repair. He deserves much honour and gratitude as a brave defender of antiquities against stupid modern Philistinism. Nor was his spirit of noble watchfulness confined to York. In 1832 he spoke at a public meeting in favour of repairing the

Abbey Church of St. Albans, and joined the subscription, and in the same year he exerted himself to preserve a Gothic chapel in Southwark.

This was the best time of Etty's art-production. He was now forty-five years old, and really an accomplished painter. At this time he painted that delightful work which we all know, *Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm.* He also exhibited *Phædria and Cymochles on the Idle Lake.* Both these works belonged to the happiest and most perfect phase of his art, and were more truly rare and precious than the large compositions upon which he hoped to build a more substantial fame. His rich colour and poetic fancy enabled him to treat subjects of this kind with a felicity quite his own. They really belonged to him, and in painting them he fully expressed the artistic part of his nature.

Outside of art, and his very respectable passion for antiquities, Etty was certainly not distinguished by power of intellect, or even liveliness of intelligence. On many subjects his mind seems to have been in a condition of simple prejudice, and quite incapable of any endeavour to lift itself to higher points of view. No Conservatism known to us in the present day can give any adequate notion of the intensity of political prejudice in a mind like Etty's in the year 1832. The very moderate measures of Reform which were proposed in those

days seemed to Etty a fearful subversion of the natural order of the universe. He classed 'Reform and the Cholera' together as the 'two great Evils of the Day.' He foretold that Reform would ruin the country. He had a great contempt and dread of the lower classes, who ought, in his opinion, to be kept in their places.

Etty had not hitherto been much honoured in York, according to the usual rule that a man's native place is one of the last to recognise his reputation. The reason for this seems to be that the celebrated name has to contend, in the native place, with a previous conception of the person as the son of an ordinary inhabitant, often without social rank. When, on the other hand, there is any social rank to begin with, it overshadows reputation in the common estimate. Notwithstanding Etty's descent from the gentry on the maternal side, he was of humble origin, and not recognised by the Squire of Hayton. It was, therefore, by no means easy for the inhabitants of an aristocratic place like York to forget the gingerbread shop. To this difficulty may be added the prejudice against art and artists, which existed so strongly in English society in the last generation, and an especial prejudice in Etty's case, whose works were not thought quite decent because he painted the nude. However, in 1832, York did positively recognise Etty to some extent. He was invited by

the Lord Mayor, invited to the Deanery, asked to breakfast with the Sheriff, and so far lionised that he could have dined out every day if he had liked.

On New Year's Day, 1833, he was so far successful as an artist that everything painted by him had been sold, but the prices had always been very moderate. In the three preceding years he had earned, nominally, about 500*l.* a-year, but a figure-painter has considerable expenses which cannot be avoided. Etty always handed over his money to his brother Walter, who gave him little sums when required. This wonderful brother had advanced to the painter about 4000*l.*, which was now almost repaid, and was entirely cleared off a little later. The whole story is a very beautiful one, the fraternal trust and generosity on one side, and the fraternal conscientiousness in repayment on the other—one perhaps equally rare in dealings on so very large a scale, relatively to the means of both parties.

In 1834 Etty sold his *Hylas* for 168*l.*, but he fell ill this year and remained almost incapable of work for several months. The symptoms were 'severe cough, sore throat, hoarseness, low fever, and soreness all over.' He recovered, however, sufficiently to revisit York, and to make excursions in Yorkshire, where he enjoyed the beautiful remains of Gothic architecture at Howden, Selby, Rivaulx,

and Byland, besides Fountains Abbey and Ripon Cathedral. All these places interested and delighted him. At York he was excited, as usual, by the constant mania for destroying what remained of the old city. The old houses about the Cathedral were now swept away; they have since been replaced by very neat middle-class tenements in brick, which the York people believe to be a great improvement. Etty had now a cottage of his own at York, to which he hoped to pay periodical visits, and so keep alive the old *cultus* for the city and cathedral. On his return to London the painter worked with great energy, and painted about this time (1835) the *Bridge of Sighs*, the *Warrior Arming*, *Venus and her Satellites*, &c.

An important event in 1835 was Etty's visit to Manchester, where Mr. Grant gave him a commission for a picture, and where he was treated with consideration. In 1836 he worked steadily at a class of subject that he liked, because it afforded a good pretext for the nude. The longer he lived the less he felt inclined to abandon his especial superiority of flesh-painting, and so he chose such subjects as old mythology or history, which gave the opportunity for the kind of painting he delighted in. It has been said that the taste for the nude implies some intellectual inferiority, since it is not the arms and legs, but the face and its expression, which visibly convey to others the intellect of a

man. To this it may be frankly answered that Etty was decidedly *not* intellectual, and yet was at the same time quite decidedly artistic; the two orders of mind being separable, as we often see. He therefore sought the subjects which best expressed his simply artistic nature. He was not a painter of thought, but of physical beauty, which to his feeling was most visible in the nude, and a sufficing motive for his art.

He had a scheme for painting some important public picture for York, but it came to nothing. There were only eight supporters of the scheme, and these were all private friends. York was certainly not the place in which any considerable number of persons could be found to whom art was a matter of interest, or who could understand Etty's devotion to it. So he set to work on his big picture of the *Sirens*, whose history we may briefly tell in this place. It returned unsold to the painter's hands after the exhibition of 1837, but was afterwards purchased by Mr. Daniel Grant of Manchester, along with the *Delilah*, for 250*l.*—not a large sum for such important pictures. Afterwards the purchaser's brother, Mr. William Grant, gave the *Sirens* to the Manchester Institution, where it may still be seen when the annual exhibition is not open. Thus it happens that Manchester instead of York has an important picture by Etty. Perhaps it is quite as well for the

painter's fame that it should be so, for an energetic community like that of Manchester is much more likely to appreciate the fine arts than a sleepy old cathedral city.

About this time Etty would very gladly have painted a picture for a Roman Catholic Chapel near Manchester. He liked Roman Catholicism exceedingly, and though he never joined that communion openly, he was certainly during his latter years a Roman Catholic in sentiment, if not in positive belief. The one thing which kept him attached to the Church of England was certainly her continued possession of York Minster. Whatever Church possessed the Minster possessed Etty. If Rome could have recovered the Minster, Etty would have gone over along with it; and it may be suspected from many passages in his letters, that if he could have seen the magnificent Roman ritual in his beloved Cathedral the sight would not have been displeasing to him. In earlier life, during his tours on the Continent, he had felt a strong Protestant opposition to 'Popish ceremonies,' but at fifty he had a poetical sympathy with the elaborate Roman worship not unlike that of Sir Walter Scott. In 1837 he positively declared himself '*Catholic*—not of the Daniel O'Connell school, but that of Alfred, St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Bruno, and Fénélon, not forgetting Raphael, Michael Angelo, and a host of other great and good men.' To his brother he says that he is

not likely ever to be a Catholic, 'unless they get their own Cathedrals back again,' which confirms what I have just said about the Minster. He had a strong sympathy with the Roman Catholic Church of the time of the Reformation, which in his opinion had been abominably ill-used. He looked back to the religious unity of England in the Middle Ages with the deepest regret, but chiefly, in may be suspected, for the sake of the abbeys and cathedrals. He disliked the ugly Dissenting chapels of his day.

There was a good deal of public spirit in Etty. We have already seen how actively he bestirred himself for the protection of the remnants of Gothic art which he valued. In 1838 he tried to found a school of art in York, and read a paper there on 'The Importance of the Arts of Design.' He did not succeed in establishing a school of art in York of the kind he at first hoped for, but three years later, owing to his influence, a Government School of Design was established there.

About this time, at the age of fifty-one, Etty became subject to a distressing cough in the winter, which seems to have been the forerunner of declining health. This did not prevent him from using all his influence to prevent the sale of certain open common pastures near York, called the 'Strays.' He also wrote energetically against the breach in the city wall made by the railway. Painting went on very actively notwithstanding these interruptions. He

painted two important works, *Pluto and Proserpine*, and *Diana and Endymion*, besides others.

A fearful day for Etty was the twenty-second of May, 1840, which he called *Fatal Friday*. This was the date of the second fire of York Minster. It broke out in one of the western towers and gutted the nave. When Etty heard of it he burst into tears, and remained in a kind of stupor for three days, unable to work or write. The first thing he did afterwards was to write to the *Yorkshire Gazette* about taking measures to preserve what remained. He went to York in the following month, and spoke in public with great energy, and even eloquence, on the subject. He also delivered a public lecture on English Cathedrals, and he subscribed liberally to the restoration of the Minster.

In September he visited, rather hurriedly, the galleries at Belgium, with the especial purpose of studying Rubens. Of this short excursion we have no details, but it is interesting to know that Rubens attracted Etty out of England. On his return he painted the *Bathers surprised by a Swan*, and other pictures of less importance. In the year 1841 he exhibited six pictures. His prices at this time had improved. The *Bathers* brought him 210*l*., and the *Prodigal's Return*, 262*l*. 10*s*. Having now entirely paid his brother, Etty began to save money for himself. The attraction to Rubens seems to have continued, for Etty revisited Antwerp in the following

July, besides Mechlin, Ghent, and other places. His love of old abbeys could gratify itself during his visits to Yorkshire; not having seen Bolton Abbey yet, he went there in 1841. Active as ever in the defence of good architecture against modern Philistinism, he protested openly, though in vain, against the sacrifice of St. Stephen's Chapel at Westminster, which might have been restored had it suited Mr. Barry's plans.

Even yet Etty's prices had not reached anything remarkable. His principal picture in 1842, *The Dance*, did not sell at all; his second, *The Innocent are Gay*, sold for 210*l.*; his third, the *Magdalene*, brought 90*l.* Six times as much has been offered for it since then. In the same year he began the *Joan of Arc* on all the three canvases at once. He had a great belief in the healthy effect of work, and pursued his profession with great energy.

At this time Etty lost a very dear friend, Mr. Harper, the architect, of York, a man for whom Etty had the very strongest affection and esteem. It is especially worth notice that Etty highly appreciated Mr. Harper's talent as an amateur artist. There is a very common prejudice that nobody can do respectable work in art unless he lives by it, yet both Etty and Stanfield admired Mr. Harper's work. Etty even said that his sketches were 'of the first rank.' Now Mr. Harper used colour in his sketches, and if the colour had been bad, an eye so cultivated as Etty's would not have tolerated it. We have, therefore, in

this instance, very strong evidence that it is not impossible for an amateur to colour satisfactorily. It is well, however, to bear in mind that Mr. Harper was an architect, and that architects have a professional training which helps them towards a knowledge of objects and of object-drawing.

Before painting the Joan of Arc series Etty had tried his hand at fresco, in the well-known summer-house experiment at Buckingham Palace. It is always excessively difficult for an artist to take up an unfamiliar process, and it can never be done satisfactorily at short notice, for the change ought to be preceded by several months of experiment. It need not surprise us, then, that Etty found fresco very difficult and unsatisfactory. He disliked the process—a fatal obstacle to good work. Mr. Maclise, who saw him at work, said that he did not care to submit to the conditions which are peculiar to the practice of fresco-painting. 'In the Pavilion at Buckingham Palace, I have seen him touch upon the dry plaster—not the fresh portion on which he was to perform his day's work—but the dry part of the previous day's. Of course such work was not absorbed, and therefore useless. His habit in the practice of his art was not methodical enough to submit to the trammels of fresco.' After the tiresome experiment in the summer-house, Etty declared that neither fear nor favour would induce him to undertake another. He had painted two,

not on the walls. He got 40*l.* for having tried the experiments, and neither one nor the other was put in its place, which seems to imply that they were considered failures. They remained his property, however, and he sold them for 40*l.* to Mr. Colls. Mr. Wethered afterwards gave 400*l.* for them.

The annoyance occasioned by this business of the fresco was forgotten in a pleasant journey to Edinburgh, York, and Manchester, with the artist's brother, Captain Etty, who had come back from Java. Notwithstanding the shortness of his visit to Scotland, the artists there found time to get up a public reception at a dinner, and treated him quite as a great man. Etty's connexion with Edinburgh was from first to last a source of nothing but pleasure and pride to him. We may add that the Scottish Academicians of that day showed an uncommon independence of petty jealousy in recognising so handsomely the merits of a living man. Such instances are rare in the history of Academies.

The following winter Etty's infirmity increased. He suffered much from cough and an asthmatic difficulty of breathing. This did not prevent him from continuing industriously his Academy work in the evenings. He was often interrupted by painful attacks of coughing, but worked on bravely in the intervals of respite.

Notwithstanding the state of his health the painter travelled in the old way, on a stage-coach, even when he had the opportunity of taking the railway. Thus he travelled to York on a stage-coach, which existed so late as the year 1845, and when he got there took steps for the purchase of a house in which to end his days, for he had always intended to pass his old age at York. The house he agreed to buy was one he had fallen in love with twenty years before. It was situated very near his birthplace, and by the river-side, with a small plot of ground in front, and pleasant prospect up the river from the back. He paid 1100*l.* for the house, and was delighted with it. The situation was at the same time retired and central, between Coney Street and the river.

The *Joan of Arc*, on its three large canvases, occupied Etty now, but the winter was severe and his health worse. His good-humoured account of his situation reminds us of Heinrich Heine. 'Now in my bed-room, on the stay-at-home system, the concerts I attend are the singing of my tea-kettle; the dances, those of the lid. York, they say, is very gay: parties without end! What different atmospheres different constitutions suit! Mine is at present certainly not gay: cheerful, yet grave. My engrossing subject is a grave and tragic one. My repeated attacks are anything but comic; I am thankful it is not worse.'

The series of three great pictures on Joan of Arc

was finished in 1847, when Etty was sixty years old. They were the last of the nine colossal pictures which it had been his life's desire to paint, and when they were finished he returned thanks in Westminster Abbey for the measure of health and time which had enabled him to accomplish them. He also afterwards returned thanks in York Minster, and took the sacrament there with especial reference to this achievement. The selection of the two buildings is very characteristic of Etty. The effect of such august places on his mind was so powerful that he felt there the solemnity of such a thanksgiving much more strongly than he would have done in any ordinary church ; indeed it may be doubted whether he would have returned thanks at all, in this solemn way, in an ordinary place of worship.

The Joan of Arc series had been a great task for him, not lightly undertaken. He had gone to Orleans to find local material in 1843, and had dreamed of the three pictures for many years before they were executed, giving them much preparatory labour of thought before that of the hand was at last begun. The mere physical labour of painting them had been very considerable, and had fallen heavily on the artist's enfeebled constitution. The three works were, however, successful in finding purchasers, being sold at once for 2500*l.* to Messrs. Colls, Wethered, and Wass.

In September, 1847, the artist is established in

his house in York, and writes to a friend that it is a place after his own heart. 'This is the place,' he says, 'and the only.' But notwithstanding his passionate love for York he soon returned to London, and his artistic work there; not the least important part of which, in his eyes, was the evening attendance at the Life School of the Academy. There he laboured still, in spite of steadily increasing physical distress.

He felt at length that the time had come for the retirement which he had planned for himself so many years before, and that he must go to his house in York. The removal took place in June, 1848. Etty could not accomplish this without a pang, for he loved London with great affection too. It was a peculiarity of his, and not an unpleasing feature in his character, that if he liked a place he soon had tender feelings towards it. He said that he 'loved in his heart every stick, hole, and corner' of his London dwelling. 'At the end of Buckingham Street,' he said, 'in the upper set of chambers, I have enjoyed peace and happiness for upwards of twenty-one years.' His strong tendency to love things and places is shown by his grief at the destruction of his father's old mill, and by his finding some consolation in possessing part of its old oak ladder, from which he had arm-chairs made. Even the rooms in Buckingham Street were not parted with, but retained as a town residence for occasional visits to London.

At York he soon began to suffer greatly from *ennui*, dreading local scandal if he used living models, yet unable to give up the habit of painting from nature. However, models were procured for him, and he set to work as of old in London, notwithstanding provincial feeling on the subject. It is absurd, indeed, to expect artists to paint the figure well without studying the real figure itself, and everybody knows that figure-painters can no more get their knowledge than surgeons can acquire theirs by the study of coats and trousers. But there is a curious provincial sentiment which holds it scandalous for an artist to study from nature in a provincial town, whilst it considers the same kind of study permissible in the metropolis. The chief advantage to Etty of living in York was, that he could not injure his health by going to the Life Academy at night.

In 1849 a proposal was made, which turned out to be the crowning event of Etty's life. The Society of Arts determined to exhibit his works all together, and asked for his assistance in the project, which was very willingly given. Then came a time of great interest for Etty, but also of great anxiety. It became necessary to persuade the owners of the different pictures to lend them. The Edinburgh Academy lent their great pictures promptly and kindly, with that readiness to be agreeable which had always marked their dealings with the artist.

Manchester was not so acquiescent about the *Sirens*, and it was only in consequence of the most urgent exercise of local influence that the picture was lent at last. Most of the owners answered Etty's appeal with the greatest good-will, some of them even anticipating it.

The private view of the collection, which included many, but not all, of his most important works, took place on Saturday, June 11, 1849. That day was the greatest of the artist's life. Rarely does a career lead up to so decided a consummation. He had wished to be a painter, had studied for it arduously and incessantly, and now the world unanimously acknowledged that he had succeeded. Etty's only regret was for the absent pictures. Those exhibited were 133 in number, those not exhibited would have filled another room had they been present.

The painter himself had a satisfaction in seeing his own works, which is the reward of successful labour. He was clearly aware of their merits, and was not prevented by artificial modesty from expressing his opinion of them candidly. 'I wish you could see the uplifted arm of Judith,' he wrote to Mrs. Bulmer. 'It never looked so well before, or so striking. Then there is *that finest of my fine pictures, Hero dying on Leander's Body*.' Then he wrote to his brother, 'It is truly a triumph, after a struggle of many years, to see and feel one's works duly estimated, considered, and applauded.'

The only drawback on the artist's happiness during this season of triumph was a great dread of fire. 'What a calamity it would be!' he used to say: 'my fame killed!'

He would not have the price of admission lowered, from distrust of the poorer classes, whom he always wished to keep 'in their places.' And yet he might have remembered that when one of his pictures was injured by some Philistine because there were naked figures in it, the Philistine who did the deed was one of the respectable payers of shillings who alone, at that time, had admission to the Royal Academy.

Health broke down again before the exhibition closed. The evil this time was an attack of rheumatic fever, of the most severe and painful kind. He got through this, however, by the help of the doctors, and quitted London late in September for his retreat in York. The London studio had not been abandoned without the hope and intention of returning to it, but the artist's friends in York saw that the end was nearer than he himself believed. He had still enough health left, however, to enjoy very deeply the first months of his retreat. His old passionate love for York made him delight in the mere sight of the familiar places. The garden of the Museum was within five minutes' walk of his house, so he could go there easily; and he deeply enjoyed that very interesting place, with its Roman and

Gothic ruins, its near neighbourhood to the river, and to the glorious Minster.

October passed in these tranquil pleasures, and Etty painted still, in spite of the painful condition of his hands, which were benumbed by chronic rheumatism. He had always been imprudent, in little things, about his health—those little things on which hang life and death. He heard a young man talk of treating himself on the too-well-known 'hardening' principle, which is health to the robust but destruction to the weak. On the night of the 2nd of November the artist was foolish enough to try to harden himself by throwing aside his flannel shirt, to which he had been accustomed for many years. He felt better in the day-time, and attended service in the Minster, but the following night came an attack of congestion of the lungs, complicated by undeveloped rheumatic gout. Then Etty became aware that he was going to die, and watched the sunsets on the river with the feeling that the glories of this world were soon to be left behind. He died on the evening of November 13, 1849.

'Lay me by my Bride,' he said; 'she who is so lovely to mine eyes, so dear to my heart, captivating to my imagination; whose brow is bound round with rubies, with sapphires, with amethysts, with emeralds; who lifts her head into the heavens, and seems a fitting ante-chamber thereto.'

This was his way of saying that he wished to

be buried in York Minster, But Etty had forgotten to leave 500*l.* in his will for the exorbitant fees, so he was laid in St. Olave's churchyard. His tomb is near to St. Mary's Abbey, which stands in what is now the garden of the Museum, and which every visitor to York remembers.

The story of Etty's life has now been briefly told from the ample materials collected by Mr. Gilchrist, but we have said little hitherto of his work as an artist. He had great difficulties to contend against in consequence of his preference for the naked figure, and difficulties of two distinct classes. It is both difficult to paint and difficult to sell when painted. People who entirely misunderstood Etty supposed that he pandered to vicious tastes for money, but the truth is, that as pictures are a part of domestic life in England, being hung in rooms that are commonly inhabited, there is a dislike to nude figures amongst English purchasers generally, and therefore an artist who chooses that class of subject does not increase his chances of sale, but restricts them. People who live entirely outside of art are always likely to misunderstand the feeling of such an artist as Etty. They do not see the studies of the nude which are, or ought to be, constantly made by other artists for their own instruction, and they fancy that the painter who chooses subjects like his has some peculiar depravity. The only real difference between him and them is, that he carries the habit of Academic

study into his pictures themselves. Etty was essentially an enthusiastic Academy student. To his feeling the human figure was the most beautiful object in the world, and his delight was to paint it from living nature continually. All figure-painters are perfectly well aware that such practice as Etty's is the foundation of substantial knowledge. It is curious, however, that the knowledge he acquired by so much perseverance should have been limited to colour and tone, for he never drew really well, and, indeed, was capable of the most glaring faults in drawing. His one distinction is that he could paint flesh as none of his contemporaries could paint it, and this came from a naturally fine sense of colour, which he cultivated by painting more flesh from nature than any other artist. He had a good deal of poetry, too, in his composition—he had much of of the poetic nature; we have evidence enough of this in such a picture as *Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm*, which is really a poem, like several others of his imaginative compositions. We see from his life that he had the intense affections of a poet. His love for York, for the bars, barbicans, walls, and especially for the 'glorious Minster,' was a poet's passion; and so, in minor degrees, were his feelings towards all other noble remains of the Middle Ages. He had, too, the high disinterestedness of the poetic nature. He was always ready to give time and money in defence of architecture and antiquities.

He was a true knight of the noble order which fights against Philistinism continually, and he dealt some very effective blows, which have saved some precious things for posterity. Few men have preserved through life more soundness and tenderness of feeling. He loved his relations and friends with much more than that tepid sort of affection which dull people consider sufficient, and he was warmly loved in return. The only imperfection of feeling recognisable in him was a want of charity towards the common people, whom he greatly distrusted. Etty had a fine public spirit and a strong, though not an enlightened, patriotism. He was not an intellectual person, and had very little general culture, which accounts for his narrowness in some things and the limited range of his ideas. Two ideas seem to have been dominant through his life: one, the beauty of flesh, with the desire to render it on canvas; the other, the beauty of Gothic architecture, with the desire for its preservation. There is no evidence, however, that he had the slightest critical acquaintance with Gothic architecture. He seems to have loved everything in York Minster equally, the only exception being an especial delight in the wonderful Chapter-house; and his letters about other places show none of the distinguishing faculty which belongs to a really cultivated student of the subject. His published letters are not the writing of an enlightened critic who wishes to enlighten others; they

are simply *coups de massue* in defence of a righteous cause, intended to beat opponents to the ground. In short, Etty, like Turner, was an artist of that numerous class whose faculties are almost entirely absorbed by the practical work of painting, and its prodigious difficulties. In these cases the man is sacrificed to the art so far as his intellectual culture is concerned, but he may still have time to cultivate what is best in character. The character of Etty is one of the simplest and sweetest in the biographies of artists; and not only was it simple and sweet, but full of fortitude and persistence, with an iron strength of resolution. His tenacity during so many unsuccessful years is really a great example. He had truly the artist-nature in the best sense, with its noble industry in study, its generosity, and its disinterestedness. Money was not his object, except that he might repay his brother Walter, and leave some provision for his niece; and this he accomplished handsomely. William Etty had paid his debt some years before he died, but his sense of gratitude was not diminished, and it seemed to him that he could not too often acknowledge those services which had enabled him to persevere. So he left his niece the beloved house in York with 200*l.* a-year for life, but all the rest of his now considerable fortune was bequeathed to his brother Walter. And thus fitly ends a true and beautiful story of fraternity.

CHINTREUIL.*

IN the year 1874 there was an exhibition in Paris of the works of the landscape-painter, Antoine Chintreuil, and at the same time a catalogue of them was published by M. Cadart. The revival of etching had one quite unforeseen result in several countries on the Continent. It led to the publication of the most sumptuous illustrated catalogues that were ever seen, and private collectors found a satisfaction for their own feelings in having the whole or a great part of their galleries etched by the most skilful etchers of the day. Sometimes this may be done with a view to the pecuniary interests of the collector, who is not unfrequently in the present day nothing but a picture-dealer in disguise. He lays out a considerable sum in pictures when good opportunities occur; does all he can to make his collection, and his name as collector, notorious; publishes an illustrated catalogue, and just at the time when his fame seems fully ripe, sends the whole collection to the hammer and clears a few thousands by the operation. Now although

* La Vie et l'Œuvre de Chintreuil, par A. de La Fizelière, Champfleury, et F. Henriet. Quarante Eauxfortes par Martial, Beauverie, Taiée, Ad. Lalauze, Saffray, Selle, et Paul Roux. Paris : Cadart, Rue Neuve des Mathurins, 58, 1874.

picture-dealing is, or may be, as honourable as any other branch of commerce, we have a strong objection to disguised picture-dealing, and are therefore glad to know that this catalogue of Chintreuil's work issued by M. Cadart was free from any suspicion of these secret designs.

It owed its existence, first, to the affectionate devotion of M. Jean Desbrosses, who was a pupil of Chintreuil, and for many years almost a son to him; and secondly, to the fidelity of two or three literary friends of the deceased artist, who wrote very interesting biographical notices which served as an introduction to the etchings and the printed catalogue. The work was published in quarto, the page being as long as that of 'The Portfolio,' and broader. Both text and etchings are on good *papier vergé* in the ordinary copies, and on Chinese or English paper by Whatman in the earlier proof copies. The text is admirably printed in old type by Claye. Most of the etchings are by the skilful and practised hand of Martial, but the others are scarcely, if at all, inferior to them in quality, and a fair average of workmanship is steadily maintained throughout the book.

Chintreuil is one of the most perfect instances of the pure landscape-painter that have become known to the public hitherto. He was born for landscape-painting, as others are born for music; but Nature, whilst endowing him with the most

passionate love of landscape, withheld the gift of manual facility. Chintreuil did not attain executive skill until comparatively late in life, and as public recognition is not to be expected without that, it need not surprise us if this artist remained obscure till the prime of life was past. The story of his existence is deeply affecting, and it is told by M. de La Fizelière with a very admirable simplicity and truth; in fact, we have seldom met with a biography so free from any straining after effect. The beauty of this life does not reside in its success and fame, though its evening was gilded with a little of these, but rather in its patience and sweet-tempered resignation in poverty and obscurity, with an industry that never faltered, even when its prospects were dullest and darkest. Chintreuil began life with good actions: first, in mere boyhood, maintaining his old father by uncongenial labour in a public school; after that, on inheriting a little fortune himself, by abandoning it entirely for the same purpose. He went to Paris, very poorly equipped for the great battle of life, tried to colour scientific prints, but was not neat enough in his manual work to accomplish this satisfactorily; so, by the advice of his friendly employer, got a situation in a bookseller's shop, where he became acquainted with Champfleury, since then a well-known writer. Champfleury had artist friends, and Chintreuil soon found the old passion and hope revive within him.

He went on a little excursion in eastern France with some of these companions, and found on his return that he had lost his situation. Then he began his artist life in earnest, first as the poorest of poor students, living up in a garret on nothing a-year. Nothing a-year is, however, an insufficient income even for the most moderate wants, and so Chintreuil found when he came literally to stare starvation in the face. Some commissions for copying were to be had from Government, and he tried to get the influence of a deputy in his favour for one of these; the deputy refused unkindly, and as a last resource, Chintreuil applied to Béranger the poet, to whom he was a perfect stranger. This was a most fortunate step, for Béranger treated the young artist with the utmost kindness, buying little pictures of him, and paying for his canvases and colours. The good-natured song-writer was not a rich patron, but he made up in kindness and activity what he wanted in wealth; and it was owing to this activity that Chintreuil became known to a little circle of intelligent people, who at any rate kept him from mental dejection and physical starvation.

As soon as he was able to leave Paris, Chintreuil went to live and study in the country, at Igny, where there is a picturesque little river called the Bièvre. He worked very hard on the banks of this stream, often in the damp morning or evening air, with insufficient attention to his clothing. After

six years of this life he caught a pleurisy, in consequence of working from nature, and probably at this time the seeds of consumption were implanted in his constitution. He recovered after six months of suffering, and got back into such health as he ever enjoyed; which was not really health, but only a tolerable pathological state. Then he wanted to recommence his habits of study, but his medical advisers would not allow him to do so on the banks of the Bièvre, so he had to choose a drier neighbourhood; and at last, in obedience to this advice, fixed upon La Tournelle-Septeuil, near Mantes, where he settled and worked assiduously for sixteen years, at the end of which he died.

The life thus briefly described was entirely devoted to one purpose—the expression, by means of painting, of what Chintreuil felt and knew about landscape. With this purpose kept steadily in view, this true student of nature lived in perfect simplicity, and almost absolute retirement, not even travelling, as that which he desired to paint might be seen about his own home. It was only during the last ten years of his life that he was a known artist, and even so late as 1863 his pictures were refused at the Exhibition. He received the decoration only in 1870. He was born at Pont-de-Vaux, in the département de l'Ain, May 5th, 1814, and died on the 10th of August, 1873.

For many years, as we have hinted already, Chin-

treuil was much hindered and impeded by the technical difficulties of his art. Afterwards he overcame these, but he overcame them quite in his own way, as Constable did in his own *other* way: so that painters who had the tradition of landscape execution considered him ignorant of his business. It often happens that an original artist is best appreciated by artists who do not work on the same class of subjects, and we are not at all surprised that Comte, the eminently skilful figure-painter, should have admired Chintreuil heartily, whilst the older landscape-painters did not approve of an innovator who had not the proper touch for oak foliage, &c. Chintreuil was one of those genuine lovers of nature whose impressions are much too vivid to be rendered in set methods; but an original artist of this kind is generally both longer in acquiring technical skill, and longer in commanding public applause, than a docile pupil of tradition. The wonder, in our opinion, is, that a painter like Chintreuil should ever become famous at all; not that he did not deserve fame, but because there is so little to attract popular attention in his work. Judging from these etchings, and from what we remember of his pictures, we should say that they hardly ever had much of what we in England are accustomed to consider a subject. Anything seems to have interested the artist—any clump of trees, any bit of rustic road, any rising ground; and he was not at all particular

about the beauty of the material he admitted: for in one or two of his most important pictures he introduces mutilated trees of painfully ugly forms. He seems to have painted so many studies, merely for study, as to have often, from habit, painted nothing but a study when he intended to paint a picture; which is, or ought to be, such a very different thing. The love of nature seems to have been stronger in him than the love of art, and yet the nature he loved was not generally either beautiful or sublime, and his works owe their interest chiefly to their effects of light-and-shade. Considering what a remarkably beautiful country France is, we have often felt some surprise that the modern school of *paysagistes* should have devoted itself so exclusively to scraps of common nature, which, though excellent for elementary study, are insufficient motives for important pictures, unless in those rare instances when the artist discovers in them some beautiful harmony of composition. There are evidences of this discovering faculty in Chintreuil; many of the subjects here are as harmonious as they are simple, but in many others one has a difficulty in making out whether there has been any artistic intention at all beyond the mere student's purpose of copying faithfully what he sees. The subject given in the 'Portfolio,' *Low Tide*, is very beautiful as a composition, and has, besides, that true feeling for nature which was never wanting in Chintreuil, what-

ever he painted. There is a great deal of poetry, of the sort for which Millet is distinguished, in the picture entitled *Derniers Rayons*, and also in *Pluie et Soleil.* In both these last-named works the *land* looks as unpromising for artistic purposes as possible, being nothing but what is called dull, uninteresting country, without even a tree, yet the composition and artistic feeling are exquisite in both. On the whole the volume is valuable, and ought to be instructive to every one who takes any serious interest in etching and in landscape. It may be safely recommended to the more earnest class of practical amateurs.*

* Although the work contains only forty *plates*, the *subjects* are much more numerous. There are often several subjects on one plate.

ADRIEN GUIGNET.

IF one were asked whether any single quality could be fixed upon as common to all artists of eminence, the answer might be that every such artist has had the power to create for himself a microcosm—a little cosmos of his own. Every powerful artist is grafted on the great cosmos-tree of nature, and receives its sap for his nourishment; but no sooner does the sap flow into him than it is transformed by the virtue of his own being into a fresh creation, and the fruit he gives is not the fruit of the tree on which he was engrafted. Adrien Guignet had this power to a degree not unusual amongst great artists, but exceedingly unusual amongst minor ones; and every one who knows his 'microcosm,' as Théophile Gautier very happily called it, will remember it as a distinct world, unimaginable by anybody else, and truly the product of a homogeneous artistic imagination. It is wonderful how such a little world on canvas fascinates us when once we have obtained an entrance, and how eager we become to see a little more of it, and a little more, till we have exhausted the achieved work of the artist, and then we feel that there must have been still a great extent of the same dreamland in his

own imagination, of which we can never know anything, since the access to it was closed for us by the cessation of his productive activity.

I never met with any one capable of entering into the conceptions of imaginative artists who did not in this way want to know more and more of Guignet when he had once got admission into his dreamland. He was one of those artists whose fame is sure to extend itself, however gradually, for he remains permanently in the memory, taking possession of his own place there and keeping it in spite of the enormous quantities of other work that we meet with in galleries and exhibitions. The reason is, that Guignet was a poet on canvas, and I propose to give some account of the sort of poetry he painted, and of the spirit and habits of his life.

He was born in 1817 at Annecy, in Savoy, and he died at Paris in 1854.* His family afterwards lived at Salins, and was ruined by a great fire that destroyed much property there in 1825. Guignet's father then became steward at a château, and the boy lived there from thirteen to sixteen, having access to wild nature, and this may have had its influence on the future character of his art. At sixteen he was put apprentice to a land-surveyor, but became tired

* I am indebted for the facts of Guignet's biography to an article by Théophile Gautier in the 'Magasin pittoresque,' but had formed my own opinion of his genius and work long before I became aware that Gautier was also one of his admirers.

of the business in a week, and fled to the woods, where he lived as he could for a short time, after which he returned to his parents and declared his fixed resolution of becoming a painter. He was not the first of the profession in his family, but I know absolutely nothing of the works of the other and elder Guignet, so it may be well to keep silence about them in this place. Adrien went to Paris, got a room for nothing, high up in General Pajol's town residence, which was the General's way of being kind to him, and for seven years, from 1832 to 1839, the young artist worked in Blondel's *atelier*. Then he went and worked alone, and alone in a sense much more absolute than is usual with artists. His custom was to paint in perfect solitude, and not to let anybody see what he was doing until it was quite finished; and if by chance this solitude was ever broken in upon and the canvas seen by the visitor, he would either alter the composition of it, or else throw it aside altogether. He lost all interest in a picture that was no longer his own secret. By this private way of work it is evident that his imagination could act more freely than it could have done in a studio crowded by callers; and if we think of him as a poet, which he was, it need not surprise us that he should have liked to be alone during his hours of composition. This love of solitude, not for solitude's sake, not from hatred to mankind, but for the work's sake, and for the vision, has always been a characteristic

of poets; and it is probable that the fashion of having studios which are like drawing-rooms, crowded with a succession of visitors, may in some measure be accountable for the too general deficiency of the poetic element in painting.

Guignet had this great advantage over unimaginative artists, that a picture with him was always primarily a pure mental conception, not a thing to be seen and copied, as a student copies a model. There cannot be a doubt that an artist who is gifted enough to start from this point begins his picture at the right end, for he strictly follows the imaginative method of the true creators. Whilst recognising, as clearly as Lessing did, the difference between poetry in verse and sculpture or painting, we may still remain convinced that when the creative imagination operates in these different arts it operates much in the same way, although, in the outward expression, it may select or reject this or that idea as being more or less in harmony with technical conditions and necessities. The best condition for an artist would be that in which the knowledge of the appearance of things was so complete that he would have no occasion to refer to nature, or even to his own studies and memoranda, during the progress of his work, but would be left just as free as a poet in words, to follow out a purely imaginative conception, developing it, giving it form and colour, *realising* it, if that mav be called realisation which remains ob-

viously a dream. His business, in a word, would be to render the dream visible. Well, this was exactly the condition in which Guignet lived and worked. He had been a thorough student, and had acquired all necessary knowledge before giving himself up to his own imaginings—this, of course, is a condition *sine quâ non.* But once in dreamland he never again quitted it; and even in his way of studying from nature, he sought much more a stimulus to imagination than a knowledge of positive facts. Gautier says, that instead of painting studies when out-of-doors in the society of other artists who were friends of his, he would quit his companions, get into wild rocky places, and sit motionless for hours together, gazing and dreaming, whilst the puffs of smoke came from his pipe in regular, time-measuring succession. He did not touch pencil or paper, did not make the slightest sketch, yet received from nature what he sought, and after bathing himself in the influences of the forest and the sunset went back to his own chamber to his work. Sometimes he would sit gazing in the same abstracted way at a white canvas for two or three days without touching it, then suddenly make the dream visible in a picture executed with astonishing ease, decision, rapidity.

The subjects on which his imagination exercised itself were almost always chosen, if, indeed, he at all consciously chose them, from a remote antiquity—from the books of the Old Testament, or from ancient

Greek or Roman history and legend. He took great interest also in a race which had no history of its own, the Gauls whom Caesar conquered. The wilder parts of France were peopled again with Gauls by Guignet's imagination. He saw them in groups amongst the rocks and under the great trees of the old forests; he saw them in myriads on the plains, resisting with hopeless valour the terrible strength of Rome. No flaming sunset of Burgundy could redden the rocky fastnesses but Guignet would see his Gauls lurking in their shadows, or coming out in the fiery light to watch the distant enemy. So when he paints a dolmen a Gaulish shepherd leans against it beneath the moon. It seems as if his imagination could not have the freedom that it needed without going back two thousand years. It is possible, also with respect to the Gauls, that Guignet may have experienced a sentiment of sympathy which we sometimes find amongst the more cultivated and imaginative of modern Frenchmen. Historians always write from the Roman point of view, just as if they saw every event from Caesar's camp; but Guignet is a Gaul at heart, and it is easier for a painter to dwell upon Gaulish subjects than it would be for a writer: the writer would not find material enough—the painter has ample material in the valorous human frame, the vigorous physical action, the scenery of rock and hill, of primaeval forest, with landscape effect which, if studied in our own time,

is true also of Caesar's time. There is, too, a peculiar interest for the spectator in seeing the Gaul on canvas—the Gaul of whom he knows so little and is willing to believe that the painter can tell him more. Even the effect of sunset, seen by the painter in some recent excursion, appears to the spectator transported twenty centuries back, because there is a Gaulish chieftain in the foreground, and the spectator finds it interesting to see how the sun set in the days of Vercingetorix.

Once or twice Guignet painted a slight subject from the Middle Ages, such as *The Knight Errant* and *Don Quixote*, for the poetry of the rider going armed in the wild rough landscape. He thoroughly understood the importance of landscape to a figure-painter, and its remarkable influence in connexion with figures. Far from disdaining it as an adjunct of little consequence, he relied upon it for half the power of his work; or, rather, he conceived landscape and figure simultaneously and inseparably. In the *Don Quixote* the impression is due to the weird harmony between the scene and the figure, the great spaces to right and left being a suggestion of the wide world into which the knight wandered. In all Guignet's works the landscape is made for the figures, yet does not look *contrived*—it looks inevitable: of course the figures must have been in that landscape which suits them so well; of course that wild scene must have been inhabited by such

warriors, by such banditti. Gautier puts this painter between Salvator Rosa and Decamps, but it might be more accurate to put him after Decamps, whose influence upon him is very marked. Guignet first exhibited in 1840, when Decamps had already appeared in five exhibitions; and it happens curiously that in 1839 Decamps came out in great strength, for he had ten or eleven works in the Salon of that year. Guignet learned a good deal from that great artist, but never servilely imitated him, and does not appear to have been bitten by the rage about Decamps' processes, which at one time possessed so many young French painters. Salvator influenced both, to some extent, but more as to choice of wild subjects than in their execution. Guignet was not so fine a colourist as Decamps at his best, he was too fond of pervading hot colour, often of the kind which artists call 'foxy;' but he was a master of browns, yellows, and warm greys, and a most skilful artist manually—more skilful in a certain sense than Decamps himself was.

In 1848 the Duc de Luynes, who so well understood the fine arts and encouraged them so magnificently, wrote to Guignet to offer him a great commission for three large works to occupy panels in the dining-room at Dampierre. This commission would undoubtedly have led to much subsequent fame and success if the artist could have lived to enjoy it, but he unfortunately died in 1854 of the

smallpox. His reputation, which was considerable amongst artists in those days, has shown no signs of extinction, but on the contrary has gradually extended itself since then, and may be considered assured in France. His life on the whole appears to have been a happy one ; he was absorbed in his art, and had the gifts of nature that were needed for his work. Although success, in the sense of money-making, came rather late to him, the other sort of success, the encouraging consciousness of doing good work, came to him early, and he was probably never troubled with any doubts about his vocation. He had both the imaginative and executive faculties, so that for him there was no dearth either of ideas to be realised or of the ability needed for their realisation.

GOYA.

IF the reader visited the Universal Exhibition at Paris in 1878, he will probably not have failed to pass at least some hours in the 'Retrospective' which occupied the galleries of the Trocadéro, and it is just possible that he may remember a series of pictures by Goya, the property of Baron Erlanger, which were kindly lent by him in order to give the Parisian public, and foreigners from beyond the sea, such as the islanders from the British Archipelago, an opportunity of deriving moral and aesthetic benefit from the works of the successor of Velazquez. Many visitors, insufficiently prepared by previous studies in the fine arts to make use of so desirable an opportunity, allowed their attention to be absorbed by some pretty bedsteads and other curious objects, and then descended the staircase, which was close at hand, without ever casting a glance upon the famous 'frescoes' by Goya, which were all hung together at a convenient height above the eye. Some stopped to look at them, because they had been mentioned in the newspapers, and it was interesting to listen to remarks which in some cases expressed a laudable desire to believe what the speakers humbly imagined

that they ought to believe. 'These,' said an English gentleman in my hearing to his ladies, 'these are the famous frescoes, you know, of the great Spanish artist, Goya, of whom, no doubt, you will have heard. They are considered very fine, but I don't quite—let me see—really, you know, there are often many things in the works of great artists which we do not quite grasp just at first, but they are fine, very fine indeed; perhaps the light is not quite good enough for them here.' He and the ladies gazed on the celebrated 'frescoes' for a few minutes, evidently from a sense of duty, with eyes expressive of veneration, combined with a sense of personal insufficiency, and then, having thus silently paid their tribute to a celebrity they could not understand, they meekly went their way.

Goya has, indeed, been so much written up by Continental critics during the last ten or twenty years, that it requires a certain courage to say the truth about him. The successor of Velazquez has been lifted up to the rank of a great master, and since, on the Continent, the great masters are not to be criticised but only worshipped, their position is almost unassailable. I do not know that there can be any more deplorable superstition in the fine arts than this blind adoration of famous names. What is fame? It is nothing but a noise made by talkers and writers, and if other talkers and writers were to be cowed by it into respectful silence, they,

would be like watch-dogs afraid to bark because other dogs had barked in the next farm. The opinions of critics, however celebrated they may be, are simply, even when sincere, the expression of their own private and personal feelings, and are utterly destitute of authority. The opinions of artists may seem at first somewhat more formidable, because an artist knows something positive and practical; but a little reflection would convince the most timid that he may live in serene independence of their opinions also if he likes, for whatever one artist paints or says, you can always find another of equal rank to declare in plain terms that he is an idiot or something worse. For example, Eugène Delacroix had a passionate admiration for Goya, and condemned himself to the slavery of copying eighty of Goya's ugliest etchings, first taking each plate as a whole and then copying parts of it separately, so that it may seem at first sight as if we ought to bow down to his opinion; but was there not another painter, called Ingres, who looked upon that same Eugène Delacroix as a demon from the pit, and had the windows opened when he had passed through a room to get rid of the sulphureous emanations?

That delicate reference by M. Ingres to the infernal regions recalls me to the point from which I started—the exhibition of the 'frescoes' in Paris, in which the demoniacal element is very strong.

It was often strong in Goya's works, but we shall have more to say of it later. The first remark to be made is, that the celebrated 'frescoes' are not frescoes at all, but simply oil paintings. M. Yriarte tells us, in his biography of the painter, that he decorated his country-house with these inventions, and executed them directly upon the wall. When he wrote his book, a successful but expensive attempt had been made to remove one mural painting, not by Goya himself, but by his son; and in those days it was the general opinion that when the house was pulled down the paintings would perish with it. Since then they have been saved by the care of Goya's admirers, and the Baron Erlanger has become their happy possessor. Thanks to him, we, who have not been to Goya's *quinta* by the Manzanares, have now ample materials for knowing the painter when most himself; for when an artist decorates his own house it may always be safely presumed that he expresses his inmost self, since he is working for his own gratification. The reader is requested to pay especial attention to this in the present instance. The so-called 'frescoes' were not hasty compositions, intended to pass out of the painter's sight and be forgotten by him, like seme of the innumerable fancies of Gustave Doré; they were the permanent decoration of Goya's principal rooms—his reception-rooms—which were often crowded by visitors of high rank in the

society of Madrid. The walls of these apartments were divided into panels, and these panels were entirely filled by the paintings in question. Goya is not the only artist who has decorated his own house, and in all such cases it is fair to take the work as representative of the painter's tastes and feelings, though it is always likely to be somewhat rapid in execution; first, because it is not paid for, and again, because a man working for himself is always likely to be satisfied with a hasty expression, intelligible to the author, if not always quite so intelligible to others. What, then, under such circumstances, did Goya produce for his own continual contemplation? Forms of beauty and grace? visions of an artist's—a poet's—paradise? the fulfilment of those ideal longings which the actual world suggests indeed but can never satisfy? Not so, his mind did not rise to any pure or elevating thought, it grovelled in a hideous Inferno of its own—a disgusting region, horrible without sublimity, shapeless as chaos, foul in colour and 'forlorn of light,' peopled by the vilest abortions that ever came from the brain of a sinner. He surrounded himself, I say, with these abominations, finding in them I know not what devilish satisfaction, and rejoicing, in a matter altogether incomprehensible by us, in the audacities of an art in perfect keeping with its revolting subjects. It is the sober truth to say, that in the whole series of these decorations

for his house, Goya appears to have aimed at ugliness as Raphael aimed at beauty; to have sought awkwardness of composition as Raphael schemed for elegance of arrangement; to have pleased himself in foulness of colour and brutality of style as Perugino delighted in his heavenly azures, and Bellini in his well-skilled hand. The motives, in almost every instance, are horrible;—*Saturn devouring his Offspring*, *Judith cutting off the Head of Holofernes*, *A Witches' Sabbath*, *Two Herdsmen savagely fighting*. A group of hideous men, scarcely human, is entitled *The Politicians*, and there is a group of coarse women wildly laughing by way of a pendant. Then we have a procession of Inquisitors, and a terrible mysterious picture, which M. Yriarte calls *Asmodeus*. One composition in the series relieves the eye by the spectacle of a popular festival, but it is made horrible by a group of diseased and filthy beggars, to which it serves simply as a background. There is a separate portrait of a woman, not repulsive for a wonder, and also a separate portrait of a man with a long white beard. This man is listening, terrified, to the suggestion of a frightful being who is whispering in his ear. Of all these things the most horrible is the *Saturn*. He is devouring one of his children with the voracity of a famished wolf, and not a detail of the disgusting feast is spared you. The figure is a real inspiration, as original as it is

terrific, and not a cold product of mere calculating design.

This description may give some faint and feeble idea of the gallery with which Goya surrounded himself at his country-house. I could have made the reader feel the true nature of these works of art more powerfully if I had concocted literary pictures as disgusting as themselves, but my muse is not a Ghoul to delight in carrion, and she shrinks from the revolting task. Enough has been said to show that Goya had made himself a den of foulness and abomination, and dwelt therein, with satisfaction to his mind, like a hyena amidst carcases.

His mind did not always dwell upon such subjects, but it seems to have recurred to them when at perfect liberty. Goya was a court painter, and in that quality depicted the *beau monde* of his time; he even tried his hand at religious painting as a matter of business, but his real delight was in horror, as we see quite plainly from his numerous etchings, the *Caprices*, the *Disasters of War*, and others, all executed by him in the free energy of private and personal inspiration. He painted one hundred horrible pictures. Moral horror seems to have been as attractive to him as physical; he illustrated every turpitude and every vice in a spirit of ferocious satisfaction. His admirers speak of him as a great moralist, but this is likely to mislead. The attitude of a moral censor can only be

maintained by one who has some morality of his own, and Goya had none. His personal character was in many ways as repulsive as his art.

After this beginning the reader may ask why such a subject should be chosen for treatment here? The answer is, that this is one of those cases in which a reputation forms itself to the injury of art, and ought to be actively resisted, as the physician opposes resistance to incipient disease. The fame of Goya has already poisoned art criticism in Spain and France, and it is beginning to spread to England, where it is already partly accepted on the credit of French and Spanish writers. It is time, therefore, to show plainly what Goya really was.

The celebrity of the artist is in great part political, and not artistic, in its origin; it is also partly a protestation against religious tyranny, which Goya hated, and resisted in his own way with considerable effect in Spain. In a word, Goya, besides being an artist, was a great Spanish Liberal just at a time when the forces of religious and political tyranny were still powerful enough to make Liberalism creditable, and yet sufficiently weakened for Liberalism to be possible. The friends of liberty, both in Spain and France, are therefore strongly prejudiced in his favour, and it is a most powerful element of success, even in art, to get an active and growing political influence on the side

of one's private reputation. The purely negative character of Goya's religious opinions, which in England might have made the difference in social influence and respectability which exists between a Gladstone and a Bradlaugh, has no such effect amongst the Liberals of the Continent, but is rather a recommendation than otherwise. The few who care for the interests of art may wish to judge of it independently of politics and religion; but who and what are they to contend against the enthusiasm of the multitude? Goya was on the side of the Revolution, an audacious enemy of tyranny, hypocrisy, stupidity, and superstition; consequently he was a great painter, and one of the most accomplished etchers who ever lived!

M. Charles Yriarte fully confesses, on the second page of his biography, how greatly, in the formation of his own opinions about Goya, political considerations have had the preponderance:—

'*We should hold cheap this enormous artistic production, if there were nothing in it but a plastic charm. What matters the execution!* the idea is there—a line engraved without effect, without much artistic effort, and the plate becomes a poem, a terrible weapon, a burning brand. Let us reflect for a moment that the time when Goya accomplished his task of destruction, although contemporaneous with the French Revolution, is relatively separated from us by a space of two centuries, since he lived in a country devoted to all superstitions and all slaveries. The effort was greater than our own, and *we ought to*

admire those who were the first to utter words of independence and cries of liberality in the midst of that nocturnal gloom.'

'We ought to admire.' Certainly we ought to admire every courageous effort in a good cause; all I say is, let us keep our admirations distinct, and not declare that a man was a good artist because he has an important place in the political history of his country. The qualities of artist and politician are in themselves distinct, and they ought to be kept so. The error of confounding them may in this instance be pardonable in a Spaniard, but not in a foreigner. 'Le cri poussé par Goya,' says M. Yriarte, 'est le cri national.' When he declares that we are to accept men of genius without question, and take what they give us,* an Englishman may answer that intellectual liberty is not less precious than political, and that if Frenchmen choose to bow down in this slavish way before everybody who happens to have been called a genius, they are as far from a condition of true mental freedom as if civil and religious liberty had never been established amongst them.

The portrait published in the 'Portfolio' will enable the reader to judge of Goya's appearance in his old age. It has the aspect of a hale, yet irascible old man,

* *Il faut accepter ces génies sans les discuter et prendre ce qu'ils nous donnent.*—YRIARTE.

but the look of ill-temper is more strongly marked in a much earlier portrait, with a beaver hat on, which was published at the beginning of the *Caprices.* In that portrait, which is a profile, the bitter satirist scowls at you out of the corner of his eye and thrusts up his under-lip in scorn. It is not an agreeable physiognomy in either picture, but it expresses, in some degree, the character of the man. There must have been another side to his character than this, for a Don Juan cannot seduce women by sourness, and Goya is famous for his brilliant immoralities.

Francis Joseph Goya was born on the 30th of March, 1746, at Fuendetodos, a little town of Aragon, his father being Joseph Goya, and his mother Gracia Lucientes. They seem to have cultivated their own land, but to have been simply peasants. It does not appear that Goya had any literary education. His childhood was passed in the country, and at the age of twelve he was already an art-student at Saragossa in an *atelier* belonging to a painter named Lusan Martinez. He had a kind friend named Felix Salvador, a monk, who took an interest in his progress and introduced him to this artist, from whom he acquired the rudiments of art and some degree of manual facility.

Goya passed the turbulent years of his adolescence at Saragossa. He was always turbulent till the approaches of old age began to calm him a little. What he must have been from sixteen to

thirty the sober English reader will have a difficulty in imagining. His temperament was one of the most ardent that ever existed. Passionate in everything, he threw himself into both work and pleasure with the violence of his hot young Southern blood. Merely to amuse themselves, the young folks of Saragossa had rows on festive occasions something like the Town and Gown rows at Oxford, but with the difference that at Saragossa the combats did not take place between different classes of residents in the city, but between different parishes. Slings were used, wounds inflicted and received, and, as if in order that these combats might lack nothing of the interest of a battle, there was a sufficient loss of life. On one occasion three parishioners were slain, on another, seven. The consequence was that the Inquisition began to direct its attention to the subject, and the leaders were marked men. Goya's old friend, the monk, hearing that the Inquisitors began to take a dangerously lively interest in the young artist, recommended a change of residence. Goya accordingly went to Madrid at the age of nineteen, and stayed there from 1765 to 1769. Here he resumed his wild life, and became leader of an Aragonese clique, for he had the qualities which excite the imaginations of young men, address in all bodily exercises, and an indomitable audacity. The consequence was that he got stabbed in the back, and though his supporters came in time

to help him out of immediate danger, the Inquisition once more became threatening and ordered his arrest. He was advised to fly, and set out for Rome, where his fellow-students used afterwards to relate that he had paid his way from Madrid to the south of Spain by working in a company of bull-fighters. At Rome he resumed the careless energy of his life at Madrid, and, hearing that a young lady was shut up in a convent by her parents, resolved to run away with her. He introduced himself into the building for this purpose, but was caught by some monks and brought to justice. Thanks to the intervention of the Spanish Ambassador he was permitted to escape, on condition that he should immediately quit Rome.

He had been a pupil, in that city, of a Spanish painter, Bayeu, who had preceded him in returning to Madrid, and immediately after their re-establishment in Spain Bayeu gave Goya his daughter Josefa in marriage, an astonishing instance of misplaced confidence, if, indeed, these good people had any sort of hope that fidelity could be a possible virtue for Goya. He had been working hard at portraits, and composed pictures, and in 1780 was made an Academician (Member of the Academy of San Fernando), he being then thirty-four years old.

The Cathedral of Saragossa had been rebuilt at the end of the seventeenth century, and in 1780 the Chapter decided to have the interior decorated. They

entrusted the work to Francis Bayeu, Goya's friend, master, and father-in-law: and an enormous piece of work it was, far too much for the labour of a single hand, so Bayeu called in the assistance of other artists, Goya being amongst them; but these other artists were to submit their designs directly to the Dean and Chapter, and not to Bayeu. Matters being so arranged, Goya sent in two sketches, each of them more than a yard and a half long: but they were coldly received and politely returned by the Dean to be 'retouched.' Goya protested in a long and solemn document which has been preserved. In his view, the rejection was a consequence of the evil influence of his father-in-law, against which he protested as being foreign to his own artistic ideas, and consequently unfair in its application to his work. In this crisis the difficulties were overcome by the intervention of the monk, Don Felix Salvador, who had been Goya's earliest friend, and who now succeeded in overcoming his irritated pride, and persuaded him to send a becoming answer to the Chapter and his sketches to Bayeu. The incident is worth notice as evidence that Goya's relations with his father-in-law were not very cordial, so far, at least, as the fine arts were concerned.

Goya was now protected by the Infant Don Luis, and worked in his house for months at a time, painting family portraits or genre pictures just as he liked. Amongst these pictures is one of the Infant and his

wife in her dressing-room. It must be of considerable importance, as it measures eleven feet by nine. The Count of Florida, Bianca, the celebrated minister of Charles III., introduced the painter at Court, where he soon made his way, and painted the king's portrait. But the real success of Goya at the Spanish Court was due far more to personal than to artistic influence. He was a successful artist, but he was also a successful man. He took up a peculiar and very independent position at Court, by sheer audacity and intelligence, and by an extraordinary influence with women of every rank, which was not restrained or diminished by any consideration of morality. The Court was dull, oppressed by a crushing etiquette. Goya came as a relief with his ready impudence and wonderful fertility of resource; the artist was welcome too for his vices. The Spanish Court had been compulsorily virtuous, in outward seeming at least, for a space of twenty-three years under Charles III., and it was weary of being virtuous. It was during the reaction under the succeeding sovereign, Charles IV., a reaction quite as violent as that which, under our own Charles II., followed Puritanism, that Goya displayed all his talents and reaped their full rewards. Three months after the new sovereign's accession Goya was appointed private painter to the king, with the title of Excellence. To the Queen he soon became indispensable, as a sort of walking newspaper. First, she got into the habit of sending for him at all

hours of the day, and after that she made him come to her room every morning at her *petit lever.* He was at the same time her court fool and her philosopher. His own line of policy at that time was to make himself the ally of Godoy, the Queen's favourite and lover.

These were Goya's most joyous days. He lived at Court, in an atmosphere of vice and corruption which suited him exactly; he was the pet of great ladies, who were as destitute of morality as himself; and he had the most ample opportunities for the display of all his talents, both as painter, satirist, and seducer. Besides his earnings, he enjoyed a fixed pension of more than 500*l.* a-year, and a social position which had all the advantages of very high rank, with few of its obligations, and none of its restrictions and inconveniences. This gay and thoughtless worldly life was not destined to be of very long duration. The Duchess of Alba was exiled to San Lucar, and Goya accompanied her to that place. During the journey their post-chaise broke down, and as they were at a distance from any town or village Goya tried to lift it. He also lighted a fire, and tried to weld the broken iron with his own hands. The consequence was a perspiration followed by a sudden chill, which left Goya permanently, hopelessly, and completely deaf. After this misfortune, the gaiety of his early manhood was gone for ever; his temper was soured, and it exercised

itself in ill-natured outbursts against his dearest friends.

The date of this accident is ascertained to have been 1793, when Goya must have been forty-seven years old. The Duchess of Alba remained at San Lucar more than a year, and Goya stayed with her most of the time, but was called back to Madrid by the duties of his place at Court. On his return he pleaded for the Duchess, who was recalled to royal favour in consequence of his representations. She died soon afterwards, as M. Yriarte tells us, still young and in all her beauty.

I pass for the present, intentionally, the years of Goya's life most complicated with politics and come to his old age. He was considered, after his conduct in the great political changes which disturbed Spain at the beginning of this century, as an incorrigible Liberal, which was not a recommendation at the Spanish Court. Notwithstanding his abilities, his private character was too unreliable to win respect and esteem, and he himself began to feel that he had no longer a great position in Spain, except simply as an artist, and art had never filled more than half his life. King Ferdinand VII. did not like Goya, and mistrusted him with good reason; most of the painter's old friends had left the country; his wife was dead, most of his children were dead also, and his deafness made ordinary human intercourse impossible to him. Under these circumstances it is not

surprising that life should have lost its savour for Goya, and that he should have looked to voluntary exile as a partial remedy against the sadness of an isolated old age. He had learned French at forty, and had so far mastered it that he could write correctly; so he chose France as the country of his retreat. The pretext he gave to the King, on asking permission to absent himself, was a desire to consult Parisian medical celebrities. He arrived in France in 1822; visited Paris first, and then went southwards to Bordeaux, where he lived with a lady called Weiss, and taught her daughter to draw. She afterwards became a clever lithographer. The reader is not to conclude that Goya was reduced to teaching drawing as a means of subsistence. He had saved a good fortune out of his earnings, and besides this he still enjoyed his pension from the Spanish Court; so that his old age was comfortable enough, so far as money matters were concerned. Its greatest enemies were his own irritable temper, which vented itself in many a crisis of violent exasperation; and his complete deafness—a deafness so complete, indeed, that when he played on a piano no sound whatever reached his ears. There was a little Spanish colony at Bordeaux, in the midst of which Goya lived out his life. He died on the 16th of April, 1828, at the age of eighty-two, after having led one of the most active and exciting lives in the history of art and artists. He had used and abused many of the best

gifts of Nature and Fortune, had seen much of mankind, of the highest in rank and the lowest in morality, and had himself exercised a great influence upon his countrymen.

The career of Goya is, in many respects, one of the most extraordinary in all biographical history. It is especially remarkable for the manifest contradiction between his daily life and the nature of his political influence. He was at the same time a courtier, and a revolutionary satirist and propagandist. Though he was a productive artist, and very industrious and energetic in the pursuit of his profession, he does not owe his position to art alone; and it is impossible to say what his reputation might have been if he had depended exclusively upon art, as Turner did, without pushing himself at Court and into political notoriety. He would not have been altogether unknown, but his fame might have been confined to his own country.

This violent agent of the Revolution not only held a place at Court, and lived amongst great people, but he founded a fortune and a title, for his son was made a Marquis — the Marquis del Espinar — in honour of him. There is nothing in the history of art and political propagandism more curious than this.

Another very astonishing thing in Goya's life is the way in which the courtier in him protected the radical, and the artist protected both. The Inquisi-

tion had its eye on him from the beginning, recognising in his terrible powers as a satirist a dangerous influence against itself; and at length, after the publication of a set of his etchings, *The Caprices*, he was called upon to appear before the 'sacred' tribunal. The King interfered to protect him, although the Queen herself was severely satirised in one of the plates,* and he actually bought the coppers, paying in exchange for them an annual pension of 125*l.* to Goya's son—a very handsome payment for a set of caricatures.

This sketch of Goya's life would be incomplete without a closer examination of his character. It was, as we have seen, far from being exemplary, but, at the same time, it had strong qualities. It was virile always, both in its virtues and its vices. Goya was not a 'half-man,' but really a man, full of masculine courage, energy, and resource. We of the North may be unfair to him simply because his nature was so very Southern in its ardent manifestations. An Englishman might have equal energy, and do an equal amount of work, but he would scarcely throw himself into his work with the same forgetfulness of everything but his object. Byron is the only Englishman I can think of as comparable to Goya in ardour, yet even Byron remained the

* It is supposed that Charles IV. did not see the reference to the Queen in the plate alluded to, and that he accepted some evasive explanation offered by Goya.

artist when most in earnest, and Goya sacrificed art to thought without hesitation, thinking nothing of the means, or the manner, when the moral or political purpose interested him, or even when an idea was urgent for immediate realisation. It has been said that Byron's energy was Satanic, but the word might be still better applied to Goya, who really does remind us of an infernal source. We have seen already how he delighted in frightful and diabolical subjects, and how he selected them for the decoration of his house. This is a mere nothing in comparison with the quantities of revolting subjects illustrated in his different etchings and other compositions. It is not easy to understand the exact condition of Goya's mind in reference to these horrors. He hated tyranny and cruelty with his whole soul, but, instead of shrinking from the visible evils which they produced, he would deliberately sit down to illustrate them in horrible detail. He looked upon human meanness, baseness, rapacity, violence, oppression, with a strange mixture of indignation and grim satisfaction, being really angry at these vices, and yet happy as a satirist to find such opportunities for the exercise of his talent. It was his pleasure to degrade humanity far below its own level by giving to his caricatures a degree of hideousness which no artist except himself could possibly have imagined. I am not forgetting the studied ugliness of some heads by Lionardo; but that is as nothing in com-

parison with the imaginations of Goya, for you see at once in Lionardo's ugliest drawings that the faces are only plain human faces whose defects have been dwelt upon and enlarged, whereas Goya's are real inventions of a diabolical genius, and they make you shudder as real demons would if you could see them. He had generally a moral purpose of some sort, and inculcated his lesson with a bitterness of temper which looks like snarling contempt for the human race. Bitter irony, mockery approaching to ferocity —these, and not tenderness or pity, are the prevailing attitudes of Goya's mind towards the suffering and the wretchedness of the world. His brain was full of scorn and incontinent of hatred. There are natures which must have somebody to hate as there are natures which must have somebody to love. Goya was a born hater and despiser, and as there was plenty in the world about him which was both hateful and despicable, his instincts had ample satisfaction. At the same time, there can have been few Spaniards more despicable than himself, notwithstanding all his manly qualities. The vices which he mercilessly lashed in others, with the exception of cruelty, were conspicuous in his own life. He stigmatised immorality, and was himself one of the most immoral men in Spain ; he contemned political subserviency, and was himself a political Vicar of Bray, paying court to anybody, Bonaparte or Bourbon, who sat on the Spanish throne, that he might keep his place and

pension. He satirised his sovereign and accepted his protection at the same time—a protection without which he would have found himself in the claws of the Inquisition. Even his onslaughts against hypocrisy were accompanied by a certain degree of hypocrisy in his own case, for did he not conform to the religious usages of the Court, though he had no religious belief? and are not these usages at all times strict in Spain? and were they not especially strict under Charles III.—a sovereign of monastic piety, who maintained in religion as in morality the most rigorous etiquette?

The baseness of Goya's personal character did not prevent him from rendering real services to the cause of political Liberalism and humanity in Spain. He did a work there which has been done in England and France by well-known caricaturists, whose productions, in comparison with his, are as lemon-juice to pure vitriol. He is not alone in this work in Europe, but he was alone in it in the Spain of his time. There was still great need for a dissolving agency, for the old powers were still strong enough to be dangerous to human welfare. The Inquisition, which we too readily look upon as an evil now far behind us in the past, was in active operation in the latter part of the eighteenth century. In its last decade a woman was burnt alive for witchcraft by command of the Holy Office, and there was a real *auto-da-fé* at Seville, Goya being then nearly fifty

years old. He himself had been on several occasions so nearly within the grip of the Inquisition, that he felt the shadow of its occult power hanging over him, and he could realise the nature of its evil influence much more adequately than we can—we, who have never experienced it, and only read about it in books.

The really animating force in Goya's mind was hatred and not hope. He was not one of those enthusiasts who look forward to a blissful future for humanity; nevertheless, there is in one of his plates a gleam of anticipation of better things. 'In a plate,' says M. Yriarte, 'which is entirely unpublished, the copper having been probably confiscated by the Inquisition, or hidden from fear, the artist represents a symbolical figure in the form of a young woman, surrounded by radiance, and kindly receiving an old man, exhausted, bent to the earth, overcome by weariness, and hardly able to endure the weight of his burden. She shows him the brightening sky, inundated with gleams of light, the future coming on, a future at once splendid and happy, with plenty, justice, peace, serenity, and strength. Flowers and children fall from the sky, and flutter about in its symbolical irradiations. At the foot of the figure a lamb seeks refuge, and a child in a cradle is sheltered under the folds of her robe.' Evidently this design expresses a hope for the future of the common people, the people bent down with toil and having so little of the light,

the grace, the beauty of life, in the immediate present. The set of plates on *The Disasters of War* are a consecutive series of denunciations against the cruelty of an invasion. They were suggested by the French invasion of Spain, and exhibit every imaginable evil which such a contest brings in its train. Some touches of a tenderer humanity may be found in other plates by Goya, but these are extremely rare. The most noticeable of them is a plate representing four women in a gloomy cell, who are lost to all sense of suffering in the happy forgetfulness of sleep. 'Do not wake them,' says the inscription under the drawing; 'sleep is often the only good of the unfortunate.' A set of plates, called *The Prisoners*, is a protest against the ill-usage to which prisoners are always subject in semi-barbarous states. Goya's inscriptions under these etchings are so many lessons to governments: 'If he is a criminal, judge him, and do not prolong his sufferings;' 'Get possession of his person, but do not torment him;' and so on: maxims which exactly express the doctrines of our own prison philanthropists.

The extreme courage exhibited by Goya at different times of his life belonged rather to a certain recklessness and effrontery of disposition than to elevation of mind; but in estimating his character we have to give him credit for it. He was remarkable, when a young man, for a temerity sur-

passing the ordinary follies of youth, and he became celebrated afterwards at Madrid for his physical prowess and address. There is a story of a thrashing administered by Goya to a gigantic water-carrier who had been beating an unfortunate humpback; and whenever he saw a mountebank he must needs endeavour to surpass him. He was an excellent fencer, and so well known in Madrid that the swordsmen who exhibited their talents publicly before the populace in the open streets and squares would hand the foils respectfully to Goya when he made his appearance, and the spectators would watch the contest with eager interest. Mere effrontery would not, of itself, have carried him through his adventures, and it was amply sustained by his personal strength and skill; but the effrontery was there always, and to what a degree he possessed it the following well-known anecdote is good evidence. One day, when the Court was in mourning, he so far forgot himself as to attempt to enter the presence of the sovereign in white stockings instead of black. He was stopped by the officials at the foot of the grand staircase, who refused to let him pass. On this he went at once to the guard-room, got an inkstand and a pen, and adorned his legs with the portraits of various Court officials, after which he forced his way into the throne-room, where the caricatures soon attracted attention. The king and queen asked what was the matter, and called Goya

into their immediate presence, when they recognised the principal portrait, and laughed more heartily than any one. Place and circumstances being duly taken into account, we must, I think, admit that Goya here attained the high-water mark of impudence.

In the changes of government which succeeded each other in Spain, Goya remained faithful to nothing but his own interest. He had been treated with the most extreme kindness and indulgence by Charles IV., but when Joseph Bonaparte was set upon the throne of Spain the painter went and did him homage, and, in a word, became one of his courtiers. Then came Ferdinand VII., to whom Goya, of course, went and presented his respects, just as if nothing had happened. Ferdinand seems to have been the first Spanish sovereign who really understood Goya. He saw through the disguises of fictitious interpretations with which the ingenious etcher of *The Caprices* had hidden their meaning from his kind protector Charles IV. He clearly perceived the treacherous, ungrateful, disloyal nature of the man, and said to him plainly, 'In our absence you have deserved exile, and, worse than that, you have deserved to be strangled; but you are a great artist, and we forgive everything.' Another reason for the royal clemency may have been that Goya was getting old.

The artist's ingratitude was not limited to the royal house. One plate of *The Caprices* (No. 33)

was understood to be an attack upon the minister, Urquijo, the very same minister who in 1799 had got him appointed 'first painter of the chamber,' and written him a most kind and friendly letter to announce his nomination. No. 55 of the same series, entitled 'Until Death,' represents a horribly decrepit old woman seated before her dressing-table laden with perfumers' bottles, whilst she is trying on a head-dress. Her tire-woman hides her face to conceal her laughter. Now this lady, whose care of her person in old age Goya thus mercilessly ridiculed, was understood to be the Countess of Benavente, and she and her family had for twenty years been the artist's kindest patrons and friends. No one was safe from his attacks, not even those who had protected him by their kindness and made a brilliant career possible for him, and he spared neither sex nor age.

Of his conduct as a husband we know little, except that he lived in a constant succession of adulteries, and often with married women. One of these left home and children for him, and went to live with him for two months in his studio. His adulteries were, in fact, almost as much a part of his celebrity as his pictures, and he knew the value of them in an immoral city and age as a means of getting himself talked about. It was one of his characteristics to intrigue with women in all ranks of society, from the common people, through the

different ranks of the middle classes, up to the highest nobility of Spain, and even to royalty itself, for he was an especial favourite of the dissolute Queen Maria Luisa, and we know what, for such a woman, a male favourite is. The *liaison* with the Duchess of Alba is historical, and adds immensely to the *éclat* of Goya's fame in Spain, where every one associates his name with hers. She was beautiful, high-spirited, imperious, and a duchess, and she does not seem to have concerned herself in the least about the publicity of their connexion. In a thoroughly immoral state of society such a conquest, so far from being a disgrace to a man, adds vastly to his reputation. Another of Goya's conquests was a well-known bookseller's wife in Madrid, and his popular celebrity was enhanced by *liaisons* with beautiful women in the lowest classes. What his wife thought of all this we are left to conjecture.

Something of his true character may be guessed from the following anecdote. Having to paint Saints Justina and Rufina for the cathedral of Seville, Goya simply made portraits of two common prostitutes in the town, and remarked to Cean Bermudez, who was a good Christian, that he would cause the faithful to worship vice. In all the religious compositions executed by him the angels are really and visibly nothing but women of an abandoned character.

The excessive irritability of Goya in his old age

may be due, in some measure, to the physical effects of the life which he had led from his youth. He had fits of furious senile rage against people who did all that the most delicate kindness could devise in order to be agreeable to him. He became so irritable that on one occasion when a sitter, who was a friend of his, said, 'Be careful, you are going to paint before Frenchmen,' Goya, not liking the remark, kicked a hole in the canvas. He was so irritable with his sitters, and so domineering, that they became downright martyrs. He would not tolerate the presence of any one but the sitter himself, except when, by chance, an old and intimate friend happened to be in the studio, and then the unwelcome witness had to go and sit motionless in a corner. As for the sitter, he was not allowed to stir, nor to stretch a leg; he might hardly even wink: in a word, he had to sit as if for a photograph, but a hundred times as long. If the wretched victim transgressed, Goya flung down his palette in a rage. He was rude even to ladies, he who owed more than half of his position in the world to their weakness. The rank and reputation of the sitter had no effect in controlling the irascible old man. The Duke of Wellington sat to him in Spain, and being rather astonished, as he well might, at Goya's manner of painting, ventured to make some remark upon it; on which the artist, infuriated, seized a rapier that was hanging on the wall and made a thrust at the Duke, as if with intent to murder

him. Fortunately, Wellington was an active man, and sprang aside in time to avoid the fate of Polonius. A pleasant painter to have to deal with, was he not?

The reader now understands clearly the character of the man. He was a monster of immorality, impudence, and ingratitude; he had a violent temper, entirely uncontrolled by any sense of what was becoming; he stigmatised in others the vices which he practised himself; and, though claimed in these latter days by the Continental Radicals as an Apostle of Liberty (a nice Apostle, truly!), he was the parasite of four sovereigns and the—what may I call it?—of a shameless Queen. He has been compared to Don Juan, but does not deserve the compliment; the Don Juan of Byron, dissolute as he is, is still a more decent and respectable character than Goya: for there are degrees in infamy, and Goya realised an existence below the sinkings of fiction.

We have now done with the man, leaving him to such immortality as he may have deserved, but the artist remains to be considered. There is a certain difficulty for me here, which may be stated frankly, as a critic should never pretend to more knowledge than that which is really his. I have never been in Spain, and only know Goya as an artist through his etchings, through the engravings from his works, and the 'frescoes' from his country-house, which now belong to Baron Erlanger. This is comparatively little, because Goya was an immense producer, and left hun-

dreds of pictures behind him which are only to be seen in Spain. There is, however, a way of forming opinions which are likely, on the whole, to be fairly correct, even when the materials are not complete. You may judge, in a great degree, from the known to the unknown, and you may learn something from others about that which is unknown to yourself. For example: a man who knew intimately one manufacturing town in Lancashire—let us say, Rochdale—would have a fairly correct idea of another town, such as Oldham, in the same region, if it were described to him by an intelligent observer. To make use of another person's eyes we need, however, to know what an astronomer would call his personal equation. If I knew Rochdale and did not know Oldham, and wanted to know Oldham through another person, I should first ask him what he thought of Rochdale; and if he told me that it was clean, handsome, and abounding in fine examples of street architecture, then I should know how to estimate the same expressions when he applied them to Oldham, and judge of the place accordingly. Again, I should take into consideration all his general ways of thinking which might affect his estimate. If the development of modern industry was a delight to him, a manufacturing town would find him very favourably disposed to appreciate its long chimneys. Applying the same method to the French admirers of Goya, who praise what is known to me like what is un-

known, and making the necessary deductions for their political sympathies, I have arrived at certain conclusions which shall be at the reader's service if they have any interest for him.

The first is, that the modern French admiration for Goya is not artistic in its origin, but political, and that if Goya had not been regarded by French writers as an agent of Liberalism they would not have studied or written about him at all. M. Yriarte says, for himself at least, what is equivalent to this, quite plainly. Again, between the political satirist and the real artist in Goya there is a third person who excites interest, the *man*—the hero of so many strange and scandalous adventures. If his life could be fully narrated it would be as entertaining, though at the same time as far from edifying, as Gil Blas. If he had lived in modest retirement his works would have attracted less attention, and without their courtly subjects and the conspicuous life of the painter his oil-pictures (I do not say his etchings, to which we shall come presently) might have remained uncelebrated by criticism.

The mere fact that Goya often drew and painted hideous people and things does not of itself prove that he was not an artist, and we must remember, in this instance, the dictum that the beautiful and the ugly are both tolerable in the fine arts, the pretty alone being intolerable. Lionardo, Rembrandt, and many other artists of note, have studied ugliness with a

curious interest, and the most revolting descriptions may be found in some of the most delightful poets—in our own Spenser, for example. I should not, therefore, condemn Goya for hideousness in itself, but there is something wanting in his temperament, and that something is the delicate aesthetic sense. He was coarse-minded, essentially vulgar; and how could he be otherwise with such a soul-degrading life as his, in the midst of such an intensely corrupt society? In all his works which are directly or indirectly known to me I am unable to detect any evidence of that sweet enjoyment of natural beauty which is given only to the pure in heart. You often find him working energetically out of hatred, often as a matter of business, hardly ever out of an artist's love for a subject which has won his affection. Again, not only did Goya work without affection for his subjects, but it seems to me that he had little delight in the exercise of the arts which he practised. I am quite certain that he never felt the real pleasures of an etcher: he uses the etching-needle merely for his political purpose, as so many people use the pen in writing, without any idea of the artistic capabilities of the instrument and the art. M. Yriarte praises his etchings to the skies, declares that he is 'universellement admiré comme aquafortiste,' that he had 'dompté le cuivre,' that 'tous ceux qui s'occupent de l'art l'exaltent:' to all which wild laudations I give this plain and simple answer, that Goya was

to a really cultivated etcher what a peasant fiddling in an ale-house is to Joachim interpreting Beethoven. Of the resources of etching—its pianos and its fortes, its harmonies and oppositions, its tender cadences and its notes of triumphant energy—Goya lived in Philistine ignorance. If his etchings had been good, he would never have endured to spoil them by heavy aquatint. He was as unskilful in aquatint as in etching proper, but he could lay a coarse, flat shade, which served in some measure to hide the poverty of his performance with the needle. For examples of his power in both the reader has nothing to do but procure four back numbers of 'L'Art,'* in which impressions are given from Goya's original coppers (not copies in any way, but real originals). The four plates given are important in size and quite characteristic of the master.

We have—1. *A Rain of Bulls* (as we say, 'It rains cats and dogs,' and the French say, '*Il pleut des hallebardes*'); 2. *Other Laws for the People* (in which the People is represented by an elephant); 3. *What a Warrior!* (a man brandishing a sword close by a scarecrow, as if to defend it); 4. *A Circus Queen* (a woman displaying her agility on a horse which is standing on a slack-rope). Far from blaming our contemporary for publishing these things, I think we ought to be very grateful for the opportunity thus afforded us of judging for ourselves. The plates are

* Nos. 118, 119, 120, and 121, all published in April 1877.

interesting as documents in the history of art, and, therefore, valuable; but if they had been executed, say, in the year 1876, by some unknown Frenchman, would our friend and contributor, M. Gaucherel, who was the artistic director of 'L'Art,' have accepted them? I should like to hear what M. Gaucherel, or any other director of a respectable artistic magazine, would have said to a young artist who presented to him a performance of that quality.

The difficulty of criticising such work is that it lies so far beneath criticism. In the first plate there is no drawing. Look at the heads of the bulls: try to see what sort of a skull there is under the skin. They are such bulls' heads as children make out of paste. Look at the ear and the nostril. You see that the artist knew nothing about the construction and setting on of a bull's ear, and as little about the shaping of his nostril. And this is not accidental carelessness. The same ignorance is displayed in all the series of plates illustrating bull-fights. Again the animals are wooden; they have neither suppleness nor texture, they look like ill-cut toys flung together into the air. The sky is simply represented by one flat, dark shade of aquatint.

In No. 2 (*Other Laws for the People*), the elephant is scarcely better studied than the bulls. The ear is not an elephant's ear at all, and the attitude is that of a cat. The shading is unintelligent and meaningless throughout, but it is partly hidden under the usual

flat wash of aquatint. The figures are so covered up with clothing (showing no forms beneath it) that they escape criticism, but the hands are not drawn, though visible. In No. 4 (*What a Warrior!*) most of the figures are hidden in the same way, but the one in knee-breeches, capering on one leg, exhibits the other leg very plainly, and it is drawn abominably, with as much calf before as behind. Anything more empty and unintelligent than the shading of the 'Warrior's' trousers it is not possible to imagine. As to the fourth plate, the *Queen of the Circus*, I have never yet been able to make out to my own satisfaction whether the horse was intended to represent a living animal or wooden one; but though it looks wooden, I incline to the belief that a similitude of the living creature was intended. The spectators are first sketched in very meagre outline and then shaded indiscriminately with perpendicular lines, without any distinction between their faces and dresses. The ground area of the circus itself and the tent above the spectators are both shaded with flat, dark aquatint, which means no more than a house-painter's flat paint upon a door, and requires much less manual skill for its application. I say that these plates, considered as etchings, are absolutely destitute of all technical merits and qualities whatsoever, and if they are to be estimated simply as caricature drawings, without reference to the special quality of etching, I do not see how their admirers can maintain that

there is anything in them at all comparable to the keen observation and subtle characterisation which distinguish all eminent caricaturists.* Criticism equally severe may be fairly applied to the whole series of *The Caprices.* I had intended to analyse some of these, but after what has just been written it is not necessary, as the plates which we have been examining are in the same manner as *The Caprices,* though on a larger scale. In their production the artist appears to have been animated simply by the desire to stir the public mind in reference to some social or political subject which interested him for the moment, and to have experienced no aesthetic pleasure. He certainly communicates none.

Of Goya as a painter I cannot speak quite so decidedly, because his admirers would tell me that he can only be studied in Spain. They say that he has some good qualities of rapid execution and light, agreeable colour, which in some instances, as in *The Family of Charles IV.*, *La Maja*, and *Manolas in a Balcony*, reach exquisite and original harmonies. Of this I cannot say anything more than that Goya's rapidity with the brush would of itself tend to pre-

* When they depend upon their qualities of design for their reputation and influence. It sometimes happens that a caricaturist rises into celebrity by the wit of the few words which he writes under each of his sketches. Cham, for example, is great by his endless invention of witty bits of literature, the drawing being merely an accompaniment, of the slightest possible value in itself.

serve a pleasant freshness in his tints, if at any time his perceptions were healthy enough for freshness of colouring. Such colouring as I have seen of his is foul and filthy to ths last degree, and I have a difficulty in understandiug how a man so restless, so irritable, and so degraded by mental and physical vice, could at any time colour tenderly, delicately, and purely. I have believed hitherto that the power of fair colouring was reserved for serene and elevated natures, but there may be exceptions to the rule, if it is a rule. One technical detail is known, which is that Goya laid in all his later pictures with printers' ink, which is scarcely a colourist's preparation. The so-called 'frescoes' look as if they had been painted with a mixture of soot, mud, whitening, and candle-grease.

The admirers of Goya have made him a reputation as a chiaroscurist. M. Yriarte says of him, 'On ne va pas beaucoup plus loin dans la science de l'effet et de la lumière.' This assertion is clearly contradicted by the etchings. They are violent, coarsely and crudely violent, in their oppositions of light and dark, but they are not learned. Either Goya knew little abont chiaroscuro, or he despised the science; he was too rough and rude in his practice to have patience for a study which requires the most careful observation of fine distinctions of light and dark.*

* His rude way of lithographing is an example of this. Nobody ever used a lithographic stone so barbarously.

Goya in black and white scorned the refinements of execution, and everything which belongs to the technical business of the artist. He expressed his thought as directly as possible without taking technical conditions into account, and it is, perhaps, this very eagerness and haste to express himself that have won for him the sympathies of literary men who value the thought, the idea, as he did, and care as little as he cared about the arts of painting, etching, and lithography. The means to him mattered nothing; artistic excellence very little: what he really cared about was to get his idea expressed whilst it was still hot from his volcanic brain. It is narrated, that when in the fervour of composing a pen-and-ink drawing he would daub about the ink with his fingers if the pen could not do the work fast enough. He toiled always in a rage, and gave himself no time for the precautions of a careful workman. He did not try to please people; his art was the result of a need in his nature, an imperious need of utterance at all costs.

The frescoes in the church of San Antonio de la Florida are curious examples of religious subjects, as dealt with by a man who had no religious conceptions. In the dome is a large fresco of *Saint Anthony of Padua recalling a dead man to life, to make him reveal the name of his murderer.* To show how little the painter has imagined the scene it is only necessary to mention a single detail. He has

painted a railing all round the cupola, and represented two boys playing on this railing quite close to the resuscitated man, as if such incidents happened too frequently to attract their attention. The object is to break the tiresome long line of the rail; and for the same reason other figures are leaning upon it in quiet conversation, or looking down into the church below: but there was no necessity for putting the rail there at all. Goya's painted angels in this church are fat and vulgar Spanish women, or worse. In the picture of *Saint Francis by the bedside of a man dying impenitent*, the figure of the dying man is very strongly conceived and full of horror, but that of the saint is awkward and primitive. There is a picture of *St. Joseph of Calasanz taking the Sacrament*, which M. Yriarte praises as being 'full of unction.' The priest is certainly fulfilling his duty in the usual manner, and the saint is conducting himself with propriety, whilst the congregation maintain a becoming gravity.

M. Yriarte justly defines the peculiar nature of Goya when he says of him that he was an ardent satirist, who attacked everything and everybody, always ready to bite, and that his bite was venomous. We may add that he is powerful by terror, horror, and antipathy, and seldom reaches the heart by any kind of tenderness or charm. He is said to have preferred general to particular ideas, and there is much truth in this if the assertion is rightly under-

stood; but does it not imply that he was more a philosopher than an artist? Ought not graphic art to deal with the concrete, the particular instance and example? Be this as it may, it is the thinker in Goya, and not the artist, who has made himself especially memorable in the history of his country, and has taken a place in the history of liberal ideas in Europe. 'The Portfolio' does not profess to deal with politics, but we shall not hurt the feelings of any party by observing that such a character as Goya can do no credit to any cause.

PART II.

NOTES ON AESTHETICS.

NOTES ON AESTHETICS.

THE first question which many readers will feel disposed to ask on seeing the title of these Notes is, whether there is any use in studying such a science as Aesthetics, since the most eminent artists of past generations have generally troubled themselves but little about it, whilst their clever and prosperous successors in the present day seldom hesitate to express a hearty contempt for all who concern themselves with this science as idle dilettants, who make phrases about what they do not understand?

The answer to any such question about aesthetics is that, like all the true sciences, it does not pretend to be practical, though practical results may sometimes follow its investigations. The only object of aesthetics is to form a true theory about the nature of art. Whether the possession of such a theory, supposing it to be fully attained, would answer any useful purpose, as utility is commonly understood, is a question foreign to the purposes of science. The scientific spirit wants to have sound aesthetics simply because it desires to think accurately. The intellect finds itself confronted by art as an enormous fact which can no more be denied than commerce and

navigation. The intellect is impatient of erroneous ideas, and its own spirit of curiosity does not permit it to remain contentedly ignorant. Consequently, when it meets with some obviously important manifestation of the human mind, it forms theories about it which may not be absolutely true, but which tend more or less directly towards absolute truth. The satisfaction which aesthetics promises to its followers is nothing more than the simple satisfaction of attaining to approximately accurate ideas about certain matters in which all civilised peoples take some degree of interest.

Aesthetics, as a science, is as yet but little developed, and this may be accounted for by the rarity of persons prepared by their studies for its advancement. It requires the union of artistic with intellectual tastes, and it happens too frequently that these are found in different persons, some of whom become artists and others philosophers. The pure and perfect artist is made for production rather than thought; the philosopher has in most cases too little practical experience of the conditions of art to be able to take them fairly into account; and the consequence is that a field of study which requires a double equipment for its successful exploration is hardly explored at all.

There must always be some presumption in attacking subjects so difficult as this, and although during the last twenty-five years the problems of

aesthetics have certainly never been absent from the present writer's mind for the space of a single day, he would not, even now, have the temerity to attempt a systematic treatise. The following notes are simply intended as an informal contribution to a science still in its infancy.

It will be a convenience, both to the writer and the reader, that these notes should be presented in the shape of propositions, some of which may be capable of proof, whilst others offer themselves as suggestions and hypotheses which, from their nature, can only be recommended for consideration. Some attempt will be made to keep these propositions in a kind of order, but this order will not be so rigid as to exclude propositions which may occur to the writer out of their proper connexion. It is one of the great advantages of a magazine to permit this kind of recurrence.

1. *The word* AESTHETICS, *its origin and signification.*—The word is modern, having been first used in Germany by Baumgarten, a disciple of Wolf. He felt the need of some special term for the science of the Beautiful, and took the Greek adjective αἰσθητικός, *perceptive*, or *belonging to perception*, from αἰσθάνομαι, *to perceive by the senses*, most especially by the sense of hearing. The word which comes nearest to αἰσθάνομαι in modern languages is probably the Italian verb *sentire*, which has its general meaning of knowing by means of different senses, such as

touch, taste, &c., and its special meaning of hearing, as well as the intellectual meaning of apprehending by the tact and taste of the mind. We are thus brought to our own word *sentiment*, which, although too restricted by custom to embrace the entire field of aesthetics, still occupies a part of it. Every other science treats artistic sentiment as if it did not exist. Aesthetics not only takes sentiment into consideration, but gives especial study to its influence in the production of works of art, and endeavours to ascertain its laws, in the perfect conviction that it cannot be outside the reign of law, however apparently irregular may be its manifestations.

Before leaving the philological part of our subject we may observe that the word aesthetics has generally been written in English with the united diphthong. The original German form was Aesthetik, abridged to Ästhetik ; the French form is esthétique, in obedience to the usual rule of the language, which turns the Greek *αἰ* into *e*. The Roman custom was to turn the Greek *αἰ* into *ae*, as *αἰσάλων* into aesalon, *αἰθήρ* into aether, and *Αἰθίοψ* into Aethiops, but the ancient Romans did not write the vowels together in one compound letter; they never wrote Cæsar, but always Caesar; and if they had used the word aestheticus (which they did not) they would certainly have written the vowels separately. We would conform to the English usage of the united diphthong if it were likely to endure, but it is disappearing so

rapidly from scholarly English literature that the time may be easily foreseen when it will have become obsolete, and it is better to be somewhat in advance of a good reform than to lag behind it.

It is scarcely necessary to observe that aesthetics, like ethics, mathematics, metaphysics, &c., is treated as singular, according to the present usage of the learned.

2. *That artistic Aesthetics is inseparable from human personality.*—The perceptions and feelings, not merely of men in general but of individual men, must always enter into the speculations of artistic aesthetics, and this necessity for constantly considering the faculties of so variable a creature as man is at the same time the greatest element of interest in aesthetics and its greatest difficulty. This is probably the reason why, like sociology, it comes late amongst the sciences. Mathematics, in which abstract truths are undisturbed by any interference of human nature, could offer results worth having at a very early stage of human development. The truths that two parallel lines, though infinitely prolonged, will never meet, and that all the parts of a circle are equally distant from its centre, have nothing to do with human faculties ; but the qualities of lines drawn by artists are always human and personal, so that the faculties of the draughtsman can never be out of consideration whilst we estimate them. Hence aesthetics belongs essentially to the *humanities*, and

in a more advanced and more complete condition of culture will probably always be taught along with them.

The difficulty caused by the interference of a human element is much enhanced by the fact that in art-criticism the human element is generally double, and sometimes even triple or quadruple. Suppose that a critic is writing about a picture, you have first the humanity of the artist between you and nature, and secondly the humanity of the critic, who cannot get rid of his own personal self whilst estimating the work of the painter. But what if the critic is writing about an engraving? Here three idiosyncrasies affect the result, those of the painter, the engraver, and the critic. Finally, the result is tinged by the mental peculiarities of the reader of the criticism, whose human interests and feelings are no more to be stifled than those of the artist and writer. Still, it might be asked, Might not these personal elements of disturbance be eliminated by careful discipline?—could not the painter suppress in himself whatever prevented him from seeing the simple truth?—could not the engraver sacrifice his own fancies to the prime virtue of fidelity?—might not the critic simply appreciate what is in the work of art without addition or deduction?—and, in a word, might not these various human agencies transmit the original truth, as postmen transmit letters, without any loss or alteration? The answer is, that the

personality of the painter is absolutely essential to the interest of the painting, that no good engraving was ever simply a piece of copyism, that no art-criticism worth reading was ever written by a man independent of the bias of personal feeling; and, finally, that nobody ever understood art-criticism who had not feelings of his own about the fine arts.

The partiality due to human feeling is ineradicable from all aesthetic occupations, and all philosophy which refuses to take feeling into account is impotent with reference to Art.

3. *The origin of the Aesthetic sensibilities.*—The attempt to distinguish clearly between what we call the aesthetic perceptions and the perceptions which we do not call aesthetic, leads inevitably to the conclusion that they are not distinguishable in their first beginnings, however widely they may become differentiated at a later stage of their development.

The beginning of the artistic aesthesis, or of that aesthesis which ultimately becomes artistic, is simply animal sensation, though by a process of gradual elevation and refinement it attains such subtlety and delicacy, as well as such a vast compass of variable emotion, that it answers to our spiritual needs, and we forget the physical origin.

It may be convenient to take the lowest of aesthetic perceptions first, as an example. Only the most ignorant criticism would deny that, in quite a

serious and artistic sense, there is an aesthetic element in the pleasures of eating and drinking. The difficulty is, to define the exact point where the pleasures of the table cease to be simply animal and begin to be what intelligent criticism would call aesthetic. It might be argued that so soon as we pass beyond the simple desire to satisfy the cravings of hunger we enter upon a range of sensation within the domain of the higher aesthesis. The very use of the word 'taste' in art-criticism is a clear recognition of the analogy between aesthetic perception and the sensations of the palate ; but besides this familiar use of a single word both poetry and criticism continually recur to gastronomic experience as a source of expression, so that the language which both creative and critical genius find it convenient to use is frequently borrowed from the kitchen or the dinner-table. A poet or a novelist will say that a man has been *soured* by misfortune or by 'a little grain of conscience ;' he will speak of 'a *bitter* jest,' of 'a *sweet* nature.' There is oil in one man's disposition, and vinegar in that of another. A certain kind of jest is said in French to be 'salted,' and conversation may be 'seasoned' with epigrams. A critic will say that painting is sweet or acrid, luscious or dry ; that the colouring of one painter is delicious, whilst that of another sets the teeth on edge ; and familiar French criticism goes still farther in the culinary direction when it talks about a man's work as being

'*savoureux*,' and of a painter as putting too much '*sauce*' into his pictures.

The frequent reference to gastronomic experience in illustration of aesthetic subjects would of itself be enough to prove a remarkable closeness of analogy between the gastronomic and the artistic aesthesis; but there is more than mere analogy, there is essential identity. The sensations of the palate have conditions of harmony and contrast, of succession and interruption, of expectation excited, as in music, with a view to satisfaction. The pleasures derived from these changes are recognised in music as aesthetic pleasures, and serious criticism would recognise them with the same frankness in gastronomy if there were not the fear of being accused of *gourmandise.* The plain truth is, that in music, painting, and poetry, even of the most elevated kind, the essentially artistic qualities (as distinguished from the moral and intellectual) have their exact counterparts in eating and drinking.

It will even be found in studying any series of physical sensations, as for example those presented by cold and heat, or by light and darkness, that they have a property which is recognised by the aesthetic sense as of the utmost importance in the fine arts, the property, namely, of passing through infinite gradations—from one end of a scale to another. These gradated scales of physical sensation are constantly resorted to by literary artists to produce

effects on the artistically aesthetic sense of the reader, on whose imagination they operate, by reminding him of sensations which he has experienced. The suggestions of heat and cold, in all gradations between the fiery and the frozen hells of Dante, are used constantly by poets to convey artistically aesthetic impressions, whilst the gradations and oppositions between light and dark are the especial means by which the chiaroscurist plays upon the very deepest feelings of those who are impressionable by his art. The reader who cares to follow out this suggestion for himself will soon admit that hardly anything which possesses the property of a gradation between two opposite extremes is disdained by Art (using the word in its widest sense) as a means of influencing the feelings. Calm and storm, smoothness and ruggedness, fixity and mobility, slowness and speed, these are contrasts which, with their intermediaries, are perpetually resorted to by literary or pictorial artists, and any one of these scales between opposite extremes of sensation is in itself an instrument on which the artist may perform so as to awaken emotion.

It is easy to show that the artistic aesthesis is rooted in physical sensation, but how are we to determine when the physical sensation becomes elevated into artistic aesthesis? What is the precise nature of the development which takes place when the common feelings of heat and cold, of light and

darkness, pass into the aesthesis of the poet and the painter, of Dante and Rembrandt, when the sensuousness of the hungry ploughman enjoying his slice of bacon is sublimated into the poetic rapture of Keats with a ripe peach melting in his mouth? It is quite possible to feel the physical sensations produced by sounds and odours without any poetical emotion, but from the artistic point of view the aesthesis which really interests us is that of the poet, the generic title which includes Milton, Titian, and Beethoven. The sensations of animals, and our own animal sensations, are interesting from the artistic point of view only as the foundation of that higher aesthesis. But these are subjects which require some space for any adequate investigation.

4. *Colours and Colour.*—In ordinary degrees of aesthetic development there is perception of colours and often an intense enjoyment of them, accompanied by profound indifference to what artists understand by 'colour.'

The delight in colour is probably preceded, in every case, by the delight in colours, and yet the two states of mind are not only different but opposed to each other, so that the lover of colour will speak with some severity of the lover of colours as a person whose faculties are still childish or undeveloped. The two conditions of mind are faithfully represented by a mediaeval illumination and Cor-

reggio. The difference between their work is the difference between colours and colour.

If we look into it more minutely we shall perceive that the illuminator likes red, blue, yellow, &c., in their unmodified states, whilst the colourist probably dislikes and certainly avoids them. We have no evidence in the illuminator's work of any tendency towards colour in Correggio's sense of the term: there is too much finality in it for any striving of that kind. If you could have given your illuminator some brighter colour—some brilliant blue like *bleu lumière*, some blinding scarlet like scarlet iodine—he would have welcomed it as a means of progress in his own direction; but the transition to colour would have required the sacrifice of one principle and the acceptance of another.

It is difficult to see how it comes to pass that a love of colours can ever educate us for colour, but the transition appears to be effected through an increasing taste for intermediate tints, which may finally arrive at the colourist's desire for the most subtle descrimination possible and the most effective arrangement. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the love of separate colours must of necessity lead the mind to anything beyond itself. For many minds it is a final state of development, beyond which they neither desire to go, nor could go if they desired it.

The love for colours manifests itself in various

ways, as for example in a taste for jewels, for stained or painted glass, for illuminated manuscripts, for heraldry, for butterflies, and for flowers, entering thus as a powerful and often determinating motive to the pursuit of archaeology, entomology, and botany. The enjoyment of colours goes for so much in the pleasure of making a collection of butterflies that we can hardly imagine the charm of such a collection without it. The gorgeous colours of heraldry are always present to those who concern themselves about coats of arms—present either to the eye when they are actually painted or to the imagination when described or engraved. The love of colour is compelled to seek its aliment chiefly in the appearances of nature and in the productions of the most gifted painters.

It appears that the love for colours may be developed in two very different directions. It may simply become more intense in its own way, so that a man who took pleasure in red and blue at the age of twenty might take a keener pleasure in red and blue at thirty. Or it might happen that the man who had simply found pleasure in pure colours early in life might like intermediate tints in his maturity, in which case, though the refinement in his perceptions increased, his delight in pure colours would probably diminish. The general experience of cultivated painters is that they enjoy pure and bright colours less than they did when

they were children. A colourist who had cultivated his gift assiduously for fifty years once remarked to the present writer that the distinction between colours and colour was never enough remembered either by painters or critics. Many painters have so far forgotten it as to imagine that the more colours they can put into a picture the better it will look. In the decade between 1850 and 1860 many pictures were executed on this principle, especially in England, and even at the present day it is not altogether abandoned. Such painting is really derived from illumination.

5. *Effects of Idiosyncrasy on the perception of Colour.* —It is impossible to ascertain what colours are really seen by eyes other than our own, but there is always a probability that the divergence is nothing more than a divergence, except in cases of colour-blindness, and that most people see approximately the same hues. The various practice of painters is of little assistance in the investigation of this subject, because whatever peculiarities may affect an artist's vision when he looks at natural objects, will affect his sight of pigments and tints. For example, if red in nature seems to a painter what blue seems to us, he will still use the same pigments to represent it which we should use.

Some years ago Dr. Leibreich gave a lecture on 'The effect of certain faults of vision on painting with special reference to Turner,' and some reviewers

of my 'Life of Turner,' both in England and America, have thought it an omission of some importance that I did not notice Dr. Leibreich's theory, and have asked for my opinion on the subject. The theory has always seemed to me fallacious in its application to actual artistic production. I have no doubt whatever that Dr. Leibreich is right about the yellowing of the lens of the eye in some people, but supposing that a painter's eye became affected by this change, I should not think it probable that his pictures would be yellower on that account. The case may be stated with convenient brevity as follows :—

1. The painter whose eye-lens is yellow sees all things yellower than they really are. He is not afflicted with the infirmity when he looks at nature, and exempt from it when he looks at his palette or his picture; the affliction is permanent, alike in the field and in the studio.

2. Consequently, as the painter's eye supplies yellow to the natural scene, it will supply yellow in the same proportion to the mixtures on his palette and his canvas, which will appear to him as yellow as nature appears to him, even when they are not more yellow than nature is in reality. This being so, it does not appear that the painter's infirmity will cause him to use more of the yellow pigments.

This answer to Dr. Leibreich is not suggested by any desire to imply that Turner's faculties re-

mained in a state of perfection while he painted his later pictures. It is probable, if not certain, that in his declining years there was an increasing insensibility of the optic nerves, which led him to desire a stronger and stronger stimulus. This would of itself be sufficient to account for the immoderate colouring of his later pictures.

6. *Causes of bad work in Colour.*—Bad colour in painting may generally be traced to one of two opposite causes.

The faculty which perceives and enjoys colour may be too acutely sensitive, in which case bad work will result from exaggerations due to the immoderate force of impressions.

On the other hand, bad work may be the consequence of a deficiency of colour-sensibility in the artist. Deficient sensibility will produce colouring below a right degree of chromatic intensity, and at the same time will fail to observe and render what is subtle and delicate in the colouring of nature.

Two well-known French painters may be mentioned as instances. In Delacroix the colour faculty was naturally of great strength, but all his nature was acutely, even morbidly, sensitive, and from this resulted many violent exaggerations of colour in his worst pictures, because he saw colour in nature with an exaggerating eye. In Gérôme the eye is insensitive to colour, and the consequence is that

his pictures are really under-coloured, notwithstanding his introduction of bright hues to give an impression of colour. The colouring of Gérôme is really brown and grey, but without the subtle and charming varieties which a colourist would get out of his greys; the bright blues, reds, &c., in Gérôme's work are adventitious.

The most perfect colour is produced by painters whose natural faculties are strong, but who have acquired the power of moderating their exercise.*

7. *The quality which is often called 'Purity' in Colour.*—In Mr. Poynter's lecture 'On the Study of Nature' there is an interesting passage on the effect of preconceived ideas, showing 'how they run away with us in art, to the prejudice of what we

* It might appear that there is some contradiction between the theory that Turner in his later years coloured violently because the increasing insensibility of the optic nerves led him to desire a stronger and stronger stimulus, and the theory that Delacroix coloured violently because he was excessively sensitive to colour, but both may be true, the reconciling consideration being that Turner did not work from nature, whilst Delacroix had models and dresses to look at, like all figure-painters, and it was from these that he received his exaggerated impressions. Further inquiry will lead us to an influence which operated upon both. All colourists delight in colour for itself, independently of natural truth, and when they can get what they require by means of an exaggeration, they are not to be deterred by considerations of simple veracity. The real object of the colourist is to produce fine colour, as the object of the musical composer is to produce fine melodies and harmonies ; nor is the colourist *necessarily* a much more accurate reporter of the colours which he sees than the musician of the sounds he hears.

might naturally do if we relied upon our impressions alone.' He gives as an instance the idea of purity as it was held by the English Pre-Raphaelites :—

'At the beginning of the movement one of the predominant ideas was, that purity is in all its forms essential to good art. Purity of subject, purity of sentiment, purity of expression, being all necessary, were only to be secured by the utmost purity of form and colour. To attain to purity of colour was a most important point, and to this end nothing but the most refined and brilliant pigments were to be used. Ochres and umbers were earthy, and perhaps, therefore, earthly; so the newest chemical compounds were sought out for the sake of procuring the clearest and brightest tints of green, yellow, scarlet, violet, and blue, that could be employed for the palette. These, combined in prismatic hues on the purest white, were to take the place of flesh tints of the sober colours which artists had been content to use up to that time. The idea was carried so far, that the use of those colours was considered a sort of test of the earnestness of a painter in his work, and they were even invested with a sort of religious halo. Here, then, is a case where the idea completely outmastered the impression; for it is certain that no painter, trusting to his eyes alone, would paint the shade of even the purest maiden's cheek with violet madder, and emerald green, and with cadmium or orange vermilion to complete the triad of prismatic colours.'

Whilst the Pre-Raphaelite painters were seeking bright colour, Mr. Ruskin was writing in favour of the same choice.

'Beautiful colour,' says Mr. Poynter, 'with him seems

synonymous with bright colour, or what he would call pure colour as typical of purity. Where he once thought he saw fine colour in Titian, he has since strenuously denied it; and his keen admiration of Turner's later work, which is full of crude contrasts of coarse colour, shows that his appreciation of Bellini's exquisite tones must be a mere accident.'

This estimate of Mr. Ruskin's manner of appreciating colour is, I believe, just on the whole; but passages from Mr. Ruskin's writings can always be quoted in favour of opposite views, for he has been so active (mentally), and so excursive, that there are few truths which he has not caught glimpses of for a moment. The real truth about purity of colour, as having nothing to do with the absence of mixture, and as existing in neutral colours as well as in bright and positive ones, was well stated in the ninth chapter of the second volume of 'Modern Painters':—

'For I see not in the abstract how one colour should be considered purer than another, except as more or less compounded; whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colours, as well as in the simplest—a quality difficult to define.'

Yes, this is a fair statement of the real state of the case. A sense of purity may be produced or awakened in us by the most compound and neutral colours. There are painters whose palettes are always in a state of dirt and confusion, and who, nevertheless, paint pictures which seem to be quite pure in colour,

the fact being that a tint which is impure on the palette may look pure when transferred to a special place on the picture on account of its new surroundings.

The well-known doctrine, that two pigments make a tint and three make mud, is true only, so far as it is true at all, of the tint as seen by itself or with unfavourable surroundings. It is positively ascertained by experiment that tints compounded, not of three pigments but of five or six, will look pure when transferred to their proper places in a picture.

What, then, is this *sensation in ourselves* which we call the purity of that which we perceive? Probably the correct answer may be, that this sensation is a condition of the nervous system, during which its vibrations are what a musician would call in tune; and this condition has little to do with positive brightness, or with the presence or absence of mixture in what produces it.

This may be illustrated from gastronomy. Very pure sensations of taste are often given by elaborately compounded dishes, such as a *matelote*, a *sole normande*, or a *bouille-abaisse*, each of which has a well-known and decided taste in spite of the variety of its ingredients. The same may be said of drinks: the sensation of taste given by the liqueur, *chartreuse*, is a pure sensation; I mean that the palate receives one definite sensation only, the consequence of drinking

chartreuse, which nothing else produces, and which leaves us perfectly unconscious of the variety of ingredients of which *chartreuse* is composed.

The notion that it is necessary to keep things uncontaminated by mixture, in order to produce the sensation of purity, is entirely unphilosophical. What we call pure air and pure water are mixtures—what we call pure English is a mixture.

8. *Right and Left not indifferent in Art.*—One of the practical troubles which an engraver has to contend against is the necessity for reversing, in order that the printed impression may put to right or left what is to right or left in the original picture. Modern engravers almost invariably accept this as an obligation, but their predecessors seem to have been much more indifferent, as they often consulted their own convenience by copying the picture directly upon the metal, so that the printed impression and not the engraved work presented itself in reverse. If right or left were really a matter of indifference, the engraver could not do better than allow himself this liberty, which would evidently be favourable to the perfection of his work, by delivering him from the inconvenience of the mirror.

It is probable that the modern practice of reversing, so that the print may be like the picture, has been suggested simply by a desire to obtain this fidelity; but there is another and a far deeper reason for it, which is that it is not at all a matter of in-

difference whether the principal masses of a composition be situated to the left hand or the right.

After a long series of observations, both on natural scenery with the mirror and on the composition of great masters, I have arrived at the following conclusions, which may be stated in the form of rules.

1. Whenever there is an issue from the picture along which the imagination of the spectator will be enticed to travel, as, for instance, an opening to the distance in a landscape, it ought to be, if possible, to the spectator's right.

2. Whenever there is a large mass which blocks up the composition, it ought to be, if possible on the spectator's left. It follows from this, that when there are two masses, one on each side, as often happens in the side-scenes of a theatre, and in pictures arranged on the same principle, it is the larger and more important of these which should be placed on the left.

It is surprising how very generally, though not invariably, these rules have been followed by painters in the arrangement of their compositions, and how much more satisfactory are, generally, those compositions in which they have been observed than those in which they have been neglected. It is probable, too, that the observation of these principles has been simply instinctive on the part of the artists, as they have never, so far as we know, been stated in words by any ancient or modern master.

I remember one instance in which the apparent

neglect of the rule was really an instinctive conformity with it, and a little perseverance would probably enable a student to collect many such examples. In Rogers' Poems, the vignette to the ninth canto of the Voyage of Columbus, representing the landing of the Spaniards on the shore of the new world, puts the masses of rising land to the spectator's right, whilst the opening to the distance lies to his left under the sun, and here the ships constitute very small masses. Yes, but the whole movement of the procession is towards the right, and the human interest of the scene leads the eye to the crowds on the sloping land which leave a lane between them for the procession to ascend. At the top of this lane is a building which crowns the height, and as this building is the final goal of the spectator's eye when it has wandered over the composition, it is judiciously placed at his right hand. The reader has only to reverse the vignette in a looking-glass to see how much more unpleasantly and unnaturally his eye then follows the procession from right to left.

In many instances where artists have put material to the right which might more judiciously have been placed on the other side, the reason has either been topographic or else a desire for variety. It is obvious that if an artist invariably placed his large masses to the left a certain sameness would result which might become monotonous, especially in sets of drawings, such as Turner's *Rivers of France.*

The present writer was convinced that right and left were not indifferent in art long before he knew that there were physiological reasons for it, but more recent scientific investigations have brought to light certain facts which help us to understand the subject. M. Delaunay has undertaken an inquiry which has already led to some curious and important results. It has been ascertained that when people enter a public gallery the great majority of them will go to the right at first, mechanically, unless there is some object on the opposite side which they particularly desire to see. This, it appears, is a consequence of an inequality in the force and activity of the two halves of the brain. The left half is the stronger and more active of the two, and as the nerves cross, the left brain moves the right side of the body and impels us to the right. It has been suggested that the preferableness of the left side for large masses in pictures might indicate some localisation of the aesthetic faculties on the opposite side of the brain, but it seems to me perfectly consistent with the usual law of cerebral development which places the predominant powers in the left brain, and quite in harmony with what we have just been saying about people's habits on entering a public gallery.

The real reason why the large masses in a picture are better on the left and the opening to the distance better on the right is the tendency of the imagination to move towards the right, in which it only repeats

the unbiassed movements of the body. Large masses to the left block up the picture there, an opening to the right is a means of escape offered just where we naturally look for it. If the large masses are placed on the right the imagination strikes against them in its first attempt to escape, and has to recover before it can start afresh in a different direction.

Our habit of looking to the right gives a greater importance to all objects placed on that side, consequently, a small object on the right has as good a chance of arresting our attention as a large one on the left. This is an additional reason for placing large foreground masses on the left and distances on the right, as distant objects generally occupy small areas of the surface of the drawing or picture.

The European habit of writing and reading from left to right may have something to do with the habitual tendency of our eyes to travel most easily in that direction.

Again, it is not at all impossible that our custom of beginning many words, and all sentences, with a capital letter on the left may have accustomed us in some degree to put large masses on that side and smaller masses to the right. Simply as a matter of appearance, without any reference whatever to reason or to meaning, it seems the proper thing to put the largest letter to the left. The name Herodotus looks perfectly satisfactory, but if we try the experiment of putting a big letter to the right, as in herodotuS, the

eye feels strangely stopped by it as by an almost insurmountable obstacle. The large initial letters in illuminated manuscripts look very well on the left, but they seem oddly out of place when we reverse the page in a looking-glass, even if we consider it simply as an artistic arrangement, without reading a word of it.

These considerations are of especial importance to etchers who work from nature, because they often draw directly on the copper without the intervention of the mirror, simply for convenience, forgetting that the scene which charmed them in nature may have a very different aspect when reversed in the printed proofs. If the side on which masses are placed were really a matter of indifference, the reversal could not affect the artistic value of the drawing, and would simply nullify its topographic interest or utility, but the truth is that artistic charm is much imperilled by so dangerous an experiment as reversal, and is in many instances destroyed by it so completely that the artist can hardly recognise his own work, and it no longer gives him the slightest satisfaction.

9. *The Love and Hatred of the Artificial.*—An element which enters for very much into our aesthetic appreciation of persons and things is the simple liking or dislike for the marks of human interference. Many minds are so constituted that it is a positive pleasure to them to see that human effort has been expended upon anything, and a sort

of negative pain to perceive that there has been no such human operation. This is quite independent of any conception of beauty, and yet it is constantly confounded with ideas of beauty because few people take the trouble to analyse the causes of their feelings. Since the rebellion against the extreme artificialism of the eighteenth century, the rebellion headed by Rousseau and continued by a host of writers and painters down to our own times, there have been two distinct parties which may be called the naturalists and the artificialists, and even in the quiet intercourse of private life, where there is not any very eager partisanship on either side, we may still distinguish the people who in a more active state of controversy would have belonged to one party or the other. In matters which appear to have little to do with the fine arts (though in reality all these things come within their domain) this opposition is often strongly marked. The liking or disliking for the natural hair may be taken as a case in point. The beard is still very strongly disliked by some persons, who deny that it can be beautiful; but what they really mean is probably that the beard is offensive to their preference for the artificial, which shaving strongly gratifies. It was not by any means accidental that the beard movement should have originated with artists, who, however artificial their pursuit may be in itself, are brought more into contact with real nature, and are

more observant of its beauties, than any other class of persons. On the other hand, shaving has generally formed part of the ideal aimed at by disciplined professions, such as those of the soldier, the lawyer, and the priest.

When the love of nature first began to be fashionable in Europe there was a prevalent, but most erroneous, idea that the love of the artificial is stronger in the civilised races of mankind than in the savage. The civilised have more conveniences, and these conveniences are often very artificial in their character; but they appear to be as often adopted for comfort, and to save time, as from a feeling of opposition to what is natural merely because it is natural. Savages interfere with and alter the natural more resolutely and decidedly on their own persons than civilised peoples do, both in their astonishingly inconvenient ways of dressing the hair, their painful habit of tattooing their bodies, their abnormal treatment of certain features—such as the ears, elongated by weights, and even in some instances in their compression of the skull itself. Besides the peoples whose degrees of civilisation are so low that we call them savages, there are other peoples whose civilised character is not to be disputed, yet whose civilisations are inferior to our own, and it appears to be a general rule that these inferior civilisations are marked by a love of the artificial and a corresponding dislike to the

natural which are stronger than these feelings amongst ourselves. For example, it is certainly not an illusion of national vanity to believe that the Chinese civilisation, though very ancient and very much advanced in many ways, is still on the whole very far inferior to our own in knowledge and power; yet a Chinese lady is further from the natural state, physically, than an English one, and that not merely in the visible deformation of her feet, but in all her manner of life, the deviation from nature being valued as a sign of culture and a mark of superior rank.

Amongst ourselves, costumes of ceremony are usually further from nature than our ordinary dress. For example, a dress hat, in its outline and proportions, is less like the shape of the skull than a cap or a wide-awake; and a dress-coat is less like the human body than a jacket. In the army, the shell-jacket is nearer to the shape of the body than the coatee. Those persons whose rank or office is held to be particularly august, such as the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and the Bishops, have a full ceremonial dress, which differs principally from their ordinary dress in being a more effectual concealment of the human form. The lawn sleeves of an Anglican bishop are further from the shape of his arms than his ordinary coat-sleeves; and the mitre of a Roman Catholic bishop is further from the shape of his head than his hat

or his cap. The wigs worn by the Speaker and the Lord Chancellor are unlike anything in nature, and their very unnaturalness gives the wearers an imposing and official appearance.

In humbler walks of life men often cherish some highly artificial fancy as to personal appearance, which comes simply from a desire to show that they do not neglect themselves. This may be observed especially amongst soldiers and sailors, who belong to highly-disciplined professions, in which carelessness is considered particularly reprehensible, and in which men incur blame for small inaccuracies in dress. We have all noticed the neat curl of the guardsman's hair between the ear and the temple, so advantageously displayed by the jaunty setting of the forage-cap. I remember a good instance of the taste for the artificial in the steersman of an English steam-packet. He stood at the helm, a fine specimen of a seaman, manly and muscular, very clean and neat, and strictly attentive to his business. The care and attention which he devoted to his work were part of his high civilisation, and of his preference for the artificial (the discipline of the ship) to the natural (mere staring at sea-gulls). However, the sense of discipline went rather far in one respect: the steersman had jet-black hair, which he had disciplined into long ringlets, oiled and glossy, which played pleasantly about his ears in the breeze.

Nay, even the ringlets were not enough; the ears being pierced (another interference with nature), and adorned with conspicuous gold ear-rings. The mixture of the sense of discipline with this sailor's aesthetic tastes led him, as we see, to three distinct acts of interference with the natural—shaving, hair-curling, and ear-piercing—all of which were considered unnecessary by Michelangelo.

Visible interferences with nature convey to the mind several different impressions, which may have little or nothing to do with beauty, and yet may be confounded with it, because they are gratifying or impressive to our social sense.

1. They may convey the idea of vigilant care and attention. We have seen that shaving and visibly artful hair-dressing convey this idea. So do the staining of the nails and teeth, the painting of eyebrows, &c., in countries where these practices are fashionable. Amongst tribes where it is the fashion to compress the skull in infancy, so as to produce an intentional malformation, a naturally shaped skull is considered ridiculous, and an evidence of neglect; whilst a skull well flattened between two boards is thought to give proof of proper parental care, and so be a sign of good breeding.

2. Interferences with nature in the way ot covering and disguise may convey impressions of dignity and power. If the reader will compare the im-

pression produced on his mind by the tights of a circus rider (the dress nearest to nature) with the vestments of a pope or the mantle of a king on his coronation day, he will at once perceive that usage accepts the principle that it is necessary to hide and disguise the natural when an impression of power or dignity has to be conveyed.* Napoleon the First used to say that there was no such person as a naked king; meaning that without his adjuncts the king would be a man and nothing more, or, in other words, that the natural could not inspire the respect which is a necessity for royalty.

The appearance of care and attention is satisfactory to the moral sense of civilised peoples, even when their civilisation is not yet of a very advanced kind, because civilisation is a product of care and attention. The appearance of pure nature is often unsatisfactory, because civilised people are displeased by the absence of care and attention. Nevertheless, it is the most highly civilised peoples

* It may be answered to this that the mere association of ideas would prevent us from making such a comparison justly. It might be so for people generally, but I believe that a painter, trained to see, or a philosopher, trained to think, might judge of such a question independently of association. Again, it may be said that nudity may be king-like or god-like in painting and sculpture. Yes, it can be made so, but only when clothed with the ideal, which is in fact quite as much a disguise of nature as the utmost artifices of dress.

who have the strongest passion for pure nature, if indeed they are not the only peoples who have any passion for pure nature at all. It is only the civilised modern nations, and especially their urban populations, who have a passionate liking for such a thing as a piece of rough, precipitous rock, in which there is nothing conducive to human comfort or convenience, and nothing to remind us of human activity or industry, except when it is the side of a stone-quarry.

It is by this time a trite observation that the love of wild nature is a reaction from the restraints and ugliness of civilisation. It may also be a reaction from the too perfect finish and polish of that which is not positively ugly in civilisation. Most of us have experienced the sort of *ennui* which comes upon the mind when we have been too long wearied by the order and polish of drawing-rooms, and the feeling of refreshment that one experiences on passing from them into a carpenter's shop, with its rough, strong benches, and the chips and shavings all about. Or, again, we know what a relief it is, after being dressed up for some ceremony, to get rid of the fine clothes, and take our ease in rougher and commoner things. Manchester and Glasgow, with their ugliness, might drive us to lake and loch, but it is quite conceivable that the artificial finish of a palace like Chatsworth might have very much the same effect. Paris is a

beautiful city, but it makes people long for the ruggedness of the forest of Fontainebleau.

Other sources of these feelings are on the one hand a sense of dependence on human help, valuing the comfort derived from it, and, on the other, the misanthropic dislike to the evidences of human effort from want of sympathy with humanity.

Suppose the case of a sailor who has been shipwrecked on a shore unknown to him. If he succeeds in getting to the top of a cliff, the first thing he does is to seek for evidences of human occupation. If he finds them, he is pleased with the hope of human assistance in his distress. Now, although we have not, many of us, been in such sore strait as this, we all instinctively feel our weakness when isolated from our kind, and we all have a certain pleasure in knowing that human help is near, except when our healthy feelings are turned to their opposites by some perversion of our nature. This is the origin of the cheerful feeling awakened in us by the sight of the artificial. Imagine a desolate Arctic landscape, with its wastes of ice and snow. The dreariness of it is beyond the power of language to express, but a cluster of huts, however wretched, will give it another aspect. It is dreary and melancholy still, but no longer wretched, since humanity is there. So a bridge, or even a bit of road, will redeem a Highland glen or an Alpine pass from the kind of

solitude which becomes oppressive. Turner almost invariably introduced these evidences of humanity, which have been considered essential until the most recent times. Some very recent landscape-painters have painted absolute solitude of sea and cloud, of desert and burning sky, partly as a change from a practice which had become a mere habit of artists, and partly because they felt a stern pleasure in setting themselves face to face with nature. There is an interesting description of this pleasure, very much to our present purpose, in Mr. John MacGregor's well-known 'Voyage Alone in the Yawl "Rob Roy."' He was out between Beachy Head and Hastings on the night of the 19th of August, 1867, during a severe storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by a strong and very variable wind, and rain hissing into the sea, and 'pouring on the yawl in sheets of water.'.

'So sped the storm for eight long hours, with splendours for the eye, and deep long thrills of the sublime, that stirred deep the whole inner being with feelings vivid and strong, and loosed the most secret folds of consciousness with thoughts I had never felt before, and perhaps shall never know again. The mind conjured up the most telling scenes it had known of "alone" and of "thunder" to compare with this where both were now combined.

'To stand on the top of Mont Blanc, that round white icicle highest in Europe, and all alone to gaze on a hundred peaks around—that was indeed impressive!

'More so was it to kneel alone at the edge of Etna, and to fill the mind from the smoking crater with thoughts and fancies teeming out of the hot, black, and wide abyss.'

Mr. MacGregor goes on to describe in a few words the effect of thunder and solitude on Vesuvius and at the fall of Niagara, but says that the storm in the Channel was more splendid.

'Imagination painted its own free picture on a black and boundless background of mind strung tight by near danger; and from out this spoke the deep, loud diapason, while the quick flashing at intervals gave point to all.'

The effect in these instances is due as much to solitude in the presence of awful natural phenomena as to the phenomena themselves. Mr. MacGregor is an excellent example of the class of strong men who like to feel themselves face to face with the sublimity of nature, getting well rid, for the time being, of human intervention in all its forms. The characteristic common to all his voyages is that the traveller was always alone. I remember a little incident in my own boating experiences which may be mentioned in this connexion.

I was by myself on a Highland loch in a tiny open boat of the kind used as yachts' dingeys. It was in the night, and the night was as dark as pitch, so that I could make out hardly anything except the light in a window at a considerable distance. The wind was high enough to produce waves which

were formidable to so small a craft; and suddenly I found myself carried away on a boiling white current, which seemed to issue from the land, and which, in fact, was a torrent swollen to fury by recent heavy rains. All this was very impressive to me, alone, with nothing of man's work near me except a tiny nutshell of a boat, but the impressiveness of the scene would have diminished in exact proportion to the amount of human help about me. In a large sailing-boat, with a servant, I should have felt it much less, and thought chiefly of the management of my sail; in a steam launch, with several companions, I should probably have thought that it was lucky we had a light in a distant window to guide us. In short, there are circumstances in which our feeling for the sublime diminishes in inverse ratio to the presence of human help. Imagine the three following examples:—

1. A thunderstorm in the higher Alps, seen from the public drawing-room of a large Swiss hotel, crowded with tourists, in the height of the season, as at Chamouni, for instance.

2. The same thunderstorm, seen from a lonely *chalet*, inhabited by two or three mountaineers.

3. The same thunderstorm, seen by a lonely traveller on the mountains, far from all human assistance.

In these instances, the impressiveness of the scene increases as the artificial circumstances diminish. It

must be terrible, indeed, to affect us much in the hotel. Even in the *chalet* we find a resource of comparative comfort, which affords our mind a refuge from the full terror of the storm. But to be alone in it, with nothing artificial but the clothes on one's own back—this is to feel it in all the strength of its sublimity.

In cases like these the love and hatred of the artificial may both operate strongly. A nervous woman would look to the artificial as a refuge, a strong man who had a taste for the sublime, like Mr. MacGregor, would like to find himself alone in the presence of nature, with his artificial surroundings reduced to a minimum, so as to be completely forgotten for the moment, and so as not to diminish in the least the full force of the impression received from nature.

We have still to consider that hatred of the artificial which is due to simple misanthropy. The reader might amuse himself by culling instances of of this from imaginative literature. He would find several in Byron—not that Byron in his better moods disliked the works and presence of man, on the contrary, he defended the artificial as an element of poetry most vigorously in his answer to Bowles—but there were times when Byron was really misanthropic, and at such times he delighted in the power of the natural forces as hostile or indifferent towards mankind. The best instance, and

the most generally known, occurs towards the close of the fourth canto of 'Childe Harold:'—

'Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage.

* * * * *

'The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves.'

Here, in its full force, is the rejoicing in the natural as hostile to the artificial, and this from pure misanthropy. The same sentiment, still referring to the ocean, occurs in the second act of 'Manfred,' where the Second Voice gives an account of havoc accomplished:—

'The ship sailed on, the ship sailed fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o'er his wreck,
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!'

It is unnecessary to multiply quotations. Enough has been said on this subject to show how the aesthetic perceptions may be interfered with by such

sentiments as the desire for the comfort of accessible human help, and an ill-natured rejoicing in human weakness. These sentiments directly affect our appreciation of painting, and are able, unless we resist their influence, to make us unjust in our estimate of artists. It has even been maintained, as a dogma, that the presence of the artificial in a painted landscape is essential to its quality as a work of art, simply because many people feel uninterested and uncomfortable in the presence of a scene where man has left no mark. In the same spirit a Manchester man once observed in my hearing that the prettiest natural landscape was wearisome to him unless he could see a smoky chimney, such was the interest he found in human labour of the kind most familiar to him. On the other hand, there is a particular state of mind, of which I have had some experience, which finds its pleasure in landscape increased steadily as the evidences of human labour diminish. I can distinctly remember feeling more and more cheerful as towns and villages were left behind, and finally attaining a state of indescribable felicity when I got into the most desolate scenery, amongst rocks and heather, on a Lancashire or a Highland moor. This was no doubt due in a great measure to the ugliness of the towns in the north of England with which I was most familiar. The feeling entirely passed away from me in France, where the cities are generally very nearly smokeless, and in most

cases so artistically situated that they improve the landscape instead of deteriorating it.

10. *Interferences of the Affections with the Judgment in matters of Art.*—The peculiarity of the Fine Arts, as distinguished from the sciences, is that affection, in some form, is necessary to the excellence of the work ; and yet affection warps the judgment, so that the artist is always biassed by his likings, and at the same time, of course, by his dislikings, which will always be of proportionate intensity. The same feelings always affect the judgment of the critic who cannot, without a strong effort of reason, distinguish clearly in his own consciousness between the suggestions of his feelings and the decision of his intellect. The critic is in the more trying position of the two. An artist is not called upon to be just in his appreciation of the various talents of others —he has only to develop his own, and this development may often be best obtained by a certain narrowness and intensity of feeling, in which affection and antipathy get the upper hand of reason. The critic's difficulty may be stated in a very few words. He cannot appreciate Art without affection, and he cannot appreciate opposite kinds of Art unless his reason is sufficiently strong to keep his affections under constant control. His affections ought to be as strong as if he had no reason, and his reason as active as if he had no affections.

Affection interferes with our perception of Art by

making us prefer the inferior to the superior on account of some pleasant or pathetic association of ideas. The nation, the family, the favourite occupation or amusement, all these powerfully interfere with the justice of our appreciation of everything in which beauty is concerned. One of the best instances of this is the conviction, so deeply rooted in many an honest heart north of the Tweed, that Scottish music is far superior to Italian. Here we see the patriotic sentiment warping the artistic judgment to such a degree that sober comparison becomes impossible. The heart, which is affected by the recurrence of some stirring or plaintive air, some 'Scots wha hae' or 'Auld Robin Gray,' feels that the loss of them would not be compensated by the most magnificent creations of Italian genius, with all their abounding variety, their inexhaustible invention, their exquisite artistic sense. It is like preferring an English village church to the Duomo at Florence because we have been christened in the village church, and our father and mother lie buried beneath its shadow, whilst the Duomo has no associations for us, and is foreign to all our experience. The popular mind does not analyse its preferences—it is incapable of establishing a distinction between what it cannot help loving and what has claims upon its admiration. This incapacity may be found, in minor degrees, in intelligences far above the popular. We see it in the taste for scenery, when the sentiment of local patriotism fondly ex-

aggerates the beauty and interest of the native land, whilst international antagonism exaggerates the defects of the neighbouring country, and depreciates its merits. The remnant of old hostility is still strong enough between the English and the French to make them unjust in their aesthetic criticisms of each other's countries. The French opinion is that England is buried under perpetual fog, and an Englishman must be exceptionally erudite in geography to have got rid of his national belief that all France is flat and uninteresting. How few Frenchmen will admit, without resistance, that the Thames above London is as rich in beautiful lowland scenes as the best parts of the Seine or the Marne! How few Englishmen will admit willingly that France contains as much fine mountainous scenery as Great Britain, or that the French mountains are many of them far higher than the British! The French have nothing to say against the climate of Denmark, because there is no international jealousy of Denmark; the English say nothing against the scenery of any minor State; but the jealousy between England and France finds vent in all sorts of mutual aesthetic criticisms. It chooses aesthetic criticism because, in matters of taste, there is always something unfavourable to be said; and it is not always so easy to prove its injustice as in a statement about trade or finance. The French say that the English have no music; the English say that the French

have no poetry. It was a great advantage to the musical and dramatic artists of Italy that their nation used to be too weak and divided to excite jealousy—it gave them a much better chance of a fair aesthetic criticism in other countries than French or English musical artists would have enjoyed. The truth of these observations is not at all invalidated by the kindly reception of English pictures in France in 1878, and of French actors and actresses in England in 1879. The fact is, that the jealousy between the two nations has diminished sufficiently to allow of more just criticism than that which prevailed many years ago, when French people used to deny all pictorial talent to the English, and English actors were received with open hostility in Paris. Repeated international exhibitions have done more than anything else to diminish aesthetic hostility between nations; but it may still be a matter of doubt whether this diminution is so favourable to the cause of Art as it is to that of universal justice. It is a moral improvement, certainly; but the consequence of it is to bring the Art of the world more and more under the influence of the same ideas, and to merge the different schools into one universal school.

Narrow local affections tend to intensify special excellences. The best Dutch painters had narrow local affections, so had our own Constable and Crome, and these sentiments were the foundation of their art. It is more likely that such artists as these would be

spoiled than improved by cosmopolitanism. Burns, by his culture, and also by his want of culture, was incomparably more local than Byron, and had far stronger local affections. His art as a poet was narrowed by this, but who can tell whether he would have gained, by a larger experience, such as that of Byron, any equivalent compensation for the local strength and intensity which he would have lost? Byron's advantages of situation are apparently far superior, and yet, if Burns had possessed them, these very advantages would have incapacitated him for doing his best work. The essentially best work of Burns could have been produced by no one but a Scottish peasant. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that Byron's wider experience of the world gave him a great advantage as a critic, and enabled him to judge of literature much better than Burns could judge of it. This brings us back to what I have said already, that local feeling may be good for an artist and detrimental to a critic.

Nevertheless, a professor who happened to be addressing an audience of artists might warn them that affections are only good for their work when the nature of them is strictly artistic. It is well for a painter to love his subject, but if he loves it for other than artistic qualities his affections will be detrimental to the work of art in which he represents it. An artist who loves a building or a landscape for the sake of old associations will find it difficult to make a

well-composed picture of it, because he will not like to sacrifice the truth which is dear to him in order to improve the artistic arrangement ; a kind of improvement which he would introduce without hesitation if he regarded the place with indifference, or with a purely artistic affection, such as he would feel for places that he liked in foreign countries. In the same manner the too earnest and too serious interest in some historical or religious subject, for reasons outside of art, which sometimes leads modern artists to seek for absolute truth of fact in their representations, is dangerous to artistic qualities.

There is, however, one love which is always safe and always encouraging—the love of art itself. It may be dangerous for an artist to love his subject over-much, but it is scarcely conceivable that he should love his art too much. The love of history and archaeology, the love of botany and geology, the love of locality, the love of literature, are all affections which in some form or degree may be dangerous to painting—not so the love of painting for its own sake. Other passions may group around it, but this should be the central passion of a painter. His means of expression should seem to him the happiest and best. He should enjoy the work of painting as if he were playing 'visible music.' He should love his palette, his brushes, his pigments, and have fanatical preferences for certain kinds of canvas or panel. The state of mind which despises the

artistic implements and materials as poor arms for a struggle with nature, should not be his state of mind. He ought to value them as a girl values her first watch, or a boy his first gun.

11 *Originality in Colour.*—Every great colourist who has hitherto appeared has coloured in his own way, and even amongst painters of little celebrity, so soon as they begin to give clear evidence of colour power, it has always a distinctly personal character, so that no one can regularly visit the exhibitions without knowing the tints and tones of those artists who enjoy a moderate degree of reputation for their colour.

If the ultimate result of art-study were the exact copyism of nature these personal differences would decrease as artists advanced in culture, and by the time they had reached a degree of perfection deserving to be called mastery, such differences would be lost in a common resemblance to nature. What we see around us in the actual world of art is strikingly different from this. When colourists advance in power they resemble each other less than ever, as the effects of idiosyncrasy become more and more decided, till at last they exhibit a complete separation from what has been done before, and this originality, when it does not offend us, we recognise as the mark of the consummate artist.

In every such instance the painter invents new harmonies, which are either suggested to him (it may

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be very remotely) by natural phenomena, or by previous works of art, or else simply conceived by the imagination and developed by experiments with pigments. The possibilities for such inventions are without limit in colour, as they are in music.

What interests us chiefly in the originality of colourists, as concerning our present inquiry, is that it gives such striking evidence of the personal character of aesthetic perceptions. Not only does school differ from school, but the members of the same school differ very widely from each other.

12. *That Perception varies with Idiosyncrasy.*—In everything connected with the fine arts, whether in execution or in the mere seeing of nature, idiosyncrasy tells with far greater force than in many other human occupations.* I had nearly written, than in any other human occupation, but hesitated, because, whenever I have made inquiry, I have generally discovered that idiosyncrasy was of importance, and easily detected by adepts, even in

* For the benefit of readers who do not know Greek, I will copy the definition and etymology of idiosyncrasy from Webster's Dictionary:—'Idiosyncrasy, *n.* [*Fr.*, idiosyncrasie and idiosyncrase, *Ital. and Sp.*, idiosincrasia, *Gr.*, ἰδιοσυγκρασία, from ἴδιος, proper, peculiar, and σύγκρασις, a mixing together, from συγκεραννύναι, to mix together, from σύν, with, and κεραννύναι, to mix], A peculiarity of constitution and susceptibility; characteristic belonging to and distinguishing an individual; idiocrasy.

'The individual mind takes its tone from the idiosyncrasies of the body.—*I. Taylor.*

labours where one would least expect to find it. There is, however, this essential difference, that ordinary occupations rarely encourage its development; whilst artistic occupations encourage it considerably in modern times, and it makes its way in the fine arts, even when not encouraged. The mechanic arts repress idiosyncrasy except in the case of inventors, who find a relief for it in their inventions. Social usage has also a very strong tendency to its suppression, or at least, as that is not possible, to suppress its outward manifestation in costume, opinion, or manners.

The action of idiosyncrasy upon the fine arts may be understood by the conditions of its suppression. To get rid of it, we have to adopt habits of production so nearly resembling those of simple manufacture, that what we moderns understand by fine art is very nearly eliminated. For example, cheap oil pictures in which idiosyncrasy can scarcely be detected at all, are sold by auction very extensively in the provincial towns of France; but they are produced by a process which is more than half mechanical. Blocks are used for printing in oil-colours upon canvas, and the colour so laid is brushed upon by different workmen in the different stages of the same picture. The result is that a bad landscape or figure picture, giving complete satisfaction to an entirely uneducated taste, can be sold at a price varying from twenty-five to a

hundred francs, without extra charge for its frame. In this case there is but one outlet for idiosyncrasy, yet there is one—the touch of the brush in the wet paint; and it is just this which elevates the work a little above the dead level of perfectly mechanical production. Unfortunately, from an art-critic's point of view, the advantage of this is in a great measure neutralised by the combination of several individualities in the same picture, as the sky is touched upon by one man, the trees by another, the water by a third, &c.

Idiosyncrasy may be repressed almost entirely even in paintings executed from beginning to end by one man, when the artist is under the strict control of a tradition, and bound to do his work in a certain set fashion, to depart from which is to commit an offence against established usage, and in some cases even against religion. The common Russian saint-pictures are, I believe, of this class. The workman labours under fixed rules which he is never permitted to violate, and soon acquires settled habits of manufacture in strict obedience to these rules. It is probable, however, that idiosyncrasy might be detected even here by a close observer personally acquainted with the workmen. It can be detected by experts even in such things as the sending of a telegraphic despatch along the wires, or the setting of type for a book, or the engraving of a visiting-card. I have heard a joiner

say after examining a box which he was supposed to have made, 'No, I did not make that box; the workmanship is good, but the man who made it has not my particular way of dealing with the materials.'

In the fine arts we owe to idiosyncrasy that charm of infinite variety which so vastly increases the interest of our exhibitions. This variety has been greater in England than elsewhere, because our artists have been less moulded by a common system of authoritative education than the artists of the Continent, and also because Englishmen have a natural turn for the development of individual peculiarities. The difficulty is to get education (without which it is impossible to avoid loss of time), and yet preserve what is really valuable in idiosyncrasy. It is encouraging to think that the difficulty has often been overcome. Many writers and artists of the present day, and in past ages, are and have been at the same time highly educated and original. Amongst poets it would be difficult to mention one in whom idiosyncrasy was visibly stronger than it is in Robert Browning, yet his education has been much above the average. Amongst painters not one has been more decidedly himself than Rubens, the most highly educated of artists. But though education will not affect a powerful idiosyncrasy unfavourably, it may crush a weaker one. I have known several curious instances of the degree to

which this evil influence may be carried, and of these the following is one of the most remarkable.

A painter (not an Englishman), who was young thirty years ago, was happily gifted by Nature in various ways. He had a very keen and active intelligence, a lively sense of the ludicrous, a habit of close observation of what passed before his eyes, the talent of a mimic, and the cutting severity of a satirist of life and manners. Had he been able to put himself effectually into his art he would have done work, I do not say like Hogarth, but bearing much the same relation to the humanity which surrounded him. Unluckily, however, he fell from the beginning under the influence of a clique of artists, led by a famous painter, who inculcated the utmost contempt for the representation of ordinary life, and for the rendering of expression. He therefore applied himself, with his whole strength and energy, to what he was taught to consider a higher form of art, the laborious rendering of naked flesh in a strictly classical manner. After years of labour in this direction he had come to consider that the thigh of an Academy model was of far greater consequence in the universe than the face of a man of genius, so he painted thighs year after year, and omitted everything which might indicate the presence of an intelligence or a soul. Meanwhile, his own intelligence, not being allowed to exercise itself in his art, found an outlet in conversation,

a double misfortune, for people did not like the pictures and would not buy them, but they liked the man because he amused them, and they wasted his time by keeping him constantly in society. Here is a case in which the idiosyncrasy of the man was dislodged from his art by teaching, and, as it could not be destroyed, was transferred to social intercourse. This was exactly what ought *not* to have happened.

Idiosyncrasy may be observed conveniently in the work of students as they draw together from the same model. The natural subject contains an immensity of different qualities confounded together. From these idiosyncrasy makes its own selection, taking some and neglecting others. In a line which is very nearly straight, but not quite, one man will see the approach to straightness, another the deviation. In a play of warm and cool tones one man will see the warm tones more, and another the cool ones. For one man projection is the most obvious characteristic of form, for another, outline. In some instances the most careful training will not remove a congenital peculiarity of vision. For example, most artists have a tendency, when they draw what they think is a perpendicular line, to make it lean one way or other, either as we write, or the contrary, which proves that the habit of writing has nothing to do with it. In careful drawing an artist minds to correct this ; but in very rapid sketch-

ing he cannot stop to think about perpendiculars, and then we see the effect of his idiosyncrasy.

It would be as well if critics would remember what they constantly forget, that they, too, as well as artists, have idiosyncrasies. They see some qualities, and are blind to others, just like the most impulsive and impressionable artists. They apply the criterion of their own personal taste to the general art production of the world, entirely omitting to consider the effect of what astronomers call the 'personal equation,' though in matters of taste it is always influential, whilst it is even strong enough to affect our perception of measurable and positively ascertainable facts. This is seen very clearly in international criticisms. An English writer said last month that the French had no irony (they are the most ironical beings in Europe, even to the point of often becoming tiresome with their irony), and another said a little later that they had no humour, as if there were any people in the world whose conversation was more frequently enlivened with humorous sallies of all kinds. A French critic said that England had no caricaturists: he understood our language, but the pages of 'Punch' left him perfectly grave, whilst he would laugh till he lost his breath over the last witticism of 'Cham.' One English critic said that French caricaturists were all coarse and monstrous in their conceptions, and addressed themselves

to a public destitute of a delicate sense of what was really ludicrous. Here we see the effects of national idiosyncrasy, as in the case of Sydney Smith, when he said that it required a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman's head, there being two idiosyncrasies in this instance, that of some Scotchman who had failed to appreciate Sydney Smith's wit, and that of the unappreciated jester himself.

A great deal more might be said about the effects of idiosyncrasy in the fine arts, but we have reserved the liberty of recurring to different parts of our subject in these desultory notes, and so leave this for the present with the remark, that whatever may be the differences of idiosyncrasy amongst artists and real critics, they all resemble each other in this, that they have an artistic idiosyncrasy of some kind; whereas there are many persons, highly intelligent in other matters, who do not appear to have it in their constitutions at all. This is one of those mysteries in our nature which cannot be scientifically explained. It is not a question of superiority or inferiority of intellectual power. I have seen men distinguished in literature—men of an intellectual rank very far, indeed, above the average—who went into a house where they had never been before, and yet, although the walls were covered with works of art, they paid no more attention to them than if they had been

blank panels. I once stayed several days in a house with a distinguished author, a keen and intelligent observer of mankind, who lived amongst the most cultivated people in Europe, and after having watched him carefully from the time he entered the house to the time he went away I am certain that he saw nothing upon the walls of that house except the books in the library. I mean that, when he went away, he must have been quite unable to tell whether the works of art were oil-paintings, or water-colours, or engravings. There is a rule in some silly French etiquette-books, that when you go to another person's house you ought never to look at the works of art. How easy it is for some people to obey that beautiful rule!—how difficult for others! Let us hope that we may be amongst the ill-mannered people who incur the censure of etiquette-books.

One of the most remarkable effects of idiosyncrasy in the fine arts is in the choice of subject. There is a good instance in an old number of 'Macmillan's Magazine' (April, 1865), in which the author of 'Essays at Odd Times' gives the following account of a visit which an artist paid to him in the country:—

'Living in a country essentially destitute of the features which artists love, being flat, treeless, and agricultural, a country once characterised by a witty, worthless king, as only fit to be cut up into roads, by which its inhabitants

might get away from it, I had often bemoaned myself on account of the dearth of the beautiful about me, and looked in vain for subjects for my sketch-book. I naturally expected, therefore, much sympathy from an artist, an old friend of mine, who came to spend a few days with me one summer. The morning after his arrival, however, I found him under his white umbrella, in a bit of waste ground at the back of my house, where a few straggling beeches and elms surround an old barn and some outhouses. In the midst of faggots, and hen-coops, and dust-heaps, and other rubbish which collects in such places, he had taken up his position, and had begun a large drawing in water-colour of two or three of these trees, which he said were most picturesquely grouped. And so indeed it seemed. At any rate, with trees and sky, and some felled timber lying amidst docks and mallow leaves, he produced a charming picture, full of light, and colour, and beauty.'

The writer of the essay, from which this is an extract, was a practical amateur in art, and evidently a man of a modest disposition, so he at once attributed the artist's choice of a subject, neglected by himself, to a superiority of judgment resulting from higher culture. 'If I could not find much beauty in the homely scenes around me, it was because I had not enough cultivated the beautiful within me.' This is modest, and it may possibly have been true, but at the same time it may be well to observe that there is another side to the question, depending, not on culture but on idiosyncrasy. Let us suppose, for example, that the author of the essay, instead of

being a modest amateur, had been a highly accomplished artist, with the strongest possible sense of his own learning and importance, he might still have been just as incapable of perceiving the beauty which lay around that barn and those old outhouses. It is most unlikely that Raphael would have seen anything in the place. We may be perfectly certain, though it cannot be proved, that Phidias would have seen nothing there. Titian would have enjoyed the character of the 'straggling beeches and elms,' and made a pen-sketch, but even Titian would not have cared for the light or the local colour. Rembrandt would probably have enjoyed it, and so would Ruysdael, but modern artists of strictly classical tastes, such as Ingres, would have paid no attention to it; and if their attention had been forcibly directed to such materials, they would have replied that they were 'merely picturesque,' and consequently interesting only to persons who pursued a low form of art. Even in our own generation, after all the cultivation of the sense of the picturesque which has been going on since the time of Rembrandt, there are still many artists of very high culture indeed, some of the very highest culture, to whom such a place as that described would be as uninteresting as if they were perfectly uncultivated.

Since the Fine Arts are the products of various human idiosyncrasies acting upon natural material and recasting it into new forms, the value of that

natural material is altogether relative. I remember once when writing about the works of a certain English artist who is now dead, and who in his lifetime had a particular liking for the scenery of Holland—I remember writing of that artist that it was a pity he had taken a fancy to such a country. He sent me a word of reply, through a common friend, in which he maintained that Holland was an excellent country for an artist to study landscape in, and that I was quite mistaken in my estimate. No doubt he was right, people are always right in their real affections; love is not a hood but an eye-water, as Emerson says; yet to my taste many parts of Great Britain are better sketching grounds than Holland. Again, there are differences of opinion, of very long standing, about Switzerland and France. I have no painful or unpleasant associations with Switzerland; my excursions in that country are brightened, in memory, by recollections of everything that is agreeable in society, hospitality, scenery, health, and the rest; yet notwithstanding this, and a strong passion for the sublime in nature, what there is of an artist in me has never been really touched by Switzerland, as it has been by Scotland and France; nor am I alone in this experience. It is not merely that Switzerland is a difficult country to paint, we admit the difficulty, but can imagine the possibility of overcoming it; the real reason is a certain want of harmony between the feelings which

Switzerland usually awakens in us and the purely artistic feelings. We see that it is a grand country, an impressive and sublime country, as well as you do, but—but we enjoy it in a way other than the artistic. I was reading a little book lately called 'Guienne,' by Mr. Algernon Taylor, an observant description of some parts of the old Duchy of Guienne and its inhabitants; and after reading Mr. Taylor's description of the little old town of Conques in Rouergue, I knew at once, by the elective affinity, that Conques would suit me ten times better than Geneva, yet the little French town has not half the attractions of the Swiss. What constitutes this elective affinity, and how do we recognise it in ourselves? It is a relation between man's nature and the external world, and we recognise its operation by a profound internal satisfaction in certain places, as we recognise its protest by a feeling of dissatisfaction and weariness in other places. These feelings are strong in all modern poetical natures, but in landscape-painters they are developed to such a degree that their satisfaction or its opposite may really constitute happiness or misery. If all landscape-painters were agreed that the same places produced the satisfaction, then we might say that it was an affair of culture, that by cultivating ourselves up to a certain point we should become sharers in it, but it is not so. One of the most cultivated landscape-painters I know, a man who draws and paints mountains with profound

knowledge, dislikes the Highlands of Scotland, and finds his satisfaction in the French and Italian Highlands. *Why* does he dislike the Highlands of Scotland? How or why can a landscape-painter dislike such places as Loch Katrine, Loch Lomond, and Loch Awe? The only answer is, that somewhere in the depths of that man's idiosyncrasy, depths as inaccessible to anybody else as the centre of the earth, there are certain affinities and repulsions, and that by the mysterious operation of these he cannot do otherwise than dislike whatever is unsuitable to himself.

When we have once grasped the idea that the artistic satisfaction, in the presence of what is called 'nature,' is dependent as much upon human idiosyncrasy as upon 'nature' itself, we arrive at the further truth that nobody can use up natural material. The natural material is in itself artistically as nothing; it only becomes something in the sensations of a human being. Even what we call light and colour and sound are only sensations. We say that we hear thunder, but we only mean that we perceive certain sensations excited in our own organism by aërial waves, set in motion by an electric discharge. Without an organized ear there may be aërial waves, but there is no *sound;* without an organized eye there may be luminous rays, but there cannot be what we call *light*, as that also is a sensation. What is true of these comparatively simple perceptions, is at least

equally true of artistic perceptions. We speak of cheerful effects and melancholy effects in landscape, which is merely our human way of talking, due to an inveterate habit of attributing our own sensations to what is outside of ourselves. The hills and clouds are not cheerful under sunshine, nor are they melancholy in the twilight; they are simply unconscious in both, whilst the natural laws which produce these effects are there for work of far greater importance than to make a sensitive human being elated or depressed. Again, what are commonly called cheerful effects do not cheer everybody. Simple sunshine, for example, as they have it in Egypt, soon becomes most oppressive to some minds, whilst bad weather makes some people cheerful and contented. So one man is cheered by the sight of a row of brick houses, which puts another into low spirits. We never know beforehand what a man who is a stranger to us will feel in the presence of certain objects or effects; he may be so constituted as to derive a sensation from them which no human being has ever felt before; and when this is so, and the man is an artist, the result is what we call originality. Public attention has been lately very much directed in London to an artist who had this quality very decidedly—I mean the Parisian etcher, Méryon. Hundreds of artists had illustrated Paris before he did, but not one of them had ever produced anything resembling a Méryon etching; and this is not at all because Méryon etched with

greater truth, it is because he had a very peculiar idiosyncrasy which made his interpretation of Paris quite different from that of any other man. As to truth, let it not be supposed for a moment that when people are paying large prices for Méryon's etchings they are giving money for veracity; they are buying what is far rarer, bits of the mind of a man of genius. If they want true views of Notre Dame and the Morgue they can get them, or what is much nearer to them, in the common photographs sold in the Rue de Rivoli. Before Méryon worked, if anybody had predicted that a new interpretation of Old Paris would shortly be given to the world—an interpretation which would awaken the keenest interest in the world of art,—such a prediction would have been received with incredulity from the constantly prevalent conviction that there is nothing left to discover. And, in his turn, did Méryon exhaust Paris? No, he did not exhaust it more than Girtin had done before him. Every fresh and original mind discovers its own Paris. You have the Paris of Martial, and of late years a painter named Luigi Loir has been illustrating Paris so as to convey to us quite a new set of impressions. The secret of these discoveries lies simply in the free play given to idiosyncrasy by the independent customs of modern artists. They are not condemned to work after set traditions, so their own natures get full play and the result is endless novelty and variety. Possessing so much in-

dividual liberty, they are under no obligation to seek 'pastures new,' as the new man makes new ground wherever he happens to be, even in such a place as Venice, where painters go still in the same numbers, though forestalled by so many predecessors. We see the same in literature. The London of Dickens is not the London of Thackeray, the Scotland of Sir Walter is not the Scotland of William Black. Even old tales become new again when retold by a new mind, as we see in the poetical narratives of Morris, who has made even Jason and Atalanta new for us. Shakespeare, before him, had given new life to a number of old stories. This novelty, imparted by a fresh mind to all that it deals with, is the reason why people like to hear preachers whom they have never heard before. A new preacher, in a certain limited sense, is a new revelation, because, although he preaches familiar doctrines, he sets them in a fresh light and exhibits them to us under aspects which make them really like 'tidings,' as they were to the first hearers. If the conception of the Church of the Future, which is indulged in by many cultivated Englishmen of the present day—a Church in which any man of sufficient culture might labour for the moral and spiritual advancement of his fellow-countrymen without binding himself to fixed opinions—if such a Church were ever to exist, its congregations would have the fullest benefit of the freshness given by idiosyncrasy, as we have it

already in literature and art. It is this freshness which gives the real interest to society. You go to a man's house; he tells you nothing that you did not know before; he makes remarks upon the weather and on the neighbours, and on the last news in the day's paper, conveying little or no information to your mind; but since he is constituted differently from you, and sees the same things otherwise than as you see them, you are refreshed and renewed by an intercourse which an unsociable person would consider an idle waste of time.

The moral of all this is, that we can hardly be too careful to preserve so precious a thing as the inborn quality of a person. An artist can never be, in the high intellectual sense, successful, unless he expresses his own idiosyncrasy in his art. What is sometimes called success, the clever, well-learned mimicry of another's performance, is not success; however lucrative, it is a wretched failure. Self-expression is success in the fine arts (including literature), providing, of course, that the self is worth expressing. It may seem, to the uninitiated, that nothing can be easier than for a man to express his own idiosyncrasy, but it is by no means so easy as it seems. When a man's mind is big enough for him to be able to cope with such a thing as art there are 'abysmal depths' of feeling in it which cannot be uttered at all in a rude and imperfect language. You cannot express the minds of great

thinkers and great poets in the language employed in the every-day intercourse of the vulgar. You cannot express the knowledge and feeling of a great artist with the execution of one inferior to him, however slight may be the inferiority. The artist whose craft, or technical language, is inferior to his mind, cannot express his mind, and the difficulty experienced by all artists is in bringing up the technical craft to the level of the mental conception. A painter said in my hearing, 'The strangest thing about my pictures is that they do not seem to myself as if I had painted them.' Now, that was failure, real failure, whatever other people thought. It was not hopeless failure, however, because the artist, now and then, in a week of fortunate inspiration, did something which looked to him like the offspring of his own mind, and his hope was that in course of time the harmony between mind and work might first become more frequent, and finally habitual.

Before quitting this part of the subject we may dispose of a possible objection. It might be objected to this theory of success and failure that an ignorant and unfeeling painter might produce ignorant and unfeeling work, which would accurately represent his idiosyncrasy, and yet be bad and worthless. Would that be success? Would it not be better that he should abandon the desire to express his own wretched little self and try instead to make himself a reflection of some nobler and larger mind? The

moon would be no luminary at all if she did not reflect sunshine, but by reflection she cuts a very respectable figure in the sky.

The proper answer to these questions is, that when an artist has not a powerful idiosyncrasy he ought not to produce imitations of strong men's work and pass them off as his own, but should content himself with honourably copying and translating works of art. If good copies were better appreciated and more adequately paid for, that would be an outlet here for inferior talents, and the progress made in the autotype processes leads us to hope that many such may find healthy employment in translating pictures into monochrome for photographic purposes.

This, and the work of engravers and etchers from pictures, may be mentioned as possible resources; but the probability is, that few men enter the pursuit of art whose idiosyncrasies are not valuable in some way or other, if only they could be fully expressed and properly employed.

13. *Idiosyncrasy and the Choice of Processes.*—There is a suitableness of process to idiosyncrasy, by which one man is naturally an oil-painter, another naturally a painter in water-colour, or fresco, or an etcher, or an engraver, &c.

This suitableness of process to idiosyncrasy may generally be very soon ascertained. The experience of a few weeks, or at most of a few months, will

enable a student to find out whether a process naturally belongs to him or not, the differences between students in this respect are so striking. The general belief that water-colour is easier than oil, that etching is easier than painting, is founded on the entirely false notion, that all men are alike in their inborn facilities. What do you mean when you say that water-colour is easier than oil? You mean easier for humanity to produce. You are not thinking of some abstract virtue in water-colour which has no reference to humanity. But what in the world is humanity with reference to painting? A mere abstraction. Humanity, chiefly English, may be said to have made London; but it cannot be said, in the same sense, to have made this or that particular picture, which is always the work of one man, however much that man may have been prepared by others. When we come to the man himself, we find something tangible and ascertainable, something which has its own special characteristics, its own difficulties and facilities—in short, an idiosyncrasy. By the strength and weakness of his idiosyncrasy each man is set apart from his fellows, under quite special conditions of life and work, which it is his first interest to ascertain. He cannot trust others. They will always make mistakes about his faculties until there is a visible result. By that time, he will be as wise as they. Balzac was told in youth, that whatever he might ultimately succeed in, it would

certainly *not* be literature; and similar instances abound. The safest guide is a feeling, not precisely of liking or disliking, but rather of ownership or non-ownership. Do you feel as if this or that process belonged to you? If you do, the probability is, that you will succeed in it ultimately; but if you have not this feeling, it is likely that your labour will be in vain. And this has very little to do with the general powers of the intellect. An artist of magnificent intellect and well-deserved celebrity as a painter wrote to me lately, that he had never been able to etch with satisfaction to himself, because he had found it 'irritating;' another artist told me that he found etching 'the most fascinating of all human occupations;' a third regretted continually, that his success as a painter prevented him from etching more frequently, as he loved copper with all his heart, and found colouring (he colours well) a torture to the mind. So with water-colour and oil. Some men are made for water-colour: those, probably, who are rapid and impulsive, and gifted with much decision of character. Others, who like to work more deliberately, prefer oil, with all its inconveniences. It is curious that the French, who are generally more rapid and vivacious than the English, appear to be not nearly so well adapted for water-colour, and have had comparatively little success in it, whilst, with all their impatience, they take to oil-painting well, and pursue it with a quiet tenacity and disci-

pline which seem to show that it answers well to something in their innermost nature. At the same time, the French have taken wonderfully to etching of late years, whilst the number of English artists who etch is comparatively very small; and although the English who succeed, succeed briliantly, they are very few in number. If we look beyond our own times, it seems clear that sculpture was as suitable to the Greek intellect as it is, generally speaking, unsuitable to the English. The Greek intellect appears in all things to have liked the limited and the definite—that which is complete in itself; that to which nothing can be added without being an excrescence, and from which nothing can be taken away without visible loss and mutilation. A chapel may be added, without injury, to a Gothic cathedral; but a Greek temple would be disfigured by such an addition almost as much as an animal by the addition of a limb. This love of the sufficient-in-itself is the best characteristic of the classical spirit, and the Greeks had it in the extreme, so that sculpture would be naturally their art. I mean the sculpture of single figures or small groups. Mere carving belongs to a lower idiosyncrasy. The Greeks, in their best time, were most sober and reticent in carving; the English, in the days of Elizabeth, were exuberant. In our own day, first-rate sculpture is only produced or enjoyed, by what may be called the classical idiosyncrasies; whilst carving, as a general

rule, is produced and enjoyed by Elizabethan or mediaeval idiosyncrasies.

Besides the broad, obvious divisions between the arts, between painting in oil and in water, between etching with acid and engraving with the burin, there are very many distinctions between processes in the same art which often separate the art as practised by one person from the same art as practised by another so very widely that different names might reasonably be given to such different kinds of work. One artist will paint in water-colour exactly on what are commonly considered to be the principles of oil; another will use thin turpentine, or even benzine, washes so freely in oil-painting that much of his work will be done on the principles of the genuine water-colour artist. It is unnecessary to follow this part of the subject further. The 'Technical Notes,' which were at one time published in the PORTFOLIO, went very fully into this part of the subject, and by the kind frankness of several distinguished living artists, as well as by the help of records left by the dead, we were able to show how each worked in his own way, in obedience to the preferences or necessities of his own ineluctable idiosyncrasy.

14. *How the Idiosyncrasy of the Artist deals with the External World.*—The reader who has glanced at any old edition of Rabelais will have noticed on the title-page that the stories were composed by the late M. Alcofribas, *abstracteur de quintessence.* Every

human idiosyncrasy is an *abstracteur de quintessence*, each of us is an Alcofribas.

The mode of operation is by selection and rejection, for the most part unconscious, but not unconscious altogether, especially in the intellectual. The visitors to the great international exhibitions, or to any other overwhelming agglomeration of products, are all *abstracteurs de quintessence*, each coming back home with his own concentrated essence of what he has seen ; the strongest and cleverest heads getting the most potent essence, whilst the weakest get something which has but a poor flavour, yet is their own.

An able metaphysician, now dead—there is no reason why I should not name Dr. Appleton, who founded the 'Academy'—once said to me, when we were talking about people's opinions on great subjects, that as all men were sure to be mistaken, I was sure to be mistaken with the rest. It seemed rather an assumption that all men were sure to be mistaken; but further reflection led me to the conclusion that Dr. Appleton had a deeper meaning, which he did not take time to explain. I believe he meant that all our views must, of necessity, be personal and partial views, dependent upon our various idiosyncrasies; and, consequently, that our opinions about the universe could never be justly representative, even on a limited scale, of the true constitution of the universe. He probably thought

that the human mind was not so constituted that it could perceive truth impartially, and that consequently everybody must be mistaken, in this way, that he would attribute more importance to this or that quality in things than was really due to it proportionately, whilst he would also unconsciously make omissions, and it was Dr. Appleton's strong sense of individual peculiarities in these respects, which led him to attach so much importance to that common consciousness which is their best corrective. So we say no Member of Parliament is so wise as the House of Commons, because the wisest individual member is still the victim of personal views. If this is true in philosophy and politics, how much the more is it true in the Fine Arts, where the gifts of the individual workman go for so very much! He sees only what his own organization will permit him to see, even in the commonest objects. Nothing is more wonderful than this process of selection. I have insisted upon it, especially with reference to etching, because in the art of etching it is often so strikingly visible; but it is visible, too, in painting and sculpture, wherever there is the slightest originality. It is astonishing enough, when we think of it, how the trees in a garden, from precisely the same chemical constituents of soil and water, can, by selection and reconstitution of elements, produce fruit so absolutely dissimilar as apples, apricots, and quinces.

It is astonishing that a goose should be able to make feathers out of grass and water, whilst a cow will turn the same materials, by another selection, into horns and hair; but it is at least equally wonderful that one man's way of seeing things should lead him to produce the pictures of Lionardo da Vinci, and another's those of Giorgione. To come to some recent instances. It is certain that no man living sees as Bonington saw, or even as Frederick Walker saw; and when we come to look closely into the matter we always discover, in such instances, preferences for some truths or beauties of nature, and indifference to others; those which are preferred are exaggerated and presented to us with disproportionate force, so that each colourist has his own peculiar hues, and each draughtsman his own graces and elegancies of form. This is why a sound and well-informed art-criticism must of necessity tolerate such widely different kinds of artistic expression, and a genial, sympathetic criticism would do much more than tolerate such varieties, it would enjoy them. At the same time the critic ought to be allowed to demonstrate what are the kinds of truth and beauty neglected by each artist, without being accused of hostility towards that artist, or of inability to appreciate his genius. Surely we may say that good taste was wanting in Shakespeare without failing to appreciate his mighty inventive power,

or that Rabelais is wanting in cleanliness, whilst we still heartily appreciate his wisdom. We may be clearly aware that Scott did not really represent the life of the middle ages, whilst thoroughly enjoying the healthy mental refreshment which it was his business to supply; we may know that Byron was destitute of real dramatic insight into the natures of other men, and yet fully perceive the extraordinary fire and energy of his own. The most useful criticism which could be applied to artists of all kinds would amount to a dispassionate description of their artistic idiosyncrasies, in which, without any feeling of hostility, the writer would simply discriminate between absolute truth and personal impressions and expressions. The difficulty of this, which would be the only perfect criticism, if it could be carried out, lies in the fact that the critic himself also has an idiosyncrasy which cannot but render him more sensitive to some truths and some excellencies than to others.

15. *The Common Consciousness of Schools.*—The theory that there is a common consciousness, superior to anything accessible to individual intelligences without its aid, is a help to the understanding of the artistic intelligence, but it is not safe to carry it too far. We can hardly speak of a national common consciousness in matters of art, at least in the present day, when we consider the immense differences and oppositions between one portion of

the community and another. The mass of our population, including the bulk of the middle classes, and a considerable portion of the aristocracy, can scarcely be said with truth to have any artistic consciousness at all. There is rather more of it in France, and yet, though the French are reputed to be the most artistic of modern peoples, their artistic consciousness is almost exclusively confined to the Parisian population. A few individuals in the provincial towns have a share in the Parisian consciousness, like distant corresponding members of a learned society, but that is all. The bulk of the rural population has no artistic consciousness whatever. Nevertheless, though we cannot help recognising the geographical restriction of the common consciousness in art, we must admit the necessity of it, such as it is; for it appears to be quite certain that nobody ever becomes either artist or critic who is debarred from getting his share of it. There is no instance of a man who, by sheer force of native genius, without help from the common consciousness of artists and critics in some great city, has attained to any knowledge of art, or power in art, whatever. There is no example of a man bred in a village, without access to some considerable town, who has ever given any evidence of artistic knowledge, though the natural materials for art, both in figure and landscape, exist in abundance in the country. Even the French and English rustic painters, such as Millet and Mason, have had their

share, at some time of their lives, in the influences of Paris and London. Most painters live habitually in a capital city; many put themselves purposely under the influence of several different capital cities in succession. In ordinary language we say that this is done for the sake of education and companionship; in philosophic language we may say that artists frequent capitals to get their share of the common artistic consciousness. With its help they may be small artists still, but without it they can be nothing whatever in art, no more than a man can become a soldier without joining a regiment.

The way in which the artistic common consciousness operates is by familiarising the mind in a short time with ideas which lie far outside of ordinary 'common sense.' For example, the general common sense recognises nothing in art but imitation, sees no value in personal expression, looks upon composition, when it hears of it, as a sort of dishonesty in painting, though musical 'composers,' by an accident of language, are comparatively familiar to it. The general common sense thinks that art must be true to be good, and if you show that it is only partially true, fancies you are blaming it. The general common sense cannot understand how or in what way the fine arts can have various merits, or how or why some of these merits are incompatible with each other —in short, it knows nothing of the conditions and exigencies which are inherent in the fine arts, and is

incapable of perceiving a distinction between the qualities of art and the beauties of nature. The artistic common consciousness, on the other hand,, as it at present exists, at least in London and Paris, is immeasurably ahead of the general consciousness on all these points, and is fully and clearly aware of many ideas which ought to be familiar to students but which lie, as yet, far outside of the provinces of thought which are covered or occupied by the general mind, that is, the domain of common sense.

16. *Keys and Transpositions.*—Music has familiarised us with the idea that the same artistic conception may be expressed in what the musician calls different keys, and this is true to a great extent of the graphic arts; but it is not wholly true, for a special reason.

In music many beautiful tunes require but a short compass for their complete expression, as there is no contest with nature, no attempt to follow or represent the vast range of the natural forces in anything. The musical composer chooses his own compass, fixes by himself the limits within which his idea may be adequately expressed, and these limits may be very narrow; they may be included between the extremities of a couple of octaves, or even, for some simple airs, with a single octave. It is evident that the narrower the compass of the tune, the more numerous may be its transpositions. There are simple airs which may be played almost anywhere on a piano, but elaborate compositions which require

nearly the whole compass of the instrument cannot be transposed so as to push either high or low notes into the region of silence.

In the graphic arts it is different. Here the transposition is really and frequently carried so far as to push the high or low notes into the region of what is relatively silence; that is, either into white space or dark space.

But, again, here comes another distinction of immense practical importance. White space is easily tolerated in drawings on paper, such as pencil and pen drawings, or in engravings and etchings which are printed on paper, but it is not tolerable at all in paintings. For example, in the well-known *Hundred Guilder* print of Rembrandt most of the figures to the spectator's left are lost in white space, so far as tonality is concerned, and consequently have had to be drawn in outline, because their tone is invisible. Now, let us try to imagine what an impossible task it would be to copy the *Hundred Guilder* print in colour, yet at the same time in its own tones. It could not be done; and if colour were abandoned in the light, as it has been sometimes in small spaces of light in painting, the left of the picture would be almost exclusively in white paint, which would be intolerable.

Transposition is easier in black and white art than in colour, because the colour fixes us down to certain limited ranges of tones, or else it ceases to exist.

Nevertheless, there is room for transposition to a certain limited extent even in colour itself, and this extent varies with the kind of subject, and with the peculiar quality of the colours which have to be used. It is certain, for example (every painter will understand this), that transposition is far easier in yellows than in reds. The reason is because yellows retain far more of their chromatic quality in pale tones than reds do.

As an illustration of the difficulty of transposition in colour, let me suppose a particular case—a red sunset. In an etching the red clouds will be left white, thereby gaining many degrees of light, and coming much nearer to the lightness of the clouds in nature, which are light and red at the same time. But in painting the artist is compelled, first of all, to have his clouds red: He would be glad to transpose his work into a higher key to get light; but how can he? If he mixes white with his red he loses its quality, so that is not to be thought of beyond certain very narrow limits. The painter is therefore compelled, under certain circumstances, to transpose in the other direction, and paint everything darker than nature to give light to his clouds by opposition. The etcher had liberty in both directions; the painter, in this instance, has it only in one.

Materials limit the power of transposition in darks also. For example, let us suppose that Samuel

Palmer etches a twilight, and that Appian makes a charcoal drawing of the same twilight; Palmer will get very much further down in the low tones than Appian could, and this simply because the deepest blacks of charcoal, though of delightfully fine *quality*, are not so dark as the blacks of etching. The consequence is that the draughtsman in charcoal has to make his blacks look as dark as possible by opposition. When not sufficiently opposed by lights the blacks of charcoal look grey, hence the charcoal draughtsman should transpose rather more in the direction of light than the etcher is compelled to do by his process. Etchers often transpose in the direction of light by choice.

It used to be believed, both by artists and connoisseurs, that light could only be expressed by surrounding lights with a great quantity of dark for opposition. Modern painters have proved conclusively, by actual experiment, that light may be expressed in light pictures by the help of a few truly related shadows and reflections. The transposition of tones is therefore frequently carried in the direction of light by modern painters. I mean that the whole set of tones is transposed towards the treble, and this allows far greater power to those extreme darks which, in pictures constructed on this principle, are used in small quantity, and for very special and definite purposes.

We have had occasion to observe that many

things in art criticism lie outside of the common consciousness. This matter, transposition, is amongst them. The conception of art prevalent amongst the general public is that it imitates the tones of nature, which could only be done, if done at all, for a few tones in the middle of the scale. Wilful transposition is, in fact, a simple necessity in many pictures; for example, if sunshine is painted at all, it can only be done by transposition. Then comes the inevitable consequence that as there must be transposition of some sort it is sure to differ with different artists. What is really done in practice is this. Every painter transposes in his own way, and not at all (as might be supposed) with the orderly regularity and completeness of the musician.* Painters transpose simply for convenience, and many a picture which satisfies the eye is really painted in two keys (or more), the point of contradiction (where the two keys overlap each other) being artfully concealed or dissimulated by some artifice which attracts attention away from it. The rigid carrying out of one key to its ultimate consequences would, in fact, generally land us either in white vacancy or black vacancy. The fine arts are like perfectly good manners in this respect, that

* The reason for this difference is that the musician has only to transpose human work (some musical composition) whereas the painter has to transpose nature itself into art. The musician transposes finite into finite; the painter, infinite into finite.

they are not according to rule, but according to the necessities of the occasion, and the taste of a cultivated person. Every real gentleman is a gentleman in his own way, and not according to the etiquette-book; so every real artist is an artist in his own way, and not according to laws laid down by critics.

Amongst these various transpositions, pray what becomes of truth? The answer is that truth is dealt with in so many and such various ways, that it is in all cases partially sacrificed, whilst in some cases the sacrifice is relatively very great indeed. There are pictures in which everything else is sacrificed to get one striking and startling truth of tone at a very important point to which the attention of the spectator is sure to be directed, but these are not generally works of a very high class. In the best painting sacrifice is managed more on the principle of compromise, and endless ingenuity is expended by clever painters on the management of tones and colours so as to prevent some of them from getting too much truth to the disadvantage of the rest. The painter would give full truth to all of them if he could, but as this is not possible, he has to contrive so that each shall get a share of truth sufficient for its place. The necessity for this parsimonious distribution of truth varies greatly with the nature of the work to be done. A heap of vases and rich stuffs may be painted by Blaise Desgoffe with startling imitative truth so long

as there is nothing else in the picture; but if the same materials were introduced in the foreground of a sunny landscape they would have to be in great measure sacrificed.

PART III

ESSAYS.

STYLE.

THE reader may remember the definition given by Reynolds in the Second Discourse,—'Style in painting is the same as in writing, a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed.'

This definition is simply technical. Style, here, is technical facility and no more.

In the Third Discourse, Reynolds approaches the question of Greatness of Style, but this time shrinks from a definition on account of its difficulty. 'It is not easy to define in what this great style consists; nor to describe, by words, the proper means of acquiring it, if the mind of the student should be at all capable of such an acquisition.'

Reynolds then proceeds to express himself as if he believed that greatness of style consisted 'in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, peculiarities, and details of every kind.'

The first study of the painter who aims at greatness of style should be, according to Reynolds, the 'long laborious comparison,' which by 'observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular.' The artist so prepared is 'enabled to

distinguish the accidental deficiencies, excrescences, and deformities of things from their general figures,' and so 'makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any original.'

It is evident from these extracts that Reynolds had two distinct conceptions of style, one technical and the other intellectual. The technical conception was simply that of power over materials; the intellectual was the notion of ideal forms, of which those actually seen were supposed to be imperfect varieties, the variety being itself taken as evidence of deviation and imperfection. As these two conceptions of style are different, so are the notions of the artistic deficiency which is the want of style. Technically it would be insufficient skill in the use of materials; intellectually it would be a too great individualisation of objects by a too definite marking of their particular characteristics.

We may understand the opinions of Reynolds more clearly by observing how he criticised the style of some one painter. His criticism of Rubens opens much of his own mind to us. Rubens worked 'in a subordinate style; a style florid, careless, loose, and inaccurate;' yet 'those qualities which make the excellency of this subordinate style appear in him with their greatest lustre.' Reynolds contrasts this with the 'simple, careful, pure, and correct style' of Nicholas Poussin. In the 'Journey to Flanders and Holland' Reynolds says that the manner of Rubens

'is often too artificial and picturesque for the Grand Style.' Nevertheless, when using the word 'style' with reference to manual skill, in its first sense, he can praise Rubens with less reserve. In speaking of the *St. Justus* he says, 'Every part of this picture is touched in such a style that it may be considered as a pattern for imitation.'

Above the skilful but subordinate style of Rubens was the grand style exemplified in the works of Michelangelo, of which Reynolds fully admitted the exceedingly artificial character:—

> 'It must be remembered that this great style itself is artificial in the highest degree. It pre-supposes in the spectator a cultivated and prepared state of mind. It is an absurdity, therefore, to suppose that we are born with this taste, though we are with the seeds of it, which by the heat and kindly influence of this genius, may be ripened in us.'

Reynolds was not an exact thinker, his intellect was not sufficiently trained to enable him to theorise quite safely on so difficult a subject as that of style, and his opinion that greatness of style consisted in the preference of the general to the particular, has been easily demolished by Mr. Ruskin; yet, notwithstanding this logical weakness, the doctrine of Reynolds may be of great utility to us as a starting-point, and it is quite worth our while to try to understand what he really thought. Unless we thoroughly

understand the opinions of Reynolds we cannot enter properly into the subject, because his opinions were a necessary stage of advancement in aesthetics, through which artistic humanity, whether in or out of England, has had to pass before reaching the doctrine about style which I shall endeavour to set forth afterwards.

We have seen that Reynolds had two distinct conceptions of style, one technical and the other intellectual. We ought not to confound the two. Let us consider each by itself. Technical style is 'power over materials.' That there may be no mistake about his meaning Reynolds is careful to explain that in the case of the painter he refers to colours, as in the case of an author he would refer to words.

Here, I think, he confounds style with simple skill, whereas the two are far from being identical. I should say that skill is an essential part of technical style, but that skill may exist without style.

It requires great skill to paint like a well-coloured photograph, yet such painting would be remarkable only for the complete absence of style, even technical.

There certainly is such a quality as technical style as distinguished from intellectual, a quality which has nothing to do with the choice of objects represented, which has nothing to do with composition, or with light and shade, or colour, but which is the grace of the workman in the exercise of his craft. It is what Englishmen of the present day call 'good form' in rowing and other pursuits which are mere modes of

motion, and represent nothing. And although painters do not paint in public, although the people do not see whether the artist holds his palette and mahl-stick gracefully or not, still the touches themselves reveal his manual inelegance or grace. A just criticism must always take account of the presence or absence of this manual grace. It presupposes a certain fineness of organization, and a certain virtue, the love of doing things properly. It is charming and admirable in itself, independently of science. A set of oil studies were sent to me lately by a French artist, which did not generally represent very interesting subjects, and were crude in colour, but the elegance of the touch was delightful, so that it became a pleasure to imagine the workman actually using his brush, and the work was so easy to follow that he seemed to be still painting before one with a beautiful facility. Here was real technical style. Of skill without style there are abundant instances, particularly in English and Dutch art. In such cases the painter is quite master of his materials, but does not use them elegantly; just as an equestrian may be master of his horse, and still not ride like a gentleman.

Before quitting the subject of technical style, we must observe that it is by no means limited to one manner. As graceful women are graceful in different ways, each having her own gift which she cultivates by a progress towards its own special perfection; so

the grace of manner in painting must vary with the genius of the artist. It is national to begin with, and then individual; one nation differing from another, and after that, within the nation, each person differing from his fellow-countrymen. An enlightened criticism instead of finding fault with these varieties, would take a pleasure in them, as one of the many means by which Providence relieves the *ennui* of human existence.

It is scarcely necessary to remark that the grace of manner which constitutes technical style must, from its nature, be beyond positive appraisement. Nobody can prove it, and anybody who chooses to deny its existence may do so. The denial is all the easier that the grace in question manifests itself so variously. Again, what seems grace to one critic will look like affectation or bravura to another. There is no fixed standard to appeal to, and we must be content with educating our taste as well as we can; after which there is a probability that although we may make mistakes sometimes, we shall on the whole be likely to appreciate what is good, especially if we have no narrow prejudices to prevent us from recognising different kinds of elegance in workmanship.

Popular artists usually possess technical style which, in some of its manifestations at least, is an exceedingly popular quality. Rubens had it to excess, so that all the work of his own hand is

full of it. He enjoyed his own manual ability as a clever violinist enjoys the precision of his own fingering and bowing. In the case of Rubens the accomplishment went far beyond precision, and became what Constable in speaking of Girtin called the 'sword-play of the pencil.' So it did in Franz Hals. In Van Dyck the power is evident also, but not so conspicuous. It was one of the superiorities of Reynolds and Gainsborough. Landseer had it in a remarkable degree. Fortuny had it, in his own way, to such a degree that it made three-quarters of his reputation. Little of it was visible in the early work of Millais, for example, in the *Ophelia;* but his later work is rich in technical style, one of the best instances being the portrait of Madame Bischoffsheim.

Technical style in painting is, to a certain extent, independent of truth; as we all know that it is in literature and oratory. The writer may affirm what is not true in excellent language, the orator may enchant his hearers by beautifully constructed sentences and a seductive voice; whilst at the same time his facts may be erroneous or unfairly presented and his inferences illogical. So, in painting, the most stylish brushwork is perfectly compatible with ignorance or misrepresentation of nature. Falsehood may be well painted as truth may be badly painted; and it happens unfortunately for the moral side of art that well-painted falsehood has always an incomparably better chance of being admired, and

even of being accepted as true, than work of far higher veracity which is inferior in technical ability. It may even be proved that a high degree of technical style, bold and masterly brushwork, the 'sword-play of the pencil,' does in itself necessarily involve an infinite number of small departures from the truth. Absolutely truthful painting would be without dash of any kind, and would require of the artist such a perpetual strain of attention in following and copying the minute truths of nature, that he would not have mental liberty enough to give him any liberty of hand. But it is not to these minute truths, sacrificed of necessity, that I refer when I say that 'stylish brushwork is perfectly compatible with ignorance or misrepresentation of nature.' I refer to truths of importance which may be, and often have been, neglected by artists who know perfectly well how to manage their brushes and colours.

Style in etching (technical) may come nearer to the original meaning of the word than style in any other modern art, for even in calligraphy the stylus has been replaced by the pen, whereas in etching it has been preserved, and the masterly use of it constitutes style in the most literal sense. This may be noted, in passing, as one of the curiosities of etymology.

Reynolds defined style in painting as identical with the power over words in literature. Buffon went further, and said that ideas alone are the foundation of style, that verbal harmony is merely ac-

cessory and only depends upon the sensibility of our organs. Again, he said that style is only the order and movement which we put in our thoughts. It might, however, be proved that verbal harmony constitutes a sort of technical style in itself, with very little dependence on ideas.

It is needless to pursue this comparison between literature and painting, because there is an initial defect in it which Reynolds does not appear to have noticed. Painting includes a handicraft as well as a fine art, and the perfection of technical style implies perfect skill in the handicraft. In literature it so happens that the handicraft can be separated from the art. For example, the reader of these words benefits by two very highly-developed handicrafts, those of the type-founder and printer, which between them do for these words exactly what the manual skill of an artist does for the details of his picture—they present the words in a clear and agreeable form, which satisfies the eye and enables them to enter readily into the mind. If the reader is disposed to undervalue the artistic importance of printing, he may soon convince himself of his error by trying to read some favourite author in an edition which is inappropriate and in bad taste. The difference of pleasure between reading an author in a suitable and an unsuitable edition is so considerable that every true lover of literature pays close attention to the selection of his editions. It is curious that the work

of the type-founder and printer actually makes the ideas of an author clearer than they are in his own manuscript. Not only does it enhance the intellectual beauty of his work, but it brings faults to light, and makes the whole more visible. There is no comparison between typography and the graphic arts in this respect, even those by which drawings are reproduced. All the reproductive processes incur technical loss—in many of them the loss is enormous—whereas manuscript gains by typography, and the author is fortunate in comparison with the draughtsman, because he gains in force as well as clearness through the help given by his mechanical allies.

The comparison of literature with painting would be more accurate if the writer produced his own book materially as well as intellectually, which would be the case if he engraved the text. This has actually been done in several instances: by William Blake, by the French etcher, Martial, and by the English etcher, Mr. Edwin Edwards. There is no intellectual advantage, however, in discarding type, for such writing in reverse has never the mental characteristics of autograph, and written autograph itself more frequently obscures thought than it elucidates it. A case might be imagined in which an author should write out his book in the sort of manuscript which in his opinion would assist its expression most effectually. This may possibly have been done by some patient author before the invention of printing,

and if such a piece of labour was ever actually accomplished the scribe would have been doing what painters do every day, addressing himself to the public by a handicraft of his own, without the intervention of a mechanical process.

We may dismiss the subject of technical style in painting with the observation that it may be made the object of too anxious pursuit, to the detriment of higher qualities. The commercial value of it is so great that young artists are often painfully anxious to attain it—an anxiety which is only too natural in an age when the principal object of criticism seems to be to prove that artists do not know their business. There is, I think (and there are very eminent painters who agree with me), a disposition amongst modern critics to throw contempt upon artists for technical failure, when the expression of contempt is either altogether undeserved or else far too harsh for the occasion. Critics who have no practical experience themselves, who do not know in what the technical difficulties of the graphic arts really consist, have no hesitation in attacking men who have spent many years in the contest with these difficulties, precisely on these technical grounds. In most instances of this kind the critic would discover, if he came to know more of the matter, that the artist had been hampered by difficulties which nobody but an artist could fully appreciate, and that he had made some compromise or sacrifice, intentionally, so as to pre-

serve as much of one quality as was compatible with the existence of another. Every artist who reads these lines will know at the first glance exactly what I mean. He will know that there is no such thing as *absolute* technical perfection ; that sacrifices have always to be made somewhere, and that it is either gross ignorance or grievous injustice in a critic to pounce upon the sacrificed parts, and exhibit their purposeful slightness or dullness as an imperfection which a better workman could have avoided.

We have now to consider something far higher than manual style, but what is also called 'style,' especially on the Continent. It is most important that the reader, if he cares in any way to possess accurate notions of these matters, should clearly establish in his own mind the distinction between these two. It may be made very clearly in words. The style which comes from the dexterity of the hand may be called manual style ; that which is due to the mind may be called intellectual style.

Intellectual style in painting consists, first in noble choice amongst realities. It must be understood that all artists make a choice, and when their selection of material is dictated by a high and severe taste, it is so far a step in the direction of intellectual style.

But beyond this simple choice of material, beyond the preference for fine models in nature, the painter makes a choice of qualities in the models selected. If he has the gift of discernment which leads to intel-

lectual style, he chooses the noblest and best qualities, and dwells upon them, giving attention unwillingly to inferior qualities, and using them only for the sake of contrast or when some moral purpose requires them to be brought into prominence. This, of course, is already a deviation from nature, because a fair and full representation of nature would be impartial, which intellectual art is not.

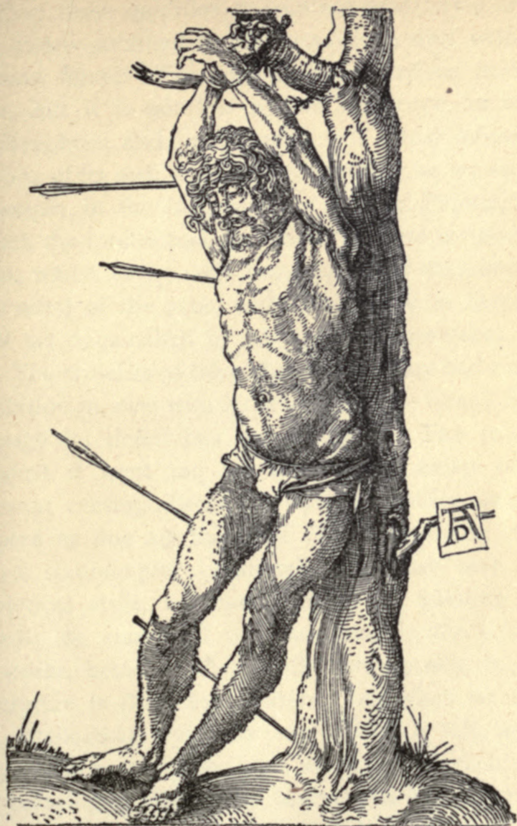
The deviation from nature by choice of qualities is, however, still slight in comparison with a far more essential alteration which I must now explain.

Intellectual style always includes the results of noble education. The painter who possesses it brings to his work a mind already enriched by the labours of others. He adds something to nature, and that something is the result of accumulated experience and invention. Without tradition there can be no intellectual style, because one human mind is not powerful enough, nor one human life long enough, to develop such a product. Intellectual style is *never* discoverable in the isolated attempts of early masters ; it comes only when great schools are passing into their full maturity. It is not nature, but a product of thought and taste. The early masters who arise before style is developed are often much nearer to nature than the painters of style ever care to be. If Albert Dürer and Raphael had sat down to draw a man's leg, and the same leg, Dürer's drawing would assuredly have been the closer

copy of the natural object, which he would have given with all its defects. Raphael, by adding to it the quality of intellectual style, would have failed to secure so accurate a likeness, but would have lifted his drawing into a higher department of art.

It is a mistake, I think, in the French schools of painting to speak of '*le style*' as if there were only one intellectual style, and as if it could be transmitted like a recipe. I have known French classical painters who seem to think that '*le style*' was just one thing which Raphael, Michelangelo, and Nicolas Poussin, had got hold of in their day, and which Ingres had recovered in ours. They seemed to believe, too, that by studying these masters they might get possession of the recipe for themselves. If style had been one thing only, then either Raphael or Michelangelo must have been in error, for their two styles differ from each other materially; and there is a great difference also between Raphael and Lionardo da Vinci. We cannot reason safely about this or anything else in art without admitting variety. Intellectual style is sure to be present whenever the natural subject is ennobled by thought and imagination, and enhanced by learning, as we constantly see in poetry, where the poetic artist gives an intellectual charm and value to common material objects, and contrives, *àpropos* of this thing or that, to enrich his narrative or description by reference to the elder lore of poetry. The possibilities of

FROM A DRAWING BY RAPHAEL, IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.



ST. SEBASTIAN. FROM THE ENGRAVING BY ALBERT DÜRER.

adding these qualities to painting or drawing are by no means confined to the arts which deal with the human figure. The gain is more obvious in those arts, but it is not less real in landscape, in which a thoughtful and poetic mind will subtly infuse the results of its own thought and learning, as we see, for example, in the landscapes of Samuel Palmer, from which the intellectual and poetic element is never absent, whilst every such composition is associated in the mind of the artist with noble work in literature and art bequeathed by his great predecessors.

The criticism of the eighteenth century had a noble ambition in view with its respect for the Grand Style, though its definitions are imperfect. The reaction against it went too far when some artists of the present century discarded style altogether, and accepted as fine art the most literal rendering of the most commonplace material. We have seen that technical style, or manual skill, in painting can hardly be compared with anything in the work of a writer, because what really corresponds to it in literature is done by printers; but when we come to intellectual style the comparison is fair, and it may help us to understand the value of such style in painting. Everybody knows the difference between poor and bald literature, in which facts are barely stated, and literature of a high order, in which facts are dealt with by the hand of a master, who exhibits them with startling clearness when he

chooses, and induces us to give him our attention by enriching his pages with allusions which go far beyond the facts, and have often but a very remote and fanciful connexion with them.

Intellectual style, both in literature and art, is a result of culture. It can only be attained by gifted persons, but the most gifted persons cannot attain it in isolation. The Grand Style is only one of its departments, due to a predominance of the sense of grandeur. Whilst acknowledging the existence of the Grand Style as a noble manifestation of the human mind, we may still admit that painting would soon weary us if it were all in the Grand Style, which is narrowed by want of sympathy with human feeling, and by a want of interest in the various beauty of nature. The mind of Michelangelo is by far the best example of what a human mind may be, when entirely occupied by ideas of grandeur—a noble mind, yet not such as any generally intelligent person would wish to possess. Too exclusively pre-occupied by visions of sublimity to enjoy either the humour of life or the beauty of the common world, Michelangelo lived above the zone in which life gives its pleasantest and most varied fruits. It is like living up in the higher Alps, without permission to descend below the level of eternal snow. The nimble genius of Shakespeare seems infinitely preferable, with all his glaring faults ; the Grand Style was accessible to Shakespeare, but his spirit did not

dwell in it exclusively. He could descend to any level, and interest himself in anything, even in the humblest wild flowers of his native land. And although few subjects, comparatively, are suitable for the Grand Style, every subject in the world that is fit for art at all, may be ennobled by thought and feeling and adorned with learning, so that even in his humblest work the artist is not simply a craftsman. It is Intellectual Style, in one or other of its innumerable manifestations, which raises handicraft into fine art. Without it all the dexterity in the world is only man's cleverness; with it, the work of the painter and sculptor takes its place beside that of poets and philosophers.

SOUL AND MATTER IN THE FINE ARTS.

ONE of the results of many years devoted principally to the study of the Fine Arts has been the quite unexpected discovery that there exists a school of criticism which, instead of interesting itself in the material side of art, avoids as much as possible all consideration of it. The advantages of this course are twofold. There is, to begin with, an immense economy of labour and time. The critic who avowedly despises all technical knowledge is, by the simple expression of this contempt, at once emancipated from the troublesome obligation of acquiring it. It is difficult to over-estimate the convenience of this. If it were possible in the ordinary affairs of life, any one might enunciate authoritative opinions without preparatory study, and so there would be nothing to prevent anybody from dealing with military subjects or industrial subjects, or, in short, any subjects whatever from which he is usually debarred by his ignorance of material conditions. As things really exist, one is only too clearly aware that if he attempts to deal with anything in which matter is concerned, he is sure to get entangled in purely

material difficulties, and that any one who knows what those difficulties are will easily triumph over him by exhibiting his oversights. The one exception to this rule appears to be the Fine Arts.

If a writer on art takes fully into account the influence of material conditions, he exposes himself to an attack of a very peculiar kind. It may be said of him that he concerns himself only with matter, such as pigments, canvases, coppers, acids, papers; and if it is not said openly it may very easily be implied that his mind is of a low and grovelling order and does not concern itself with the exalted things of art. The author of 'The Graphic Arts' knowingly exposed himself to this kind of attack, but he hoped, and the success of that work proved the hope to be well founded, that the public would not infer from the presence of interest and knowledge concerning technical things the absence of all interest and knowledge concerning the intellectual and imaginative elements in art. It would be strange indeed if one who was known to value the intellectual life outside of the fine arts should be indifferent to it within their pale—strange if a steady reader of the best existing literature should suddenly divest himself of his tastes when he found himself before a work of graphic art, and become a student of matter only, without any reference to mind.

The truth is that in the fine arts Mind itself is

dependent upon Matter for its expression, and that to a degree which cannot be realised until we are brought into immediate contact with the material necessities themselves. The very desire for a full and untrammelled mental expression is of itself the cause that impels artists and all who sympathise with their modes of thought and their interests to take matter seriously into account. When we seem, to an outsider, to be thinking of matter only, our real anxiety is to facilitate some kind of mental expression—perhaps some special and peculiar kind. Those who know nothing of technical matters, and take no interest in them, appear to believe that an artist of real ability can always overcome any technical impediment and express his genius with equal completeness in any of the forms of art. Such a man, they seem to think, is above those material difficulties that perplex the student and awaken the curiosity of the critic. What the great artists have actually done has been to express only that part of themselves which could be readily expressed in the kind of art they happened to be using for the moment. Instead of stupidly struggling against material conditions, they quietly and wisely conformed to them; but it is necessary for a critic to know what those conditions were; because, if he did not, he might suppose that the artist had expressed all of himself when he had intentionally only expressed a part.

To make this clear I will take a well-known ex-

ample, Turner. By nature he was especially and peculiarly sensitive to the beauty of distances; but this feeling for distances could only be fully expressed by the utmost delicacy of shade and colour. Now, if you had given Turner a reed-pen to draw with, and black ink, without permission to dilute it, he could not have expressed the delicacy of a distance at all; but he might still have given some idea of its nature, of the hilly or flat country, of the woods and the distant villages, and he could have told you plainly enough whether the water six miles off was the sea, or a Scotch loch, or a French river. The reader may believe that I have supposed a case which could never occur, that nobody would refuse permission to dilute ink; but the case is not imaginary. When draughtsmen work for photographic reproduction in blocks to print with type the ink must be as black as possible throughout, a condition that puts a stop at once to all delicacy in distances. Now let us pause for one moment to consider all that would be meant for Turner by such a privation as this. It may seem only material, but it is a mental privation of a terrible kind. The delicacy of a distance in landscape art is inseparably connected with poetical feelings which are affecting because they go far beyond material things. The vague mystery of a beautiful distance leads the mind out of the world itself, as the most exquisite music does. It is almost a profanation to attempt any expression for this idea in words, except in the form of

poetry; but it is not too much to say that the hopes and aspirations of the individual life, as well as the aspirations we may indulge in for the human race,—in a word, all thoughts that look wistfully to the future, are connected with ideas of distance in which the solid earth itself becomes aërial and loses its shades in heaven. If a landscape distance only meant what is measurable—six miles, ten miles, twenty or thirty miles of land—it would not be more poetical than a railway. There is more in it than that, and Turner certainly felt it. Turner with black ink for a medium of expression would have been deprived of the means of utterance.

If the permission to use very pale and delicate gradations is necessary for the poetry of distance, so there is another kind of poetical expression in the fine arts that is impossible without the powers of gloom. Darkness has its own poetry, and if we go deeper into the matter we shall find, here also, that the real reason for the way in which we are affected is a spiritual and not a material reason. Simply from the material point of view darkness is annoying because one cannot find things easily, or dangerous, because we may fall and hurt ourselves; but it is not awful in the least. What is truly awful in darkness is, that it reminds us so powerfully of the darkness that surrounds the little lives of men. Whatever may be the religious opinions of the reader he will agree with the one opinion that is common to all preachers and all

philosophers. The wisest of them have always said that there is a dark veil, a curtain of obscurity, impenetrable by human intelligence, between us and the absolute nature of things. There is also, in all life as we know it on the earth, an ineluctable element of sadness which we associate with the idea of gloom. In the graphic arts these feelings are expressed by sombre tones and hues. Now, if Rembrandt had been limited to the pale line he could not have expressed these feelings, or have excited them in us. But, who it may be asked, would have limited him to the pale line? The answer is, that a certain instrument would have done so if he had adopted it. The silver-point, so much used by the old masters of form, has admirable qualities of firmness and delicacy; but it confines the artist to the pale line, whatever may be his genius. Here, then, is another example of an artist whose mind could not have expressed itself by a certain technical method and who had to employ another. The incomparable depth of etching and its unrivalled powers of contrast between delicacy and darkness, exactly suited Rembrandt, and allowed him to express his thought.

One more example, and I have done. One of the greatest means of influence exercised by one mind over many is the art of the orator. This influence is entirely incompatible with extreme slowness and hesitation in delivery. Without some energy and rapidity there may be learned statement and sound

reasoning, but there is no oratory. The real orator does not simply exhibit the *effects* of intellectual power, but he shows us intellectual power *in action.* Is there anything of this kind in the fine arts, and is it dependent in any way upon material conditions? The answer is yes to both questions. An artist, though he died hundreds of years ago, may, in certain arts, exhibit to us his mind in the rapid motion of excited energy, whilst in other arts the motion is not seen, and we have only a result. All the arts in which sketching is possible, *and these only*, exhibit the mind in motion and partake of the nature of oratory. Water-colour and etching are both excellent arts for what may be called the oratory of drawing, whilst the employment of a slow instrument like the burin makes eloquence impossible. Here is another case in which a certain mental state may be balked of expression by the use of an ill-chosen instrument. It would be easy to show the mental embarrassment that would result from the employment of certain brushes in oil-painting, or from the too liquid condition of the pigments. No doubt an oil-painter could lay on colour with a camel-hair brush, but he could not express his power.

To me it seems always that this close association of Mind with Matter in the Fine Arts gives them additional interest. It does not seem to me that Mind is in the least degraded by this connexion, but

that Matter is elevated. Those who regard the material conditions of the Fine Arts with contemptuous indifference as something beneath the consideration of the intellect, only show that they themselves have no natural sympathy with Art. The peculiarity of the Fine Arts is that, in them, the action of the intellect is strictly subordinate to matter—and not only that, but happily and willingly subordinate. It selects the material means that are most perfectly favourable to its purpose, and having selected them it conquers matter, not by opposition, but by a studious conformity.

THE NATURE OF THE FINE ARTS.

MR. PARKER'S essay on the nature of the Fine Arts* belongs to a small class of books that are peculiarly difficult to review. It is very full of matter; and so provocative of discussion, that to consider all its propositions as one would desire, might lead to the writing of a volume containing as many pages as itself. The tone of Mr. Parker's writing is enough to provoke a reply to almost every page, being at the same time ratiocinative and dogmatic, not at all deferential to any authority whatever, and—though not arrogant or overbearing—always imperturbably self-satisfied. I have read the book through twice with much interest; and if it is impossible, in the space of an article, to deal satisfactorily with a volume that opens so many questions, I may at least quietly consider one of them.

Before proceeding to details, we may, on behalf of the Fine Arts, express a grateful sense of the honour done them when a representative of the

* 'The Nature of the Fine Arts.' By H. Parker, Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. London: Macmillan & Co. 1885.

older culture, a Fellow of Oriel, condescends to pay so much attention to them as to institute an inquiry into their nature. We are old enough to remember the day when Slade Professors had not as yet been heard of, and when the influence of Oxford was entirely on the side of popular misunderstanding of these subjects. Even so recently as the year 1863, Mr. Ruskin spoke of that evil influence in the present tense. In his evidence before the Royal Academy Commission, he said: 'I think if you educate our upper classes to take more interest in art, which implies of course to know something about it, they might be most efficient members of the Academy; but if you leave them, as you leave them now, to the education which they get at Oxford and Cambridge, and give them the sort of scorn which all the teaching there tends to give, for art and artists, the less they have to do with an academy of art the better.' There are some traces of this ancient scorn even in Mr. Parker's book. When giving the evidence just referred to, Mr. Ruskin spoke of the mistaken notion that a painter could be made by means of a little technical education only, and said, 'that error is partly owing to our excessively vulgar and excessively shallow English idea that the artist's profession is not, and cannot be, a liberal one.' This word 'liberal' is often used by Mr. Parker, and he steadily maintains that painting is not a liberal art. 'The belief that the art of painting is a liberal art'

is treated by Mr. Parker as a popular error, and he seems to retain the old conception of the liberal arts, that 'they are not simply the non-servile pursuits, but are studies which need no technical or manual instruction, being of a purely intellectual kind.' He then separates the Fine Arts and the Liberal Arts in a short sentence: 'At the present day a complication has resulted. There is on the one hand a desire, almost universal, to support the view that the Fine Arts can be taught, as the Liberal Arts are taught, theoretically. On the other, the University of Oxford has for the first time in its history, with one doubtful exception, departed from the traditional ideal and included practical instruction.'

Mr. Parker's reasons for refusing the epithet 'liberal' to the art of painting are the following: He says there never can be a science of painting, in the sense in which there is a science of music. You may begin by dividing musical from unmusical sounds, but 'no such division of colours is possible. This is a necessary result of the fact that painting is an art of representation, for the artist who represents must use all the colours which he sees. In the next place, musical sounds can be reduced to language or signs. Music can be written. Colours can be stated in language only in an exceedingly imperfect way, which is quite inadequate for scientific purposes. Colour is continuous, sound is discrete.'

Mr. Parker then affirms that 'the condition of a true science is that it should contain propositions, the terms of which have a definite meaning,' and finally comes to the conclusion that 'Cassiodorus was quite right when he affirmed in the introduction to the *Liberalium Litterarum* that music belongs to *mathematica.* Colours, however, cannot be so treated.'

The argument here is that painting is not one of the liberal arts because it cannot be taught in rigid scientific propositions. Mr. Parker admits that perspective may be so taught, but this is the only part of painting that seems admissible amongst the liberal arts. The real objection to Mr. Parker's argument is that a theory of vibrations has no more to do with what a musical artist understands by 'music' than a theory of muscular contraction has to do with the art of dancing. In both cases purely scientific investigations leave the soul of the art out of consideration. It may or may not be possible to calculate the number of vibrations in a string that sounds a given note; such a calculation goes no way towards explaining the invention of a melody. The composer of some simple tune, such as 'Annie Laurie,' exercised the true gift of musical invention, but would probably have been quite unable to explain how the tune came to him by any theory of mathematical coincidence. The definition of a liberal art as an art that can be explained in scientific terms would exclude all those qualities of the Fine Arts that give them their superior

rank. It is always these higher qualities that escape the scientific analyst. He can define the rules of prosody, but the delicate art of the poet evades his measurements, often by its very violations of those rules. What is really wonderful in Mr. Parker's theory is that he would deprive painting of its rank as a liberal art because it is too subtle, too complex, too synthetic, and too refined for the rigid explanations of the lecturer. Mr. Parker's work is, in fact, a reactionary attempt to re-establish the scholastic sense of the term 'liberal arts,' in opposition to the modern sense. The scholastic sense is that of the 'arts' recognised in a Master's degree; the modern sense has been accurately defined by Webster, who says, 'the liberal or polite arts are those in which the mind or imagination is chiefly concerned, as poetry, music, and painting.' Littré tells us that the word 'Libéral' means 'qui est digne d'un homme libre;' and then he proceeds to explain that the Liberal Arts are so called by opposition to the Mechanic Arts, because they require 'une intervention grande et perpétuelle de l'intelligence. La peinture, la sculpture, sont des arts libéraux.' This opposition between the liberal and the mechanic arts had its origin, according to Littré, in the ancient prejudice against manual labour, which was considered unworthy of a freeman, and contemptuously left to slaves. The popular modern reason amongst the wealthy and professional classes for unwillingness to admit painting amongst the

liberal professions is, that it includes a handicraft trade, the skilled application of colours to wood or canvas. Mr. Ruskin calls this prejudice 'excessively vulgar and excessively shallow.' The vulgarity and the shallowness of the idea consist in seeing the handicraft only and not the thought, knowledge, and imagination which are expressed by means of the handicraft. The excuse for the prejudice is to be found in the necessity for great manual skill, which we admit to be an unfortunate necessity. An artist may have deep thought, ample knowledge, and noble imagination, yet if manual skill be wanting, his art is a failure, whilst on the other hand we find instances of artists clever with the brush who have succeeded without poetry and with a minimum of thought. The full truth about this matter is that painting may be a great intellectual art or a mechanical handicraft, just as it is practised by a noble mind or a common one. There are pictures quite equal to the finest poems as expressions of what is most elevated in thought, most tender and delicate in feeling, whilst there are many other pictures (produced, alas! in ever-increasing quantity) that only display a little science and a great deal of purely manual dexterity. The misfortune is (and for this there is no remedy) that an artist who has the mental gifts may be paralysed by his want of the handicraft. To realise the profound evil of this we have only to imagine the poetical genius of Byron and Scott denied because they wrote badly from the

writing-master's point of view. Had they been subject to the conditions of handicraft, as painters are, they would have been compelled to produce beautiful manuscripts under penalty of forfeiting their intellectual rank, and if the manuscripts of Southey or Milman had been more workmanlike they would have had the preference, whilst Byron and Scott would have been classed as incompetent amateurs. Few of us fully realise what a great evil this inseparability from handicraft is for the art of painting; but there was probably an instinctive perception of it in the educated classes of former generations, who took care to avoid practical meddling with the Fine Arts.

Mr. Parker says that 'the law on which all modern canons of artistic criticism are based, is the supposed law that the most exact imitation is the greatest work of art.' Mr. Parker's statement here is much too sweeping. Mr. Ruskin, in an unguarded moment, said something of that kind to his pupils at Oxford, but French critics have long clearly distinguished between imitation and artistic interpretation (not at all the same thing), and have insisted on the superiority and on the necessity of interpretation, the consequence of this persistent teaching being that all intelligent French people at the present day understand the matter as far as their knowledge goes and are prepared to accept interpretative work. I may, perhaps, be permitted, in self-defence, to say that for many years I have been writing on the side of interpretative as

opposed to imitative art, and that my advocacy of etching, at a time when it was less appreciated than now, was founded upon this preference. It does not appear, either, that Mr. Parker clearly understands the nature of imitation in painting. He says that the realistic principle is 'that the sole test of merit in a work of art is the degree of resemblance of the imitation to the thing imitated;' and then he observes that 'the careful cabinet-maker who has made a chair or a table after a given pattern has satisfied this test as well as the painter or sculptor.' The fallacy here is caused by a remarkable omission. If a cabinet-maker is told to imitate a chair, he can absolutely reproduce it, and therefore there is no interest in observing the degree of approximation to the model; but if a landscape-painter were told to imitate an oak-tree, we should know beforehand that he could not absolutely reproduce it, and therefore we should have a prolonged critical interest in following his work and watching the degree of his approximation to his model. This is really the interest which we feel in imitative painting. We know that the painted tree is quite a different thing from the real tree, that it is only paint on a flat surface, and we are pleased to see that with such means a degree of imitation is possible; but we have no such pleasure in being made to observe, what we all know beforehand, that one wooden thing can be made to look like another wooden thing shaped out of the same material

and with similar tools. If, on the other hand, the cabinet-maker is working from a mechanical drawing he is not imitating a model but following instructions. A cabinet-maker will sometimes work from a shapeless sketch if only all dimensions be written on the sketch. This is not imitation, but obedience to orders.

As it is a misfortune for painting that it includes a difficult handicraft, so it is not less a misfortune for all painters of high aims that there should be a popular art of imitative painting which causes perpetual misapprehension about the nobler and worthier art. To paint without an ideal, without thought, without imagination, merely to imitate shapes and textures, may be a harmless way of earning one's living, but is not a very elevated pursuit.

CAN SCIENCE HELP ART?

VERY eminent artists and critics may be named on each side the question, so that one cannot express an opinion without placing oneself in opposition to distinguished men. The best way in cases of this kind is to express one's own sincere, personal, individual opinion, without deference to this or that authority, since the authorities on each side are equally weighty. I will begin, then, by answering the question in my own way, and after that develop or amplify the answer.

1. The efficiency of an artist depends, in a great measure, upon his vivid recollection of organic form, and of effect.

2. Scientific knowledge enables the memory to retain organic form and effect with a precision not otherwise attainable.

3. Therefore, scientific knowledge helps the efficiency of an artist.

The argument on the other side is this—(I will do my best to state it quite fairly)—Science can teach things to an artist which are artistically easy, but fails him in what is artistically difficult. For example: perspective can teach how to draw the straight edges of a London causeway, but not the

curves of the sea-shore; anatomy can teach the places of bones and muscles, but not the subtle variations of surface and of line on which the living energy of the animal depends for its expression. Scientific theories of colour can teach the relation of primaries, secondaries, tertiaries, but never the relations of the indescribable tints; and all the tints of a great colourist are of the indescribable kind.

The whole of this is true. We may even go further than this, and admit that Science teaches nothing whatever that belongs specially to Art; nothing that is, in the true and deep meaning of the word, *artistic*.

Still the sciences of perspective, optics, anatomy, are useful to artists; just as the science of geography is useful to a traveller. Take the very best of maps. What does it tell you of the country you intend to explore? It is not a substitute for your observation as a traveller, but simply a reliable informant as to where the places lie, where you will find them, and a help to your topographic memory. After having studied the map, you must observe the country itself, in all its detail, if you want to know its *life*. But the map has helped you, nevertheless, in the arrangement of the work before you. It has saved you time and trouble, it has prevented you from missing your way.

What a map is to the traveller, scientific study, wisely pursued, is to the artist. It can never serve

him as a substitute for his own observation, but it may tell him where to apply his power as an observer, and guard him against innumerable mistakes. If artists could always have nature before them, exactly as they desired to paint it, they might dispense with the help of Science altogether. Any artist who sees quite clearly in the artistic sense, sees also as much of organic structure as is necessary to his perfect performance. But when nature is not present, or is constantly changing, which very nearly amounts to the same thing, artists need everything which may counteract the natural infirmity of the memory. The degree to which Science can do this may be easily demonstrated.

After we have dissected a plant, with the help of any really good work on botany, the organic structure of the plant, and even such characteristics as its colour, the season of its growth, and the places which it prefers, are engraved on the memory permanently. These things are not Art; they do not describe the artistic appearance of the plant, but, by the association of ideas, they recall its artistic appearance, when that has been previously studied from nature. They present a sort of skeleton of knowledge, which the purely artistic memory clothes with the perfect life.*

* It is customary to speak of anatomy, botany, geology, as separate sciences, and a notion is thereby conveyed that the sciences are too numerous to be accessible to an artist. In

There are instances of artists who, having been attracted by scientific study beyond the sphere of Art, have lost the artistic spirit, and become purely scientific. Thus Science *may* ruin an artist, but not when the artistic spirit is really strong in him. Science did not spoil Rembrandt's work, nor has it spoiled Landseer's. I could name half-a-dozen painters who have been ruined by Science, but they were all men of feeble artistic gifts, to begin with. A man of any native artistic force works as freely after scientific training as before it. The scientific

reality, these three sciences are one. Botany and geology *are* anatomy. Botany is primarily the anatomy of plants, and geology the anatomy of the earth. And anatomy, in any of its branches, is nothing more than the separation of anything into its component parts.

Now, there is a very curious characteristic to be noted in the classical spirit, in the spirit of classical tradition in the study of the fine arts. It admits one of the branches of anatomy—that of animal form—as necessary to the artist, but does not admit the necessity of the other branches of anatomy. This may be accounted for by the classic love of the human form and the classic disdain of landscape: and I believe it may be asserted with little fear of any effectual contradiction, that whenever modern artists have been deeply and seriously interested in the study of anything in nature, they have, as a rule, thankfully accepted the help of Science with reference to that particular thing. For instance, Rembrandt did not disdain the anatomy of the human body, nor Landseer the anatomy of dogs, nor Ruskin the anatomy of mountains. The disdain of Science always seems to apply to things in which the artist is not specially interested, and we commonly find that figure-painters consider the anatomy of plants superfluous, but not human anatomy.

training helps his memory of things, but does not chill or harden his work. A man may write easily and poetically, without a trace of pedantry, *not-withstanding* his knowledge of grammar; and grammar, like botany and geology, is one of the branches of anatomy.

PART IV.

CONVERSATIONS.

BOOK ILLUSTRATION.

THE following study has been cast into the form of dialogue for the reader's convenience. The subject is one that has to be considered from different points of view, and it is tiresome to be continually told that from another point of view it has another aspect. In dialogue this transition is effected frequently and instantaneously by simply changing the speaker. In the present instance the too frequent practice of introducing a speaker who utters opinions only that they may be controverted is avoided by limiting the argument to the strong points on every side. In order that there may be no ambiguity about my own opinions, and that I may not seem to avoid responsibility by getting behind different *dramatis personæ*, I may say that the Art-Critic is the writer purely and simply, whereas the other personages express opinions which the writer puts forward, not necessarily as his own, but as well deserving to be taken into consideration. The Scientist (I dislike the word, but it is convenient and not less legitimate than 'artist'*) expresses what I have heard said by scientific men in real life ; the Artist is of the picturesque order and opposed to scientific views. The Poet represents imaginative literature generally, and has that want of sympathy with the graphic arts which so often accompanies a purely literary culture, whilst he is positively hostile to science,—a natural antipathy that Professor Bain will admit to be consistent. The Critic is in some degree a reconciler, not by desiring the others to abandon any position that they have a right to hold, but by inducing them to consider the interests of others.

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* How inconvenient it would be to say 'man of art' every time we say 'artist !'

CONVERSATION I.

THE RIVALRY BETWEEN ART AND LITERATURE.

POET (*opening a volume on the table, and shutting it at once contemptuously*). Another illustrated edition of a popular poet! I wonder he tolerates these things.

ARTIST. Perhaps he feels rather flattered. At any rate, an illustrated edition is a confirmation of his fame. Publishers do not select unknown men for illustration.

POET. That is one of the numerous advantages of obscurity.

CRITIC. When you are dead you will probably be illustrated also, and appear amongst the Christmas books with some astonishingly showy binding. Add to this the gilt edges, the toned paper, the faultless typography, and the 'exquisite illustrations by the first artists of the day,' as the advertisements have it.

POET (*with a look of anguish*). Say no more, I pray you, those dreadful words have already added a new bitterness to death! And to think that a dead poet is powerless to prevent this, and that if his works live it is almost certain to happen!

CRITIC. Almost? Why not say *perfectly* certain? It is as certain as anything can be in this world, that when your copyrights have expired there will be illustrated editions of your poems. Then will the

arts of the draughtsman and the photographic reproducer be married to immortal verse!

POET. There ought to be a law to preclude the possibility of that.

ARTIST. May it not occasionally happen that the illustrator perpetuates a poetical reputation that would perish without his help? There is the well-known case of Rogers, who purchased immortality with a definite sum of money, by going to Turner and the wonderful vignette engravers of that day; just as you may buy a kind of temporary fame by paying for advertisements in the papers.

POET. A most undesirable and unnatural kind of existence after death. It is like paying for being embalmed. Rogers' poems are really dead, yet instead of being permitted to pass into oblivion quietly, according to the kindly natural law, there they are, existing still like mummies! A poet needs no help from illustration. If his works have not vitality enough to do without it, they gain no advantage from the kind of factitious immortality that illustration may confer.

CRITIC. I may, perhaps, be able to suggest a case in which illustration would do a real service to a poet's memory. Suppose the case of a poet who had genius deserving durable fame, yet who might be overlooked and forgotten by a mere change of fashion. He has, however, the good luck to be illustrated by an artist who remains in fashion during

a generation indifferent to the poet. This would carry the poet through a time that would otherwise be fatal to him, and afterwards he might be really appreciated for himself.

POET. The illustrator, in that case, would be a sort of camel carrying the poet across a stretch of desert that would be death to him if he were alone. The worst of it would be the difficulty of getting rid of the camel afterwards. It is an inversion of the fabled 'Old Man of the Sea.' In that story the difficulty was to get rid of the rider.

ARTIST. Nothing can exceed your ingratitude to the Fine Arts. You seem to look upon them not merely with indifference, but with antipathy.

POET. I can attain to indifference when the Fine Arts keep to their proper place, and illustrate subjects of their own; I mean subjects that the artist finds for himself in nature, and especially on condition that the illustrations be kept out of the books and exhibited separately as pictures are at the Royal Academy, or like etchings that are published by themselves. What I dislike is to see the text of a poet encumbered by illustrations.

ARTIST. We have here, as it seems to me, a case of jealousy. The Poet is jealous of the illustrator, and of the attention that the illustrator attracts to himself.

CRITIC. There may be a reasonable jealousy. In this case I think the poet may reasonably be

jealous, as the illustrator, under pretext of doing honour to the poet, really gets upon his shoulders and attracts most of the public attention to himself.

POET. We can do without illustrators as ships can do without barnacles. The old poets did without them for ages.

SCIENTIST. The best way to elucidate this question would be to take some particular instance. May I suggest Doré's illustrations to Dante as a case in point?

CRITIC. Certainly, one of the best instances you could have selected. We have only to examine that single case to get to the bottom of the whole subject.

POET. As for me, the mere juxtaposition of the two names leaves me no patience for argument. Doré and Dante! The names by themselves are enough. The preposterous Frenchman stands for grotesquely impudent pretension; the illustrious Italian represents all that is most august in the grandeur of the human mind.

CRITIC. I have nothing to say against your high estimate of Dante, but you are harder on Doré than you would have been if he had only illustrated authors you cared for less. Your objection to Doré as an illustrator of Dante would, in fact, apply to all illustrators that are inferior to so great a poet; and what illustrator is not?

POET. Well, I could be content to regard Doré

with simple indifference if he had not used Dante as a convenience to attract attention to himself. It is a terrible example of the rivalry between the illustrator and the poet. Nobody ever thinks of *reading* Dante in the huge, unwieldy edition with Doré's illustrations. The mere size of the page and weight of the paper are insuperable obstacles to quiet reading. All that people do with these editions is to turn over the leaves and examine the cuts. My contention is that the artist, under the utterly false pretext of glorifying the poet, does, in reality, 'exploit' him in the sense of the French verb *exploiter.* He makes use of him for his own perfectly selfish purposes. My view is that an artist like Doré, with his coarse interpretations of the poets, is an active evil in literature. He makes use of the poets simply as a matter of business to sell his illustrations better. It is a nefarious pact between artist and publishers. They plot together to get up a trade: they trade on illustrious names.

SCIENTIST. Is it not possible that the artist may help to keep alive the reputation of the poet?

POET. I hope you do not mean to imply that Dante stands in need of Monsieur Gustave Doré's good offices.

SCIENTIST. The readers of Dante are not very numerous, except in Italy. There every educated man has read the 'Divina Commedia,' and many women, too, like the Countess Guiccioli, are Dantean

scholars; but in France and England, the countries Doré worked for, how many know the Italian poet at first hand?'

CRITIC. I have known about half-a-dozen Dante scholars in England.

SCIENTIST. 'And how many in France?

CRITIC. One.

SCIENTIST. My experience has been much the same. Now, I venture to remark that Doré has made the principal scenes in the 'Inferno' known to thousands in both countries, and this may have induced many to read at least a translation, or enough of it to understand the pictures. Doré has acted in a manner analogous to that of a professor or commentator who draws attention to a great poet; but he has been a hundred times more efficacious because a hundred times more attractive than a prose commentator could ever be. I confess, for my part, that many of the scenes in the 'Inferno' have been fixed in my memory more permanently by the illustrations. The tortures in the drawings are at any rate horrible enough. I don't profess to be a judge of art, but when I see several men with their heads fixed in a frozen lake, and still living, I feel cold and uncomfortable.

POET. Well, for my part I would rather my writings were totally forgotten than kept before the public by the speculations of an illustrator. The mere material aspect of illustrated books is too

much for me. I hate their superfine paper, their excessive margins, their obtrusively big and fine typography, their showy bindings. My notion of suitable publishing is that which consults the convenience of the reader without attracting any attention to itself; consequently, the volume should be easily held in the hand, the print legible, the paper thick enough to hide what is on the other side of the leaf, but not thick enough to be heavy, and the binding simple, smooth, and light. I like Morris's 'Earthly Paradise' as a material book. It has all these qualities, and the great negative one of being without illustrations.

ARTIST. We might, perhaps, find a ground to agree upon. Illustration is sometimes quite subordinate, and when it is so even you might possibly tolerate it. For instance, in Hood's 'Whims and Oddities,' the little pen-sketch woodcuts are of quite secondary importance, and do not interfere with the literature in the least. On the other hand, when illustrations become big and important, why not publish them separately from the text in albums? When this is done, the reader may enjoy his poet in a handy edition, and refer to the illustrations when he chooses.

CRITIC. The publishers do not take to the last system you propose. In fact, it would embrace two different branches of trade,—book-selling proper for the readable volume, and print-selling for the album.

There cannot be a doubt that the question of rivalry between literature and art really exists, though few of us feel so acutely on the subject as our friend the Poet. I remember the case of a young writer of verse who had a certain modest degree of accomplishment as an artist, so he published a book of poems with his own illustrations. The consequence was that without at all intending it, he set up a conflict between the two. He told me that the reviewers invariably compared the poet with the artist, and generally sacrificed one to the other. One reviewer would sacrifice the poet, another the illustrator. His own intention had been to make the illustrator auxiliary but subordinate.

SCIENTIST. The conflict you speak of cannot be avoided. It is in the nature of things. But what strikes me as remarkable is that when literature and art are put together it is generally literature that suffers. People do not read splendidly illustrated editions, and the fewer and more insignificant the illustrations the better is an author's chance of being read. Why should pictorial art have this advantage over literature?

CRITIC. The reason is simply because an engraving can be understood at a glance, whereas to read a page requires a little effort, and also a little time. In some cases a sustained intellectual effort would be necessary. We have talked about Dante and Doré. Nobody, however intelligent, can

read Dante without close mental application, but any one can glance at the woodcuts. Therefore the woodcuts receive at once the slight degree of attention that they claim, and the poet, as we see, is neglected.

SCIENTIST. This accounts for the great prevalence and great success of illustrated books in the present day. People take a certain faint interest in a number of subjects, and engravings supply their demand for knowledge.

ARTIST. You might add that there is really a much stronger appreciation of the fine arts than there used to be, so that engravings or reproduced drawings have an interest for the present generation which they could not have for a generation ignorant of art.

POET. Then there is the stronger reason for jealousy on the side of literature, for if illustrations are appreciated for high artistic reasons they are the more dangerous as rivals, and we who write have the stronger reasons for keeping them out. I say nothing against pictorial art in its own domains, that is, on the walls of an exhibition or in a portfolio of prints, but I want to keep it out of ours.

ARTIST. No one knows better than an artist the great importance of avoiding conflict in any appeal to attention. No real artist would tolerate an ornamental engraved border round a print of any artistic merit. Even the ordinary engraved letters

under a print are an injury to it, and are avoided in the early proofs as much from artistic reasons as any other. When lettering is given it is always purposely made as light and thin as possible so as not to catch the eye. Only imagine the effect of heavy lettering under a delicate print!

SCIENTIST. We have said nothing yet about colour. We have talked about the attractiveness of engravings, but even these lose their power of catching attention when works in colour are to be seen. In exhibitions the rooms set apart for black and white art are invariably empty when galleries of coloured pictures are close by; and these, notwithstanding their vastly greater extent, are often crowded. We may therefore suppose that the recent introduction of coloured illustrations, printed with sufficient delicacy and taste to make them admissible in works of a high character, must be an additional blow to literature.

POET. There can be no doubt that the work of the old illuminators was anti-literary. Can you imagine any one really praying from an illuminated missal with elaborate borders and miniatures? Such things could only distract attention, unless the ornaments had become so familiar that they were entirely forgotten, as we forget the designs in the coloured glass of a church that we go to every Sunday.

SCIENTIST. Your feeling on this subject might

be described as a kind of literary asceticism, the rejection of the luxury of the eyes for the higher needs of the intellect.

POET. 'Asceticism' is, perhaps, hardly the proper term, as I am grateful for every luxury that is a help to reading. I like good print, good paper, a volume that can be held pleasantly, an easy chair, and a well-shaded lamp. These are delightful luxuries. But I don't want superfluities that seem to me inimical to reading any more than, on going out for a walk, I should care to be encumbered with the Lord Mayor's state robes. In placing the *perfect* convenience of the reader above every other consideration, I speak not only as an author but as a reader too. The bibliophile may think differently. My reasons fall to the ground when books are purchased merely to be looked at and very carefully handled.

SCIENTIST. You are wonderfully rational, for a poet. The voice of Reason herself seems to issue from your lips.

ARTIST. All artists are rational when the interests of their own art are concerned, because they understand them. Our friend is like a painter, who wants a good frame and a good light, but would rather not have the attention of his visitors distracted by anything remarkable in surrounding colour or architecture.

SCIENTIST. Or you might say that he resembles

a musician, who likes a room with good acoustic properties and hates conversation, however intelligent, that goes on during a musical performance. This kind of jealousy is most reasonable. Let us have talk or music, one or the other; we cannot attend to both at the same time.

POET. Nor to poetry and illustrations.

ARTIST. You mentioned a case in which a poet was his own illustrator. When that is so there can be no occasion for jealousy, as the attention of the public could only be diverted from himself to himself. We admit that you might be reasonably jealous of me if I illustrated your books, but if *you* were to illustrate them would you be jealous of yourself?

POET. I should do as Rossetti did. I should keep the two talents separate. Have you not noticed how careful Rossetti was to publish his poems without illustrations? All he did in the way of graphic art was to decorate the back of his volumes and design the paper lining with a sort of unmeaning pattern.

SCIENTIST. But might it not be very advantageous in various ways that an author should illustrate his own works if he could draw well enough?

CRITIC. That is one of those suggestions which always seem excellent at first. I remember hearing a very distinguished author say that it was most desirable, but there is a fallacious idea underlying every fancy of this kind. The fallacy lies in the

supposition that the artist's talent would answer in every respect to the author's, because the two were united in the same man. It would do nothing of the kind. All examples show the extreme narrowness of gift and accomplishment in the graphic arts. I presume, to begin with, that you would not desire the illustrations to be bad, as art. Very well, if you admit that, you must accept the narrow range of all successful work, and a probable want of connection between the graphic and the literary performance.

ARTIST. In most cases the author who illustrated his own works would not be, as Rossetti was, an artist. He would only be an amateur like Thackeray, and therefore unable to draw. Amateurs are *never* able to draw in our sense of the word.

CRITIC. Thackeray's illustrations have a great interest, but it is only psychological. His books, with all their satire, are kindlier in their views of human nature than his drawings. The people in the drawings are generally disagreeable, besides being defectively drawn. They have a habit of looking mean, or else of wearing a peculiarly vapid expression. No one would infer from Thackeray's drawings that he possessed a powerful intellect, still less that his nature was really and deeply sympathetic. A critic who judged Thackeray from his drawings only might possibly not under-estimate the works of art, but he would be sure to under-estimate the artist.

POET. In another way the same may be said of Thomas Hood and his rude little pen-sketches. They are always comic, whereas his genius as a poet was serious and sometimes profound. Hood's sketches are the playful exercise of a small part of his mind. For one thing they have no delicacy, yet there was much delicacy, as well as tenderness, in his work as a writer.

ARTIST. That is true, and still I like Hood's sketches far better than those of most amateurs; they are unpretending, and quite sound and straightforward in method. He used a simple kind of art, which is better than attempting something beyond his power.

CRITIC. There are two other instances of authors whose drawings may be compared with their literary work—Mr. Ruskin and Victor Hugo.

ARTIST. Ruskin is not an artist; he draws like an amateur.

CRITIC. I knew you would say that; but you are rather unjust. Mr. Ruskin does not draw as an artist could because he has not the same purposes. An artist's object is simply to produce a good work of art—not to teach people anything about nature. Mr. Ruskin's drawings are observant and didactic; sometimes strictly scientific. At the same time it is not fair to speak of him as an amateur, because that word may be taken to mean a feeble imitator of the style of artists without their knowledge, and that Mr.

Ruskin is not. He has no *style* as a draughtsman; yet his knowledge has always been sufficient for the clear statements of fact which are all that he has attempted to make. It would be just to call him a student—a student of nature.

POET. Still, the difference between Ruskin as a writer and as a draughtsman is very striking. He is a powerful writer, fond of strong effects and able to produce them; in short, he seems to be gifted with poetical power, but so far as I can see anything in drawings I should not say that his drawings display poetical power.

CRITIC. As Mr. Ruskin has himself said, the literary and artistic faculties cannot be both cultivated to the same extent. He is an artist when he writes, a student when he draws. In writing he unhesitatingly sacrifices accuracy to effect, and that is quite characteristic of an artist. In drawing he seems always anxious, above all things, to be accurate, and that is characteristic of the painstaking and conscientious student.

SCIENTIST. It must follow from what you say that the draughtsman, in Ruskin, only accompanies the writer half-way.

CRITIC. Exactly, or even less than that. The drawings express little of the artist's idiosyncrasy, which is the more remarkable that they are evidently sincere.

ARTIST. Anyhow they are not impudent like Victor Hugo's.

CRITIC. 'Impudent' is a strong word. Victor Hugo's drawings are violent; they express at the same time an energetic and a vain disposition, but there is in them no false pretension to artistic refinement. They are a savage utterance, partly made in fun, like the thumping on the piano of some vigorous but uncultivated amateur who has a rude notion of music, and who turns round and laughs at his own performance. There is a sort of grim humour and a real turn for the grotesque in Victor Hugo's drawings. They show one side of his mind.

SCIENTIST. We seem in each case to arrive at the same conclusion, namely, that when an author illustrates himself he will do it very partially.

CRITIC. Quite as partially and imperfectly as any other artist. There is no practical advantage in illustrating one's own works, beyond a certain convenience. A critic likes to see drawings by an author just as he likes to read writings by an artist, because they may gratify his curiosity by revealing another side of a mind that interests him, but that is all.

SCIENTIST. If a novelist illustrated his own novels we should at least get an idea of the outward appearance of the people that he imagined. We might see his creations as he saw them in his mind's eye. No other illustrator could give us that kind of authenticity.

CRITIC. The seeker for this kind of revelation in

Thackeray's drawings would generally come away disappointed. He would feel that the character in the drawing was poorer and more vapid than the character in the text. Frederick Walker's illustrations to 'Philip' are more satisfactory, because more living than those which Thackeray began to make. It is difficult to believe that he would have given us a better Colonel Newcome than Doyle's. Yet Doyle, as a draughtsman, was not to be compared for one moment with such a consummate artist as Charles Keene, for example. Had Thackeray possessed the technical and artistic knowledge of Keene, he would have held in his hand an instrument as good as his pen, and we should have seen his characters as he conceived them. I cannot believe that Thackeray was able to realise his own conceptions in drawing, indeed, there is distinct evidence in one of his letters that he knew his own weakness as a draughtsman—at least in some degree. He thought that he had not the knack of giving lively touches. In reality the drawings were weak throughout, and no mere touches could have strengthened them.

POET. Then your conclusion is that authors do better not to illustrate their own works.

CRITIC. I think the rivalry we have been speaking of as existing between literature and art displays itself in a peculiar way when the author is his own illustrator, and it is more prudent to follow Rossetti's example than Thackeray's. This refers, however,

chiefly to imaginative literature. When matters of fact are in question an author may give useful illustrations. Utility is worth considering, but it lies outside of the subject of our present conversation. We may talk about it another time.

CONVERSATION II.

UTILITY.

CRITIC. The last time we met, we talked about nothing but the rivalry between the literary and artistic elements in illustrated books. There is another side to the question, which is, the utility of illustration.

POET. Then we must leave out the illustration of imaginative literature altogether, for, most assuredly, there can be no sort of utility in obtruding drawings on a reader who is occupied with the conceptions of a poet or a novelist. It is as much an interruption as if you offered him cakes and apples.

ARTIST. Not quite, surely; for the cakes and apples would have nothing to do with the story.

POET. They would, at any rate, not pervert the author's conceptions by substituting others. I see no possible utility in turning great imaginative works into picture-books.

SCIENTIST. There is this possible utility—that

inertness of imagination in the reader may be helped by the clearer conceptions of the illustrator.

POET. They are not the author's conceptions, and that condemns illustration without appeal.

SCIENTIST. I cannot agree with you, because, in any case, the reader's conceptions are no more those of the author than the illustrator's. It is quite a mistake to suppose that when you read 'The Newcomes,' you see in your mind's eye exactly the Colonel Newcome that Thackeray saw. Doyle's conception of the Colonel is not Thackeray's either; but it may be more vivid and more consistent than your own.

ARTIST. There is something to be said, too, on the side of study. The illustration of a book requires a great deal of severe mental application. The artist reads carefully with a special object in view, which is to invent the most appropriate visible personages. Even if he sometimes fails in this, there is one point on which he is always likely to give useful assistance, and that is, the true representation of costume and surroundings. Nobody without the help of an artist will imagine those correctly for any age except just his own; and even in his own time he will hardly go back more than two or three years. As an artist, I am accustomed to these things, and have made a special study of them; but when I had lately occasion to examine a boxful of photographs, representing my relations and some other friends in their costumes of thirty years ago, I could scarcely

believe that they had ever dressed like that. An author cannot be constantly describing costume, if he did his books would read like the newspaper accounts of levees and drawing-rooms; but a draughtsman can be continually describing dress, furniture, architecture—in short, everything that is visible—without making himself wearisome in the least.

SCIENTIST. You might add that an illustrator can give a very clear idea of the landscape of a particular country in which the scene of the poem may be laid. I remember a very good instance of that in Birket Foster's illustrations to Scott's principal narrative poems.

POET. The artists—or, at least, the landscape men—seemed to go about the country to hunt for local illustrations on the 'Land of Burns' principle. It is what I should call *guide-book* illustration of poetry.

CRITIC. That is not original. The word 'guide-book' was applied by Emerson to Scott's own work. He said, 'What did Walter Scott write without stint? a rhymed travellers' guide to Scotland.' If the poems are only a guide-book, it is natural that the illustrations to them should have the same character. Emerson's sneer, like most sneers, was a misrepresentation. Scott's love for locality made him localise the scenes of his poems, and this led tourists to visit the places mentioned by him. Wordsworth did

exactly the same, so did Burns; and some travellers have even visited the ugly part of Spain that is associated with Don Quixote.

POET. I did not remember Emerson's hit, and did not intend to apply the word 'guide-book' to Scott's poems, which I fully appreciate. I was speaking of illustrations only, such as those by Birket Foster.

CRITIC. Very well; I will answer you on that ground. It would be a detestable practice (I have an impression that the thing has been done) to illustrate a poem with photographs taken directly from nature, because they would be so rigidly and topographically truthful; but in the case of Birket Foster, although he has more taste and judgment than imagination, there was much artistic skill and invention in the vignette arrangement of natural subjects—quite enough to lift his vignettes far above the level of simple photography. I see no discrepancy between them and the poetry they illustrate so far as the landscape is concerned, and as to the character of the border country in the illustrations to 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and to that of the lake country in 'The Lady of the Lake,' we certainly get it far better in woodcuts of this kind than in ideal creations.

POET. You admit, however, that Birket Foster was of use only in illustrating the local element in Scott. Now, for my part, I cannot think that the

love of locality in Scott, or in Wordsworth either, was a good thing for their art. It enchained both of them. Poetry should not live in the world that you can survey from the top of a coach, but in a sort of no man's land that you cannot find on the maps. The fabled region of Lyonesse gains immensely from the absence of any geographical situation. Only fancy how disastrous the poetic loss would be if it were determined that Lyonesse meant the neighbourhood of Lyons, in France!

SCIENTIST. That is a question outside of the subject which occupies us. It is for poets to decide whether they will mention real places or not. When they *have* mentioned them it is natural that the illustrator should draw them, though I can understand that he would put himself in the wrong, by creating a discrepancy between his work and the poet's, if he drew them very prosaically.

CRITIC. Poets mention places out of affection, and this affection is in itself a poetic because a pathetic feeling. There is no sign that the habit will be entirely abandoned. Matthew Arnold's 'Thyrsis,' mentions 'the two Hinkseys,' in the second line, and the second stanza begins :—

'Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
  The hill, behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
  The Vale, the three lone wears, the youthful Thames!'

Later in the poem we find references to Cumnor, Fyfield, Ensham, and Sandford, all affectionately mentioned by name, because the writer's friendship for Clough had been associated with these places. Now, suppose that an artist were set to illustrate this poem, would it not be natural and right that he should sketch them? If the poet thought them worthy of mention, the artist might fairly conclude that they deserved a sketch. In the case of Cowper, who led a narrow, retired life, very intimately associated with one locality, Birket Foster threw an additional light upon the poetry by showing us the quiet English scenery in which the writer took his daily walks, and where he found much of his inspiration.

POET. I think it may be admitted that if a poet mentions places, an artist makes himself useful in illustrating them, provided he avoids the great danger of making the illustrations themselves prosaic. When, however, the poem is outside of locality, like Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' it is not so easy to see the utility of the illustrator.

CRITIC. He can only be useful in such a case when his imagination raises that of the reader to a higher plane than that which he would have naturally reached without assistance. It follows, therefore, by a rigorous deduction, that works of high imagination can only be illustrated by very imaginative men, and then we meet at once with

the objection that men of that calibre are likely to substitute themselves for the poet.

SCIENTIST. I wonder what Milton would have thought of Turner's illustrations to 'Paradise Lost.'

CRITIC. The probability is that he would not have understood them. But to descend to humbler authors and more recent times; we have evidence that some of our contemporaries looked upon their illustrators with a kindly eye, and even with sentiments of gratitude.

POET. That is truly surprising. Could you mention instances?

CRITIC. Yes, here are two or three. Anthony Trollope was extremely pleased with Millais' illustrations to his novels. He said he did not think that more conscientious work was ever done by man. He particularly insisted upon the pains that Millais took to study the works he had to illustrate. This is very interesting testimony. I can add another to it, not less interesting. George Eliot was pleased with Leighton's illustrations to 'Romola,' which she praised to myself for the closeness with which they followed her own work, and the characteristics of old Florence. I remember she particularly praised Leighton's conception of Tito, and it was easy to see from her way of mentioning Tito that the character was one of her favourite creations. We may add a third well-known novelist to the number of those who have been pleased with

their illustrators. Dickens, in one of his prefaces, says of Seymour, who made the first drawing of 'the Pickwick Club,' that his happy portrait of Mr. Pickwick might be said to have made him a reality. I think I remember, too, that Thackeray praised Frederick Walker as an illustrator, and certainly he showed a deference to his talent by calling him in, or consenting to his being called in, to continue the illustration of 'Philip,' which the author himself had already begun.

ARTIST. There may, then, be something like gratitude on the part of an author to the artist who gives labour and talent to the illustration of his works. This is consolatory, for there is no harder toil than the illustration of a novel, and if the author is still living, one is anxious that he should be satisfied. It is much more convenient to illustrate a dead author.

SCIENTIST. The kind of art to be selected for the illustration of a story may be found by simple reasoning, but there must often be a difficulty about finding the *man.* Not that there is any lack of talent amongst artists, but the difficulty must be to find an idiosyncrasy answering nearly enough to that of the writer. The artist may be in sympathy with some of the author's moods, but not with all. Considering how rarely human idiosyncrasies coincide, and how especially rare it is for men of talent and originality to think and feel alike

on more than a very few points, I should conclude that the choice of an illustrator must be one of the most perplexing difficulties in the business of a publisher.

CRITIC. It is simplified very much by the practical consideration that as, after all, only certain passages in a book are illustrated, the artist may find points of contact sufficiently numerous for the quantity of illustrations required. As a matter of fact, authors are illustrated very partially. The draughtsman does not accompany the author; he only joins him at different points along the road.

SCIENTIST. Now suppose a difference of idiosyncrasy of this kind. You have a humorous author who occasionally passes into caricature, but who is not habitually a caricaturist in his writings. You want, however, an amusing illustrator; so you get a caricaturist. He will illustrate some passages quite in harmony with the text, but his drawings will have a general aspect of caricature not in *general* harmony with the other. There may be a narrower idiosyncrasy in the illustrator than in the author. If the artist had the broader of the two idiosyncrasies, that would not matter, as he would only employ a part of it on the particular task.

CRITIC. Your observations about caricature might be supported by several examples. In former days, when Dickens and Thackeray were publishing their novels in numbers, the illustrations were always

caricatures, and Thackeray himself seems to have had no other idea of illustration; yet, though a humorist, he did not go so far as that, habitually, in his writings. Dickens was more of a caricaturist in writing, and so, in his early Irish stories, was Charles Lever; still, they had not that persistency in caricature which we find in illustrations to their books. Hablot Browne's designs were clever according to the taste of the day; but on looking over them now we find them very monotonous in their extravagance, certainly more monotonous than the books that they embellished.

POET. For my part, I dislike all professional caricaturists and humorists: the people who set up for being funny men, and who must be funny habitually and at all costs, whether their wit comes to them or not.

ARTIST. Perhaps you do not appreciate humour?

POET. I beg your pardon. I am under the impression that I appreciate it more than the professional jesters do. It is the salt of human existence, just as the sweetest and tenderest affections are the honey of it. But we do not want either all salt or all honey. I can imagine a state of society vulgar enough to be unable to enjoy any literature but funny novels and newspapers; a society in which some American humorist would be at the head of literature, and some comic French draughtsman at the head of art.

CRITIC. Millais and Walker improved the illustration of novels because they were men of serious genius, with a faculty for gentle humour and satire besides. Very few professional humorists have ever excelled that scene between Lady Lufton and the Duke of Omnium in Millais' illustrations to 'Framley Parsonage.' There is no caricature in it whatever, but the very sobriety of the artist, like the reticence of well-bred people, adds piquancy to the humour of the scene. The same may be said of the refined comedy in the pictures of the elder Leslie.

SCIENTIST. We seem to have arrived at a practical kind of conclusion, which is, that novels should not be illustrated on the principle of the caricaturist, but in a manner free enough to admit either serious or humorous treatment. We may also consider it settled that illustrations of novels may have a certain utility, since the authors themselves sometimes feel grateful to their illustrators.

CRITIC. It seems to me that we have now almost exhausted the subject of utility in the illustration of imaginative literature. If you do not think it too presumptuous, I feel disposed to lay down a sort of rule or law about the utility of illustration.

SCIENTIST. Let us hear it. There is nothing like proposing laws, because the mere discussion of them clears up a subject so wonderfully.

CRITIC. Well, my law is this:—*The utility of*

illustration increases with the preponderance of the positive element in the subject.

SCIENTIST. You mean that in proportion as a work of literature assumes a scientific character the utility of illustration becomes more and more evident.

CRITIC. Exactly; and I will give you an instance. In my opinion, the use of illustrating Gulliver's Travels is very questionable—I would rather read an edition without engravings—and so it is with Robinson Crusoe. But when we come to real travels, such as those of Baker, illustrations become truly precious; and it seems to me infinitely regrettable that Mr. Palgrave had not opportunities for sketching during his exploration of the heart of Arabia. Here is another example. Suppose that a poet writes about a flower, as Wordsworth and Shelley have done, an illustrator will give us a drawing of the flower, very likely to be inaccurate, but whether accurate or not it is superfluous. On the contrary, when a botanist describes a flower, a good scientific drawing of it is the best and most valuable help that the student can desire.

SCIENTIST. In confirmation of your opinion it may be noticed that the illustration of scientific literature is often much more complete than that of imaginative literature. For example, here is Bentham's 'British Flora,' in which every plant is drawn, but you never meet with a poem in which every scene and personage is illustrated.

POET. So much the better for the artists, as it is said that they do not read the books they illustrate.

ARTIST. There is no necessity for reading the whole of the 'Faery Queene' in order to make drawings of a few incidents.

CRITIC. Certainly not, for it contains a quantity of stories that are very much isolated, quite enough to be taken separately, and some of them afford capital pretexts for pictures—I mean not only for illustrations but for paintings. The instance of Belphebe and the dove is a case in point. It gives a painter an excuse that he would not have had otherwise for painting a dove with a ruby hanging from her neck. This makes the bird more interesting, and, besides, the ruby is pretty as a bit of colour and ornament. Then the action of Belphebe in following the dove is entirely due to the poet. A painter would not have made her do this because he would not have been able to account for the action. Since the poet explains it for him, he is at liberty to adopt the subject, which is charming. It would be very unreasonable to argue that because a painter takes Belphebe for a subject he ought to have read about Calepine and the 'salvage man.' Who has read all 'The Faery Queene?' Possibly there may be some proof-corrector who has done so. Nobody else reads the poem through, but every one who appreciates English poetry has wandered about in it as we wander in a tract of country that is rich in beauty and interest

The case is much the same with Ariosto. As for anything approaching to a complete illustration of either Spenser or Ariosto, it would be overwhelming; the pictorial subjects are so numerous.

POET. What you have just been saying only proves the more clearly the *unnecessary* character of illustrations to poems. For if it is true, as you say, that only a few subjects out of many are illustrated, those which the artist passes by have to do without illustrations altogether; and if they can do without it so may the others.

SCIENTIST. That argument is certainly incontrovertible. When a publisher announces an illustrated 'Faery Queene,' the poem is not illustrated as a whole, but only a few passages. Illustration does not permeate the whole work as a dye stains water; it only touches it here and there.

CRITIC. I think we may conclude here our examination of these questions as concerning imaginative literature; and we may do this the more readily that it is really the most unsatisfactory part of our subject, although at first sight it appears the most attractive.

ARTIST. There is only one thing I should like to say. It has been thought by some painters that their art ought to be entirely independent of literature; and it certainly might be so, for there are endless subjects in nature. If I were a writer besides being what I am, a painter, my own disposition would naturally lead me to keep the two arts distinct, each

to its own work. I cannot see that painting gains much from literature except the convenience of representing fictitious incidents that have been made generally known by means of popular books. Of course, the more popular a book is the better it is adapted for such a use. That is why the 'Vicar of Wakefield' has been so frequently resorted to by painters. Still, the 'fine arts' could do without Moses and the gross of green spectacles, the proof of which is that great schools of painting flourished before the days of Goldsmith.

SCIENTIST. Well, we have done with imaginative literature as a subject for illustration; now let us turn to something more matter-of-fact. What about the illustration of history?

CRITIC. Here I should feel inclined to exclude composed pictures of historical events that the artist could not witness, and for which he had insufficient materials. They are, I think, worse than useless, unless it be as models of artistic composition, and that is a subject not concerning the historical student. Such a student is not likely to get the least good out of a clever arrangement of excited horses and idashing cavaliers, neither is there any use in purely imaginary portraits.

ARTIST. So severe a doctrine as that would exclude almost all religious art, which is historical in a certain degree, but is without personal data. We do not possess any evidence whatever about the faces of the persons mentioned in either the Old or

the New Testament. Would you go so far as to say that illustrations of sacred history are useless?

CRITIC. I was speaking from the point of view of a modern critic who can have no illusions. Religious illustrations may be of use in a simple state of society. We know that religious pictures are of immense importance in the Greek Church, which has to do with a vast and ignorant peasant population. As knowledge increases, that use of the religious picture diminishes. We find pictures and other images of great use in the Church of Rome, but they have not that religious sanctity and importance which they retain in the Greek Church. The reason evidently is that the Church of Rome has to deal with populations of a higher grade in civilisation. Then we come to the Church of England, in which pictures are confined to the figures in painted windows and to a very few mural paintings and altar-pieces. Again, whilst illustrated and decorated missals are extremely common, illustrated prayer-books are comparatively rare. Now, please observe that the Church of England has to deal with a population that is better educated than most of those which are under the spiritual authority of the Vatican.

ARTIST. Do you mean to imply that the better a population is educated the less it will value and appreciate art?

CRITIC. Not in the least, but I do mean to

say that the peculiar simplicity of mind that makes religious pictures credible belongs essentially to an early state of civilisation.

ARTIST. How does it happen, then, that such religious pictures as those of Titian, Raphael, and Paul Veronese, which are as much illustrations of the Bible as if they were bound up in the book itself, are still so highly valued that they occupy the most important places in the public galleries of Europe?

CRITIC. That proves nothing in favour of their utility as illustrations of history. Nobody believes in their historical value, and if they had great religious value they would be in churches or other religious institutions. They are now valued purely and simply for artistic merits, such as colour drawing, composition, grace of attitude, fine arrangements of drapery, and so on.

ARTIST. Well, you will admit that modern religious painting may be of use when the artist does everything in his power to be truthful, even down to the smallest accessory?

CRITIC. I am aware that this kind of art *claims* to be a truthful representation of the scenes as they occurred, but it can only be so when abundant documents are accessible. In the case of sacred history these are wanting where most needed—that is, in the physical appearance of the personages. Some archaeological details may be given, but what are these? Pure idealism would be quite as satis-

factory. At least, ideal pictures may be complete in their own way; whereas this pretended truthful art is incomplete, for it lacks what is most essential—the human beings. It is as unsatisfactory as would be a portrait-gallery of one's deceased ancestors done from living models in London.

ARTIST. Then what should you consider to be valuable as illustrations of history?

CRITIC. Portraits of distinguished men from authentic sources; careful topographic drawings of localities without artistic arrangements; accurate archaeological representations of architecture, costume, furniture, and, in short, of all the things that surrounded the men who interest us, and who make the whole past life of humanity attractive.

ARTIST. Your list of useful illustrations appears to exclude what is essentially art, except in portrait, where it might creep in. Your 'careful topographic drawings of localities without artistic arrangements,' and your 'accurate archaeological representations,' are death to art by depriving the artist of his liberty. In doing such work he would cease to be an artist and become only a draughtsman.

CRITIC. All that is perfectly true; and it only confirms my theory that illustration becomes more and more unquestionably *useful* as it abandons the imaginative—and consequently the artistic—qualities to move in the direction of science. Portraits from life are scientific things in comparison with imaginary

figures of saints and martyrs. Topographic landscapes are scientific in comparison with those of Claude and Titian; whilst accurate archaeological drawings are in themselves purely scientific, however picturesque the subjects of them may be. There never was any accurate illustration of things in the pre-scientific ages.

SCIENTIST. Here, perhaps, you exaggerate, for I have certainly seen accurate representations of objects both in ancient and in mediaeval drawing. I should say that the worst enemy of accuracy has been the search for the picturesque, and that did not come till later.

CRITIC. I ought rather to have said that the accuracy of drawing in the pre-scientific ages was of a very irregular character. The draughtsmen were sometimes accurate and sometimes not; and therefore not to be relied upon without first subjecting their work to careful analysis and criticism of a kind that requires a practised eye and a trained judgment. The modern picturesque, as you perceive, has been a terrible enemy of accurate drawing. Many things are not at all picturesque when correctly drawn, yet they can be made to look so by altering their character. The extent to which this is done can only be appreciated by knowing intimately some place that picturesque artists frequent, and then observing how they deal with the severer things in it. We may, therefore, add the pursuit of the picturesque, which is essentially

modern, to the other enemies of the useful in illustration.

CONVERSATION III.

UTILITY (*continued*).

SCIENTIST. There are one or two points in our previous conversation that I should like to refer to a second time. One of them concerns the utility of illustrations to books of travel. It must happen rarely that the traveller himself is able to draw from nature in such a manner as to make satisfactory illustrations in a book. On the other hand, if the traveller's sketches are not accurately copied, there must be a diminution of their authenticity.

ARTIST. In most cases it would be impossible to publish the originals, which are generally very poor amateur work. They may, however, be useful as data, and from the facts they supply an experienced draughtsman may make up presentable drawings on wood that can be engraved by the ordinary wood-cutters. The existing scenes of battles with savages or huntings of wild beasts are got up in this way.

SCIENTIST. One can hardly think that it is the best way, as the drawings are made by men who have never seen the countries visited by the traveller.

ARTIST. If you could see the bad original sketches you would admit that the drawings are nearer to the

truth of nature. I have never seen a horde of naked savages, but I could draw them far better than a naval officer could, although the sight might be familiar to him. He could not draw one savage properly, even if the negro posed for him, not to speak of drawing complicated groups of savages in violent action and from memory.

CRITIC. I think we must admit, that when materials collected by amateurs have to be used there is no way out of the difficulty but that of getting some artist to make them up, unless the public were sufficiently indulgent to tolerate bad art for the sake of authenticity, which it is not. The public is curiously severe in requiring artistic qualities of some sort and excessively sharp in detecting the peculiar unskilfulness of the amateur. It will tolerate almost any violation of fact in an accomplished artist and see at once that the artist *is* accomplished, but it will only laugh at poor work, though the poor work may be full of valuable information. In a word, the public judges of all drawings very much from an artistic point of view. It looks for talent and it cares for very little else.

SCIENTIST. The taste of the public has been educated by great artists whose work is charming, and when the charm is absent the mere interest of information is not enough. In this I am not one of the public. I would rather see the original designs of the traveller himself, however defective.

ARTIST. He might show you them in private, but could hardly publish them. There are cases, however, when a real artist accompanies an expedition, and then he may make sketches with the pen to be reproduced by one of the processes that admit of printing from type. In this way the reader gets the impressions at first-hand.

CRITIC. Genuine sketches are now so much better understood than they used to be that they can be safely published, if good of their kind—even when very slight. Twenty or thirty years ago a sketch was only understood by the few who really study the fine arts.

SCIENTIST. The way seems to be clearing itself before us. In the case of travels the traveller may be an amateur, and if so, his memoranda must be used as materials by an artist who ought to retain as much fidelity to fact as possible. Or the traveller may be accompanied by an artist who sees with his own eyes and selects what he wants from nature. This is evidently the best way, and such a system of illustration is carried to the utmost degree of satisfactoriness when the artist's sketches are reproduced directly for publication. But to make this system all that it ought to be, I cannot conceal the opinion, which may sound heretical, that the artist should incline towards science or sober truth in his preferences, rather than to the beautiful or the picturesque.

ARTIST. Why not resort to instantaneous photography at once?

CRITIC. The only practical objection to the photograph, considered as a means of obtaining *useful* illustrations, is that it does not detach one thing from another as a skilful artist can. The artist can take what the reader wants, and that only, and he can make the needed facts very plain and intelligible, whilst in a photograph they may be entangled with many other details that are not wanted. The traveller largely uses this power of selection in writing an account of what he has seen and done, so the illustrations of an artist are better in harmony with his work than the photograph can ever be. In fact, a pure photograph from nature is out of place in any book whatever.

SCIENTIST. You may perhaps be able to cast a new light for me on the subject of scientific illustration. It is one that I have thought about for myself, but not without perplexity.

CRITIC. Well, with regard to science, I should say that you require truth of fact more than truth of appearance; though of course it might be argued, plainly enough, that truth of appearance is as much scientific, in the comprehensive sense of the word, as any other. There is, however, a sound reason for my opinion; which is, that the truths of appearance very frequently conceal facts of a kind more important to science. I may give one very obvious instance. The forms of mountains are often partially concealed by clouds and made to appear different from what they

really are by effects of light and atmosphere. I should say that a geological draughtsman would rightly ignore these effects, though an artist would give them all his attention. One might go further, and argue that even in the commonest daylight the appearance of a mountain does not show its geology so plainly as a scientific draughtsman might find to be desirable.

ARTIST. I see. You would allow the scientific illustrator to draw more distinctly than Nature herself. That is one of the greatest faults an artist can be guilty of. It is a common fault of the inexperienced, who state the little they know as emphatically as possible.

CRITIC. We are trying just now to see where artistic and scientific drawing diverge; and I think it is plain that we may allow a greater distinctness to Science, even an unnatural distinctness, because Science is analytic and studies one order of truth at once.

ARTIST. It is a great mistake to suppose that scientific illustrations are *true*. The mountains, for instance, in geological books are often badly drawn, and when the draughtsman attempts effect and tries to shade, his shading is heavy and amateurish.

SCIENTIST. No doubt if an artist worked for truth, his greater manual skill, acquired by constant practice, would give him an immense advantage. What is needed for good scientific illustration is the manual

skill of an artist *employed for the purposes of science*, and this is difficult to obtain. Few men of science are really accomplished draughtsmen, even archaeologists are often quite unable to draw.

CRITIC. To get first-rate scientific illustrations you require to establish a more conciliatory spirit than that which has usually existed between artists and men of science. Artists are needed for the work, but they ought to know enough of science to enter without feelings of repugnance into the necessities of the case.

SCIENTIST. It may clear up the subject to mention a particular instance. I never knew any artistic representation of foreground plants so true as Fitch's illustrations to Bentham's 'British Flora.'

CRITIC. As I happen to possess the book, I should like to know the artist's opinion on that point. I have my own, but would rather reserve it for the present.

ARTIST (*examining one of the volumes*). Oh! I see; hard outlines, and that sort of thing. Work done on the principles of a child's elementary drawing.

SCIENTIST. I can only say that such work is of great practical use. It is very accurate, and tells more about the facts of structure than any artistic drawing ever does.

ARTIST. You mean, I suppose, that it gives botanical information. We care very little about

botanical information, especially when, as in this instance, it is given at the cost of truth of a higher kind. For example, when the stem of a plant is hairy, Mr. Fitch draws the hairs to make you see that they are there, but he draws them out of all proportion. He marks one hair out of fifty, and draws it on a hugely exaggerated scale. The real hairs of the plant would be invisible at that distance, and the only effect of their presence, like that of the down on a woman's arm, would be to produce a certain softness that might be rendered in painting, but not at all in linear drawing. Besides that, he draws things all on one plane, and with equal distinctness. His outlines are as hard as nails.

CRITIC. All that is true, but it need not be stated with any severity, as Mr. Fitch may have been no less clearly aware than we ourselves are of what constitutes visual truth in a drawing. But Mr. Fitch's business, in illustrating a botanical book, was simply to give the facts that concerned botanists as lucidly as possible. He did that most ably by linear work with a very sparing use of shade, and he employed shading only to explain shapes like the swelling of a leaf or the rounding of a fruit. It is evident that the clearness with which these illustrations convey the scientific facts, is due in great part to the abstinence of the artist from everything that could encumber his work. Any greater degree of shading would have hidden many clear but minute explanatory lines.

For instance, the small tubercles are drawn when they occur on carpels, and the lines of shading would have effaced the tubercles on that scale. An artistic drawing, done on the principle of visual truth, would of course have omitted many of Mr. Fitch's hard outlines, yet they are of the greatest use in enabling us to know what we want to know at the first glance, without having to penetrate the mystery of artistic drawing. Still, I should not condemn these illustrations, even on the side of art. A necessary conventionalism is admitted, but there is no real ignorance. The exaggeration of the hairs is not ignorant; it is only the designer's way of stating the fact that the stem is hairy, and the absence of hairs in his drawing informs us with equal clearness that the stem is glabrous.

ARTIST. I see you have another book which pleases me infinitely better. It is 'The Wild Garden,' by Mr. W. Robinson, illustrated by Alfred Parsons. These drawings are quite minutely accurate enough; in fact, some of them seem to me quite as accurate in structural details as those of Mr. Fitch. Here is one, representing the slender stems and scattered leaves and flowers of the 'Giant Scabious.' It seems very delicately true. But what I particularly like about these drawings is that they convey so very perfectly the impression of life. These are not plants in an herbarium, or scientific facts about plants, but plants as they live and grow.

SCIENTIST. Certainly these woodcuts are remarkable for a rare degree of truth, and they are very pretty at the same time; still, for purposes of practical study Mr. Fitch's illustrations are likely to be much more useful. Mr. Parsons gives the idea of natural richness and abundance, which of course cannot be given by the detached specimens drawn by Mr. Fitch, yet these specimens explain structure better. For example, take the 'Yellow Corydal.' Mr. Parsons shows how richly it may grow on a wall, and his drawing explains that the flowers are in racemes, but it does not and cannot show the peculiar way in which the leaves are divided and cut into lobes. Mr. Fitch explains this, and more besides, by his system of drawing; and he does it with less labour.

CRITIC. The question narrows itself simply to this: Are different principles of illustration to be admitted, or are we to be intolerant and admit only one principle? I should say that each book has its own character, and that there is just one absolutely best way of illustrating that book—one way and no other. The wits of author and publisher can hardly be better employed than in finding out what that one best way is; but other books require other kinds of illustration, which may be almost infinitely various in a library. Now, in the case of Bentham's 'British Flora,' I think that the absolutely best kind of illustration was hit upon because it gave the maximum of information with the minimum of labour, and

therefore enabled the publishers to offer an illustration of every plant. The kind of illustration to 'The Wild Garden' was very well chosen also, as in that work the object was not to give botanical details, but to show how the wild plants grew in the garden. Again, with reference to the geological books that have been talked about, the absolutely best illustration is not attained when there is anything superfluous about it, such as attempted landscape effect. This superfluity of labour is the more vexatious when the time wasted upon it might have gone to the improvement of the linear drawing. I believe it to be a very great principle in illustration that the illustrator should never exceed his duty. What is required of him? Let there be no confusion on this point. Is he to give scientific information, or is he to give aesthetic pleasure? If information, what are the facts that he is to inform us about? These being decided, let him detach them clearly from other facts and present them in the most intelligible shape.

SCIENTIST. We have not said anything about mechanical drawing, yet it is very useful in all books about construction as made by men. It cannot deal with natural structures, in which there are neither straight lines nor simple curves; but for such arts as shipbuilding and architecture it is invaluable.

CRITIC. The practical objection to mechanical drawing is that it is not popularly intelligible. A

very loose and inaccurate representation of a cathedral or a ship may be quite safely presented to the public, if it is done on artistic principles. You may be sure, in that case, that it will be acceptable in some way, though perhaps you do not know exactly how; but plans, sections, and elevations—though incomparably more accurate and, to those who understand them, more informing—convey *no ideas whatever* to the unprepared mind.

SCIENTIST. That is very curious, as, in fact, a mechanical drawing is far simpler and more primitive than an artistic one. To my mind there is nothing so satisfactory, whenever any human structure is concerned, as the three aspects of it given in plan, section, and elevation.

CRITIC. I believe that is the case with all of us who understand construction. We feel that we do not thoroughly know even those buildings that we have seen, until we have studied architectural drawings of them. I knew a certain cathedral, as I fancied, very intimately; but when an architect afterwards showed me drawings of it done to scale, they were a source of great additional enlightenment. If you want to improve a boat, the right way to set to work is to make a careful mechanical drawing of your boat exactly as it is, and then design your improvements. The wrong way is to look only at the real boat and *imagine* the improvements, without the help of a mechanical drawing. I

remember being called in to the assistance of a friend who was not satisfied with his garden, which he had laid out himself. It was a large garden on beautifully varied ground. I found he had never made a plan on paper; so I made one, to scale, of the garden as he had created it, and he saw at once five or six great faults that we easily corrected. The plan of an estate always surprises us at first sight, even when we know the property intimately; which is good evidence that we do not see the reality as it is without the help of a drawing.

ARTIST. This, however, can have little to do with book-illustration; as you would not put mechanical drawings into any books except scientific treatises.

CRITIC. I was thinking of books on architecture, in which they are quite necessary. This is an interesting example of art and mechanical exactness coming together; for architecture is a fine art, and yet architectural works are best represented by mechanical drawing.

ARTIST. Perhaps the best of all representations of architecture are not exactly mechanical drawings, but sketches done by architects, with their precise knowledge, from the buildings themselves, when their beauty is brought out by a favourable effect of light.

CRITIC. Such drawings are often both charming and valuable; but there is a great temptation in all

picturesque representation whatever, even when the draughtsman is an architect. The temptation is to heighten the quality of picturesqueness, in order to gain a certain charm, at the expense of accuracy. Even old buildings have often very clear, sharp, and straight lines when the stone is good ; but a picturesque draughtsman dislikes the rigidity of these, and makes them broken and irregular. No one has a more kindly appreciation of the merits of the Houses of Parliament as an edifice than Mr. Ernest George. He says: 'The building has its faults, more especially a superfluity of surface ornament, causing a loss of breadth; but the proportions, the composition, and the details, are the work of an artist, and the grouping of the towers is charming from whatever point of view they are seen.' It would be difficult to be more just, in a very few words, to a work often treated unjustly; but when Mr. George came to draw the Victoria Tower in his etching of *Millbank, Westminster*, the picturesque draughtsman overruled the accuracy of the architect, causing him to disguise the sharpness and the rigidly vertical character of line in that tower. His etching is much more charming than a photograph, and the charm is due to a certain looseness of treatment, in itself eminently artistic.

ARTIST. Then would you prefer hard mechanical drawings in books about architecture?

CRITIC. Certainly, if my purpose were to study

architecture; but not if I wanted to enjoy the skill and craft of the artist who made the drawing.

POET. I should say that a great building has a sort of soul, and that a mechanical drawing of it could never give the faintest conception of its soul. Even a photograph, though it shows the marks of time and accident, and is so far pathetic, fails to convey *that*. I doubt even if a picture can convey it; for certainly when we see a building for the first time, we always receive the impression of great freshness and novelty, although we may have seen it repeatedly in pictures. Sir John Lubbock gives this as a strong reason for travelling; and mentions the Pyramids as a good instance, because their form is so simple and they have been well photographed. Nevertheless, he felt on seeing them that his previous impression had been but a faint shadow of the reality.

ARTIST. As book-illustrations are in black and white they fail, of course, to give one very powerful element in real buildings, which is their colour.

CRITIC. This may be, to some extent, supplied by the writer of the text if it is a treatise on architecture or a book of travel. The colour of St. Paul's Cathedral is a peculiar instance. When washed with rain it is a very pale cold grey, almost white, and where the soot has not been washed off it is nearly black. This produces the oddest effect, reminding one of nothing so much as bleached bones contrasted with black earth. The front of

Notre Dame is a mellow golden brown, rather like the shell of a walnut. Melrose Abbey is red, Holyrood is a cool grey. The colour of such a building as St. Mark's at Venice cannot be described in a word, but it might be in a sentence. I have often seen old buildings completely spoiled, as to their colour, by merely substituting a chilly slate roof for warm old tiles. A painter would hesitate before giving that because it might spoil his picture, but a writer need not hesitate, it would not spoil his page.

SCIENTIST. The utility of illustration has never been more completely demonstrated than in modern illustrated dictionaries. A drawing of the object has two great uses. It explains the nature of the thing and impresses it on the memory. It is curious how very small an illustration suffices for the purpose. In 'Webster's Dictionary' the explanatory cuts vary between half an inch and one inch square, and they often contain more information about objects than could be conveyed in several paragraphs of text.

CRITIC. Every one who has to do with workmen knows the great utility of a drawing. If the workman has learned to read drawings you can convey to his mind the clearest and most accurate idea of things that he has never seen, whilst verbal explanations would only confuse him. I was travelling last year on a boat and wanted a piece of ironwork to be made at once in a little town where we stopped for a short time. On going to the local locksmith I found he

looked intelligent and asked if he understood mechanical drawing. He said he did, so I drew what was wanted and he made it without wasting a minute in experiment or hesitation, yet he had never seen such a thing before in his life, or anything like it. A verbal explanation would have been useless in this instance.

SCIENTIST. Such cases are encouraging, but my own experience of workmen has often led me to regret that they did not really understand drawing, and I feel very strongly that it ought to be universally taught, so far as it is necessary for the representation and understanding of simple tangible forms. Have you anything to say about elementary education in drawing, with a view to mere utility?

ARTIST. I should think it would be a waste of time to teach anything about effect. I see in the illustrations of scientific treatises what appears to me to be a great waste of labour in shading such things as photographic apparatus, for example. The shading must cost enormous labour, and it is always quite wrong as to effect. Of course no artist could shade in that manner, an artist would not have that peculiar kind of manual precision; but if he had the skill he would never use it so. In most cases, where the work was intended to be simply explanatory, he could make the details of construction evident and stop there. Shading of the kind given in the scientific treatises must be useless.

SCIENTIST. Not altogether. It may be false in effect, but it often serves to make construction plainer by showing the direction of the grain in wood, for example, and by establishing a clear distinction between one substance and another, even though the representation of substances may not be comparable to Mr. Alma Tadema's marbles or to Jules Jacquemart's crystal and sardonyx.

CRITIC. Besides that, the bad mechanical shading may be of great use in the explanation of forms. At least it shows which are hollowed surfaces and which are in relief. This distinction is valuable on the side of utility.

ARTIST. I have not studied the class of engravings we are talking about, but am willing to suppose that there are reasons for the great labour bestowed upon them. Perhaps it may be explanatory, as you suggest, but in many cases I should think it likely that the shading would conceal minor details of some importance that would be more plainly seen in an outline drawing. In talking of botanical drawings, especially those illustrations to Bentham's 'Flora,' by Mr. Fitch, we seemed to be agreed on the point that it was an advantage to clearness to give a minimum of shading, and that only of a strictly explanatory kind. If a cultivated artist were employed to draw such things as photographic cameras, and told that a clear statement of structure was of the

greatest importance, he would use a little shading, no doubt, but he would not be likely to shade his work all over. I cannot help thinking that, even for purely utilitarian purposes, there is a great deal of labour wasted on the elaborate woodcuts we find in scientific books; and I am quite sure that, so far as art is concerned, the greater part of it is worthless, being done only by hand and eye without using the mind. However, this is a matter concerning science rather than art, as these woodcuts are outside of the fine arts altogether.

SCIENTIST. I should be sorry to imply that artists would be unable to draw scientific apparatus well if they applied their minds to such a task, but I do think it likely that the men who do the work habitually have got possession of certain methods that have become traditional, and are, on the whole, practically efficacious. Although their work seems very elaborate, they are so clever at it that it is neither tedious nor costly.

CRITIC. Such departments of the craft of engraving are nearly related to heraldic engraving, which could not be done in its perfection as a craft by any one whom we should consider an artist. In short, we have begun by talking about poetry and the imaginative fine arts, and have gradually gone on to considerations of utility, till at last we have quitted the region of fine art and are now in that of highly skilled handicraft. It is beyond our province to pursue this

part of the subject further, but there are technical considerations concerning the employment of the genuine fine arts in book illustration that may be worth inquiring into when we meet again.

CONVERSATION IV.

TECHNICAL NECESSITIES.

SCIENTIST. Our last conversation ended by approaching a purely technical part of the subject, when our artistic friend blamed the elaborate shading in the representation of scientific apparatus as a waste of time and effort. He thought that a simpler kind of drawing might answer the purpose and would even in some respects be clearer. I said that the kind of mechanical representation of such things as photographic cameras which we are accustomed to in scientific manuals is the result of a tradition, and is not so long and laborious as it appears to be, because the traditional methods of work are a saving of time and thought. There is no hesitation about such work.

ARTIST. Neither is there any original observation. It is the application of ascertained methods requiring much manual skill and an apprenticeship, but that is all. There is no evidence in these woodcuts that the objects have been really

seen in the artistic sense of seeing. As to the technical work, it is outside of the judgment of an artist because he would never draw in that manner; indeed, an artist would not possess the necessary kind of skill, which is really very great.

SCIENTIST. What have you to say about the kinds of art employed in the higher departments of book-illustration?

ARTIST. I think there is one principle that ought never to be lost sight of, yet it is often neglected. That is, not to go beyond what is wanted. An illustrator should know *exactly* what is required and then keep to it. He should not burden his work.

SCIENTIST. In what way do you think that work is generally 'burdened,' as you call it?

ARTIST. In several different ways, but the commonest is in uselessly elaborate shading.

CRITIC. You might add that shading is often not only uselessly elaborate but false in its elaboration, whilst if less were attempted it might remain relatively true. Any attempt in the simpler arts to rival the delicate distinction of tones which is attainable in the finest engraving must incur a great risk —indeed, almost a certainty—of failure. If, in a work attempting full tone, the tonic values are not surely and delicately separated one from another the thing goes out of tune, like bad violin-playing.

ARTIST. Yes, and so I have a dread of illustra-

tions that attempt complete tone unless they are by the hand of a master, indeed I ought to say two masters, for they require an excellent designer and an excellent engraver also.

POET. I cannot say that I exactly understand what you mean by complete tone. It is a technical expression that lies rather beyond me.

ARTIST. Our critic must explain that. I know very well what I mean by it. You have it in refined water-colour, and in the best engravings from Turner's vignettes. A critic is more accustomed to making definitions than I am.

CRITIC. Perhaps I may be able to illustrate the subject by a reference to another art—to music. Suppose a violinist slides his finger up the string, using the bow at the same time, the note gradually rises without a break, and although it passes through a number of what we call tones and semi-tones, it does not omit any of the sounds that lie between them. That would answer to a complete range of tone in painting where there are no breaks between highest and lowest, that is, between the brightest light and the darkest dark. If you attempt to do the same thing on the piano you cannot, because in that instrument the tones and semi-tones are fixed and you have nothing between them. Again, there may be instruments of a less advanced kind in which the intervals are wider than on the piano, a peal of bells, for instance. Well, the instruments

where there are intervals represent the simpler graphic arts, and the simpler the art the fewer the tones are and the wider the intervals. For example, in some kinds of pen-drawing there are four notes only, white, light grey, dark grey, and black. Yet even with these limited resources much may be done, as the artist can effect a separation between objects by means of outlines when he cannot separate them by tone. In the arts where tone is what we call complete, it can, of itself, effect all the distinctions between objects that the human eye requires, and line ceases to be necessary.

SCIENTIST. That doctrine is intelligible; but is there not an inevitable falsity in the simple arts, such as that kind of pen-drawing you have mentioned? Will not several notes in nature have to be represented by one note in the drawing?

CRITIC. That objection is well founded, and would be very grave indeed if no art could be valuable except that which is strictly imitative. In fact, however, the graphic arts are conventional; and if the mind understands the convention, the eye forgives the falsity. The convention about tone in the incomplete state is really nothing but classification. Nature passes insensibly, and without a halt, from dark to light. The artist first divides this mentally into tones for his convenience, usually in this way: *Dark*, *Half-Dark*, *Middle Tint*, *Half-Light*, *Light*. This is an artist's conventionalism; and he thinks of nature in this way

even when he is merely looking at natural scenery without drawing at all. But if you analyse the matter, you will find that many tones are included under such a name as 'Middle Tint,' or 'Half-Light,' or 'Half-Dark.' We do this kind of grouping continually, when we speak or write, and are not accused of falsity on that account. When an artist does it in drawing he is not guilty of an outrage against truth, but merely of a simplification. He translates all pale tones into white, using lines to separate one thing from another; two greys, or possibly three, may stand for a vast variety of intermediate tones; and, finally, a great number of dark ones may be represented by black. He is then working in conventional or incomplete tone, which is well adapted to pen-drawing, and also to the simpler kinds of engraving and etching; in fact, the famous old engravers, who are the classics of the art, never worked on any other principle.

SCIENTIST. It seems clear, then, that there is nothing degrading to art, or implying inferiority in the artist, in the use of simplified methods.

CRITIC. Degradation and vulgarity consist, on the contrary, in the imperfect and ignorant use of the more complete arts, such as painting or (since we are talking about book-illustration) full-toned engraving. It is always a sign of high culture in art when restrictions of method are intelligently accepted and observed; and even when the artist has self-denial

enough to refrain entirely from attempting that which cannot be done really well in the art that he is practising, though it might be done quite well enough to escape ordinary criticism.

SCIENTIST. Can you give a good instance of this self-restraint and abstinence?

ARTIST. I can give a very good one. In Mr. Pennell's brilliant illustrations to Mr. Hamerton's book on the Saône, you will hardly find more than two or three instances in which the artist has attempted a sky. He almost invariably leaves the sky blank, which at most can be taken to mean only the serene summer sky, and is inadequate even for that, as it does not give the gradation. A critic who did not know Mr. Pennell might think that he was indifferent to the beauties of the clouds, but it is not so at all. Few artists admire cloudy skies more than Mr. Pennell does, and it is just for this reason that he has not patience to represent them in an art which is far too simple to give the delicacy of their tones.

CRITIC. There may possibly be another reason which is this: If Mr. Pennell were to draw cloudy skies and shade them even in a summary and conventional manner, he would find himself compelled to carry out a more elaborate system of shading in the landscapes and buildings, and that would be contrary to the most refined practice of pen-drawing, considered as an abstract and rightly conventional art. It comes,

in short, to this, that in order to do the landscapes and buildings as well as possible in that limited art the clouds are sacrificed.

SCIENTIST. This, then, is a case of sacrifice for an artistic reason rather than of indifference to nature.

CRITIC. Yes; and you might even go further, and say that it is the sacrifice of one part of nature to another—of the sky to the earth, and to what is upon the earth.

SCIENTIST. What would happen if the converse sacrifice were made—if the earth were sacrificed to the sky?

CRITIC. In that case the things on the earth would lose their brilliance; they would be blackened in order that the sky might have some feeble approach to the relative light and splendour that it has in nature.

SCIENTIST. Your technical considerations seem to be very closely bound up with a voluntary recognition or omission of natural truths.

CRITIC. It is a matter of choice between one kind of truth and another, always in view of technical difficulties or facilities. The wisest course is always to avoid a difficulty that is not in its nature inevitable. It is wise, in a certain sense, to be pusillanimous. I say, in a certain sense, because there are some difficulties that must be faced boldly though others are avoided. For example, in violin-playing, the per-

former avoids the difficulty of playing several notes at the same time, except on very rare occasions. On the other hand, the violinist must grapple with the difficulty of making his own notes, which is very great. The pianist has not to make his notes, they are made for him by the constructor and tuner of his instrument, but he is compelled to face another formidable difficulty, that of playing ten notes at the same time. So in pen-drawing, the artist avoids as much as possible the difficulty of delicate tones, but he has to face the formidable difficulties of accent and expression.

SCIENTIST. It might be worth while to examine, one after another, the technical considerations that have to do with book-illustration, as applied to different kinds of literature. Suppose we take poetry first. Let us have a poet's opinion.

POET. I suppose you mean to appeal to me. If so, I am for blank paper by way of illustration. If, however, something must needs be printed upon it, I think that Rogers showed a clear judgment in choosing delicately engraved vignettes.

ARTIST. I think I see your reason. You would not like coarse pen-drawings, would you, however artistic they might be? You would not care to see Milton illustrated by a violent pen-draughtsman like Michelangelo, with his big black lines and dashes?

POET. I have a sort of feeling that poetry requires a technical delicacy corresponding to its own.

For instance, in Rogers' poem, 'Jacqueline,' the second part begins very prettily with these lines :—

> 'The day was in the golden west;
> And, curtained close by leaf and flower,
> The doves had cooed themselves to rest
> In Jacqueline's deserted bower;
> The doves—that still would at her casement peck,
> And in her walks had ever fluttered round
> With purple feet and shining neck
> True as the echo to the sound.
> That casement, underneath the trees,
> Half open to the western breeze,
> Looked down, enchanting Garonnelle,
> Thy wild and mulberry-shaded dell,
> Round which the Alps of Piedmont rose,
> The blush of sunset on their snows.'

Rogers was not generally much of a poet, and these lines themselves are only pretty; but they are very pretty and very delicate in the use of colour and light and shade. Now I should say that a rude pen-sketch would be quite out of place in the illustration of such a passage, and I may go further and say that no pen-sketch whatever, even if reduced to give it a refinement not naturally belonging to it, could possibly have a delicacy corresponding to that of the verses; but Turner's vignette had it, and artist and poet seem to have been working harmoniously for once.

CRITIC. It is chiefly the refinement of the

shading, the completeness of the tone, that satisfies you; and you could not have had that in black and white with any art less perfect than Goodall's exquisite engraving.

ARTIST. You have selected a landscape as a case in point. It is a peculiarity of landscape that poetical feeling cannot readily be expressed in it without full and delicate light and shade; indeed, to express the *whole* of what an artist feels about landscape, colour is also necessary. The absolutely perfect illustration of a poem in which landscape was mentioned would be in water-colour, with the inconvenience that there could only be a single copy.

SCIENTIST. How these technical and economical questions interfere, in the fine arts, with the free choice of means!

POET. I congratulate myself that literature is exempt from them. Suppose I were to describe an evening sky as crimson or golden, and my publishers were to write me a short note saying that the description must be cancelled, as it would be peculiarly expensive to print!

ARTIST. We have to renounce colour in landscape illustration to books, but people imagine it in some measure. If they did not, they would be shocked by the faces of people in engravings, which are always ghastly white or grey. This is something; and it is much to have full light and shade,

which gives us the opposing powers of splendour and gloom.

CRITIC. Observe the different effects produced on the mind by a full-toned drawing in sepia or Indian ink, and an outline sketch of the same subject. The very simplest materials produce emotion if there is solemnity in the effect. Mr. George Reid, the Scottish Academician, sent me a reproduction of a sketch in Indian ink, representing nothing but a corner of a calm lake, with a few stones and firs—absolutely no human interest whatever. This drawing moved me deeply, because the effect was one of those we call melancholy; which, of course, only means favourable to melancholy feelings in ourselves. Exactly the same subject, drawn in outline, would have left me utterly indifferent.

ARTIST. A painting of the same subject and effect would probably have moved you still more with the lingering colour of evening tingeing the grey rain-clouds.

CRITIC. Perhaps; but that would have depended on the power of the artist to make a poem in colour, and this power is very rare. Besides, there are reasons why the poetry of chiaroscuro tells better when there is nothing to rival it in the same work. For my part, I do not greatly regret the absence of colour from book-illustration. To be acceptable it would have to be perfect, and the perfection of colour, for certain scientific

reasons, is often incompatible with the most powerful chiaroscuro.

SCIENTIST. You mean on account of the incompatibility of certain colours with very high light in painting.

CRITIC. Yes, that is one reason; and besides that, a work composed for colour arrangements may be almost destitute of light and shade.

SCIENTIST. The final conclusion appears to be that light and shade is indispensable for the expression of poetic sentiment in landscape illustration, but that colour, though it might often be valuable, is not indispensable.

CRITIC. That is quite my opinion with regard to landscape; but it does not follow that the light and shade must necessarily be complete. If it is well suggested to the imagination, as in some etchings, that is often enough. However, it is none the worse for being complete. The mezzotints after Girtin are good examples of laborious fulness in light and shade entirely helpful to the expression of sentiment. The laboured chiaroscuro in Samuel Palmer's etchings is also precious from beginning to end, not only technically but poetically.

ARTIST. We have an excellent opportunity for estimating the value of chiaroscuro in the sentiment of landscape illustration by comparing the line etchings for Turner's *Liber Studiorum* with the same plates after the addition of mezzotint.

CRITIC. Yes; and you may observe that the more grave and solemn the subject is, the more valuable does the shading become. If the effect is simply cheerful, like that of an ordinary sunny afternoon, a sketch in line may give an idea of it, or, at least, tune our minds to a corresponding cheerfulness; but a few lines can never convey the impression of solemnity. Gustave Doré understood this. He had two ways of sketching for the wood-engravers, in line with the pen and in chiaroscuro with the brush. He used the first chiefly for figure groups in action, when action was the important matter, and effect of little or no consequence; but whenever he wanted to impress the reader with landscape solemnity, as in the illustration of the gloomy entrance to the infernal regions,* he took the brush, and employed a kind of chiaroscuro which if not very refined, left no doubt whatever about his intentions. It also powerfully affected the poetical feelings of the public; and if you will trust my experience for a dogmatic statement, I affirm that the public is ten times more poetical than scientific in its instincts.

SCIENTIST. Now, what should you say about the illustration of novels from the technical point of view?

* The engraving illustrating the well-known inscription over he entrance-gate of hell, in the opening to the third canto of Dante's 'Inferno.'

ARTIST. I should say that expression is the most important quality here; and consequently that the art which gives expression best and most easily is the one that ought to be chosen.

SCIENTIST. Then what kind of art should you specially recommend?

ARTIST. Any sort of art with easy and clear linear drawing.

CRITIC. We see that the modern illustrators of novels have been led by their own sense of the necessities of the case to the choice of arts in which the line was free. It is in the highest degree remarkable that at a time when etching had fallen into almost complete disrepute as a fine art, it was resorted to by the illustrators of novels merely for the facility of its line, and the fidelity with which the line could be printed after the biting. Draughtsmen like Hablot Browne and Doyle used a simple kind of etching for their more important compositions; but as it could not be printed in the text, Doyle had recourse to wood-engraving for his minor illustrations. It was, however, facsimile wood-engraving, in which the line was absolutely free when the artist drew it on the block; though of course the subsequent work of the wood-cutter had no freedom, but the slavery of it is imperceptible in the result. The expense of printing etchings seems to have led to their abandonment for the illustration of novels; and now we have only woodcuts or reproductions of

artists' pen-sketches. There is nothing to be said against these, for the special purpose we are talking about, provided that the artist's lines are faithfully reproduced.

SCIENTIST. Then we may set it down as an ascertained principle that line is more important in the illustration of novels, and delicate shading of less importance than in the illustration of poetical works?

CRITIC. The rule would hold good in most instances. It very seldom happens, though it may happen sometimes, that anything is wanted in novels beyond the illustration of figures, which must have expression. Landscape illustrations are so seldom wanted that they may be considered generally unnecessary. Now, a great deal of life and character can be given to figure sketches with shading of the most summary and abstract kind; but it would be long and tedious work to give character by delicate tones without the help of lines, on the principles of painting. Etching, pen-drawing, and facsimile wood-engraving, are the three arts most admissible in works of fiction.

SCIENTIST. We have already talked about books of travel, but not with reference to the technical side of their illustrations. Can we ascertain anything like a law, as we certainly seem to have done in the case of novels?

CRITIC. A book of travels requires both figures and landscape, therefore it might admit illustrations

of two characters, according to the predominance of line or the predominance of shade. But there is a commercial consideration, which interferes with the use of the best arts for books of travel. They must not be so expensive as art books ; and yet to give a good idea of the places passed through, and of the people seen, the illustrations must be numerous. Hence the expensive methods of printing are almost inadmissible, and the illustrations must be confined to such as can be printed in the text.

ARTIST. And it follows from this that commonplace kinds of wood-engraving are usually resorted to, because wood-engraving can give line in one illustration and shade in another. Pen-sketches, if well reproduced, are extremely good for figures, houses, minor details about encampments, and so on ; but they are not so good for landscapes, except the immediate foregrounds. They may be made, it is true, to convey the idea of landscape effect to a very intelligent public, but only by a sort of shorthand. They cannot in any way realise it.

SCIENTIST. Without pretending to any knowledge of art, I take an interest in the subject ; and so I was comparing, the other day, some recent reproductions of pen-sketches, very excellent in their kind, with some wood-engravings that appeared about thirty years ago, and were printed with all the skill and taste that could be commanded in those days. The reproductions of pen-sketches had much more

life and accent, which seemed to be due to the influence of etching; but certainly I must say that there was a delicacy of tone in the woodcuts that no pen-sketching could ever rival.

ARTIST. That I have no doubt about; but what is doubtful is whether those tones that seemed so delicate were anything like faithful interpretations of the tones used by the artist in his original drawing. Our complaint about wood-engravers is that they so often put tones and textures of their own. This may be in great part involuntary, for all kinds of engraving are very difficult, but it is vexatious.

CRITIC. I can distinctly remember the time when the superiority of wood-engraving in quality of tone (which has nothing to do with fidelity to the tones of the artist) produced a strong conviction in the minds of many people, who had to do with illustrated publications, that pen-drawing could never be acceptable, because the quality of its tones is not so soft and agreeable to the eye. The same objection was held to be fatal against all other processes that admit of printing with type. For example, a pen-drawing of a sky may give a noble piece of cloud composition and it may also explain the forms of clouds very clearly by a sort of rude conventionalism; but as in nature the quality of a sky depends chiefly on delicacy of tones and the absence of lines, it follows that the skies in common woodcuts are more acceptable to the large part of

the public, which is not very fastidious, than those of the finest pen-drawings ever executed.

SCIENTIST. I notice that you make a reserve in what you say. You talk of 'the large part of the public that is not very fastidious.' There is something under that phrase which you have left unexplained.

CRITIC. I did not think it necessary to go into the matter further, as it has scarcely more than a commercial interest. What happens is this. There are certain obvious qualities that are easily recognisable, even by an uneducated taste, and such a taste expects them. It will find them in a woodcut, and not in a pen-sketch. It is satisfied by the presence of these qualities in a mediocre degree, but is dissatisfied when they are absent. The educated taste wants them in a far higher degree, or else is prepared to go without them. To apply this to the subject we have been talking about, I should say the qualities of the skies in woodcuts are sufficiently satisfactory to an uneducated taste. A fastidious taste would be likely to require still greater delicacy of tone, which it would seek in the finest plate engraving. If the fastidious judge could not get this, he would say, 'Very well; then let there be no pretence to delicacy of tone, and let us have an avowedly rough sketch of a sky for its forms and composition.' And as, in his mind, he would be perfectly able to separate one quality

from another, he could enjoy the forms and composition without the tone, which the uneducated eye could not.

ARTIST. With regard to the education of the eye, I have met with one or two educated men, or what are called so (I mean University men), who were totally unable to read the language of lines in drawing. They only tolerated lines which were so fine as to be practically invisible. The sky of Mr. Haden's large etching of Greenwich is always a great puzzle to them. The lines in it strike their eyes as a confusion of thick wires, and iron rods, and pokers, set up somehow against the sky. That part of the sky of his *Calais Pier*, after Turner, which is nearer to the horizon, they take for cliffs—the cliffs of Albion.

CRITIC. This is interesting. Nothing is more interesting in art than the interpretations of ignorance. They throw a wonderful light on the questions concerning success and popularity. I have no doubt that the popular desire for tone, and the popular objection to line, have done much to keep up wood-engraving, even of a very inferior quality. I have nothing to say against wood-engraving that is really excellent. It has its own peculiar merits that no other art can successfully imitate.

SCIENTIST. Now I should like to know what you have to say about the technical question in the illustration of scientific books.

CRITIC. We dealt with that question, to some extent, in our last conversation. When the illustrations are not so numerous as to make the cost of printing very important, and when the scientific man can draw accurately enough in an explanatory way for his own purposes, he ought himself to etch his illustrations in a very simple and clear manner, without attempting effect. Dr. Travis Whittaker did this in his 'Student's Primer on the Urine,' which contains sixteen etched plates of microscopic studies, chiefly of different crystals. The author drew attention in his preface to the suitability of the etching-needle for the delineation of microscopic appearances. By its aid the student gets the master's graphic explanation quite at first hand, which is an inestimable advantage. When etching cannot be done, or cannot be afforded, the scientific man may make clear pen-drawings, to be reproduced photographically and printed with the text.

ARTIST. You assume that he is able to draw?

CRITIC. I take it for granted that every man of science, including archaeologists, ought to be able to draw an object quite clearly and distinctly. I should not expect him to make charming or clever artistic drawings, and I should not advise him to try, as by doing so he would probably miss those qualities of practical importance that he ought to aim at, and might generally attain.

ARTIST. The distinction between scientific and

artistic illustration is plain enough. Science has no object but accurate knowledge, but the purpose of art is to move and charm. Well, then, I should say that the best kind of illustration for scientific books would be the clearest, and that the best kind for artistic books would be the most charming. Mezzotint would be very bad for scientific illustrations.

CRITIC. I think this settles the question. In scientific illustration any veiling of hard fact for the sake of charm is a mistake; and in artistic illustration any assertion of hard fact at the cost of visual beauty and charm is a sin against art. Mezzotint, which is useless for scientific purposes, is excellent in those books which belong to the category of the Fine Arts.

CONVERSATION V.

THE EFFECT OF FASHION.

SCIENTIST. I have been thinking about the probable future of book illustration; and, with the help of what has been said during our talks upon the subject, was in hopes of arriving at some satisfactory conclusion, had I not been embarrassed by a factor that we have never yet taken into consideration, and that is fashion. It interferes in everything except

positive science, and even that is more or less fashionable at different periods; however, positive science cannot be extinguished by becoming unfashionable, whereas an art may be extinguished completely, as it depends on public encouragement for its existence.

CRITIC. We, in this very time, are witnesses of a case of extinction very remarkable in the history of the fine arts, and that is the death of engraving. It appears as if no effort on the part of criticism, nor any degree of accomplishment in the engravers themselves, could prolong the existence of the dying art.

ARTIST. There is a very curious peculiarity in the history of engraving. All connoisseurs appear to be agreed in admiring the masters of the sixteenth century, especially Marco Antonio Raimondi; and I recollect that M. Duplessis, in his history of engraving, declares that this engraver's plates after Raphael's drawings have never been equalled. Well, I possess a few of them, and I can see on what principles they are done. The art in them is of a very abstract character: it is very severe, like classical sculpture; it ignores local colour, and the light and shade is quite conventional and arbitrary. I know very well that it is a great sort of art in its way, and I have no doubt that the connoisseurs are right in admiring it; but if there is any permanence in good qualities, how does it happen that modern book illustration is never done on the principles of

Marc Antonio? The answer is, that they are out of fashion.

CRITIC. The qualities of Marc Antonio are not of a kind likely to be fashionable in modern times. The moderns delight in texture and tone, and they hate hard outlines. In Marc Antonio there is neither texture nor tone, and the outlines are really much harder and more definite than the *perceptible* contour of a marble statue.

SCIENTIST. There is a manifest hollowness or falsity of pretension in this and all similar cases. If Marc Antonio's work is held up to our admiration, the reason is that it possesses certain qualities. There cannot be any other reason worth considering by an intelligent man. There may be a prejudice in favour of a name or of an age; but all comes at last to this, that the work must have certain qualities to recommend it. The hollowness or false pretension lies in professing admiration for those qualities in Marc Antonio, in saying that he was greater than the moderns, because he had them, and then in discouraging to the utmost every modern engraver who attempts to acquire them. Do you believe (to bring the matter to a practical issue) that Marc Antonio, if resuscitated in the flesh, could earn his living in London at the present day?

CRITIC. Certainly not, if he continued to work on his own severe principles.

SCIENTIST. That is to say, if he continued to be

Marc Antonio. What sort of work would he be put to, do you think?

CRITIC. He might possibly earn a bare subsistence as an architectural engraver, or, failing that, he might engrave coats-of-arms. If he clung to fine art, he would be told to learn etching or mezzotint and study the picturesque, in which he would probably be a complete failure.

SCIENTIST. In short, the Marc Antonio whom all connoisseurs profess to admire so immensely would have to abandon the very qualities that they praise him for.

ARTIST. That is a true statement of the case.

SCIENTIST. Then it amounts to this, that modern engravers are put below Marc Antonio for not having his qualities, whilst if they had them they would be neglected and left to starve in obscurity. Do you believe that, with hearty encouragement, any modern men would have equalled Marc Antonio on his own ground?

CRITIC. I have not a doubt of it. The kind of engraving that he practised is extremely simple; and therefore, as Marc Antonio worked within very narrow limits, a modern imitator might, by close application, attain a surprising degree of skill in that narrow speciality.

ARTIST. One might go a step further, and add that although pictures by Raphael are purchased at fabulous prices, a modern painter working exactly on

Raphael's principles would find it difficult to earn a living. There is a very small picture of the *Three Graces* in the Duc d'Aumale's collection, for which he paid twenty-four thousand pounds. If the picture could be entirely forgotten, and one exactly like it were painted by a young English artist, do you think he would get four-and-twenty pounds for it? Very doubtful. The figures are heavy, and Raphael's style of painting is not popular now. Besides, he did not enhance the beauty of these figures by any art in the arrangement of a background. The idea of the group was taken from a Greek marble; but the painting is less beautiful than the piece of sculpture, whilst the sculpturesque arrangement detracts from its quality as a picture.

SCIENTIST. Here we have a case in which a permanent reputation *traverses* succeeding fashions; for you say that the qualities which distinguish Marc Antonio and Raphael are not fashionable now, yet their works maintain their prices.

ARTIST. The names survive. It is a question of names, of great reputations won at a time when certain qualities were fashionable that are fashionable no longer. The important matter, however, is the quality—I mean as concerning us: we might imitate the quality, but we cannot assume the name. If Marc Antonio's qualities were fashionable they would soon exhibit themselves in modern book-illustration.

CRITIC. We need not go so far back to find exactly the same contradiction. We have already spoken of Turner's vignettes, and the exquisite engravings from them by Goodall and others. Well, the name of Turner is very great, but the qualities of those vignettes are fashionable no longer. If they were, the school of English landscape engraving would be kept up, but the public has quietly allowed it to perish. There is just one survivor of the old school; and the public cares so little about the art, that he has been turned aside to other work than that for which his training prepared him, and which he alone, of all men living, is now able to execute. The critics of the future will wonder at the barbarism that could neglect the last chance of obtaining work of that quality that may ever occur in England. No breath of temporary fashion can ever revive a slow and difficult art like engraving.

SCIENTIST. Unless my memory deceives me, the art of engraving on metal was not succeeded at once by the photographic processes. It was succeeded by wood-engraving. After Stothard and Turner came the day of John Gilbert and Birket Foster as draughtsmen on wood. Was not this a distinct decline? Is not wood-engraving decidedly a lower form of art than the other? I wonder at a change of fashion which abandons an art whose difficulties have been overcome to take up with an inferior one. Quite a library of illustrated literature has appeared with woodcuts.

CRITIC. That change of fashion might be accounted for, in a great measure, by commercial considerations. A publisher naturally likes to diminish his risk as much as he can, so he is ready to encourage cheap methods if only they can be made satisfactory. The facility of cheap printing is the great attraction of wood-engraving for publishers. The public being ready for a change, the adoption of woodcut was made all the easier by a large demand for illustrated books in the middle classes. These classes include great numbers of people of limited income, not indifferent to literature and art, and to whom a rather cheap kind of illustrated book was welcome.

SCIENTIST. Do you think it likely that woodcut will survive in spite of the cheap photographic processes? Will not pen-drawing, in reproduction, entirely supersede it?

CRITIC. My impression is that if any of the arts of engraving survive in spite of the photographic processes, those two arts will be wood-engraving and etching.

SCIENTIST. Why these two rather than any others?

CRITIC. Because wood-engraving hitherto keeps the lead well amongst processes that print typographically by the clearness and purity of its tones and the variety of its textures. Now, there is nothing that the modern public really likes so much as

texture and tone. Etching, on the other hand, may keep alive through the desire of the public to have some kind of plate-engraving that is not done by a photographic process. It is inevitable that the photographic processes, by their enormous productivity, must flood the market continually more and more; and this will be quite enough to awaken a desire for original work. There will be no line-engravers, because line-engraving requires a long special apprenticeship. Etching does not require this; any one who is an artist, and has a natural gift and affinity for etching, can learn it with a moderate expenditure of time. There is this chance for etching, but it is only a chance.

ARTIST. Even with regard to etching, the photographic engravers excel artists in certainty. If I etch a subject, I am not quite sure of getting the desired result; but if I make a drawing with a pen, using Indian ink on Bristol board, M. Dujardin will make a plate from my drawing which is really an etching, for he has bitten it, and it will be a better plate than I could bite myself on account of his wonderful skill.

CRITIC. That is an artist's reason. The public can have no concern with practical difficulties, it thinks only of results. Now, in Dujardin's process there are two interferences — that of the photographic camera, and that of the chemist who does the biting. Without knowing exactly how the thing

is done, the public is aware that there is a 'process.' Direct etching, on the other hand, is known to be strictly original from beginning to end; and I think it likely that this quality may make the art survive.

ARTIST. A friend who pays close attention to changes of fashion tells me that etching is not quite so fashionable as it was three or four years ago.

CRITIC. The market for works of art is in a state of incessant fluctuation; it is never exactly in the same state for two successive years. Oil-painting is, in modern times, the most permanently fashionable of the fine arts; yet even oil-painting is less in fashion than it was some years ago. We hear on all sides complaints that pictures are not selling as formerly.

ARTIST I know several painters of merit who tell me they are not selling anything whatever. Another says that he sells, but only at low prices to speculating dealers.

CRITIC. The sudden popularity of water-colour on the Continent a few years ago is a remarkable instance of a fashion springing into existence. Before that fashion began, Continental people, especially the French, had a contempt for water-colour. All of a sudden they came to appreciate it—or to fancy that they appreciated it—and then there was a change of tone in the press, and a curious increase of activity

in the artists. At one time I thought there was going to be a great fashionable revival of pastel; but the difficulty of keeping pastels properly was against it.

SCIENTIST. There is a sensuous element in the fine arts, which is not without its importance. The love of colour in combination with a certain softness would be favourable to pastel, quite independently of any intellect displayed in the art.

CRITIC. An individual man, in his private life, has moments of great intellectual indolence, moments in which the slightest intellectual effort is an annoyance. There may be times corresponding to these in the public mind, when the intellectual part of the fine arts is unpopular, and the sensuous part alone is acceptable. In such times noble and serious subjects would be disliked, and frivolous subjects preferred; whilst the technical qualities most sought for would not be the strongest and best, but those most flattering to the eye, most agreeable (as a luxury) to the sense of vision. Such a state of the public mind would, of course, be most unfavourable to severe classical engraving. It would dislike all severity of line. In black-and-white art it would incline to mezzotint and charcoal; but no species of black-and-white art could ever satisfy it. Colour would be desired more than any beauty of form or solemnity of shade. There is a curious passage in Mr. Bell Scott's 'Little Masters,' about the substitution of

sensuous for intellectual pleasure in the enjoyment of the fine arts :—

'The charm of colour,' he says, 'is the vulgar or rather universal charm; and if the reader has any acquaintance with painters or collectors of pictures, he will readily acknowledge that it is rather needless to speak to them of anything else. I may relate an anecdote which has already been in print. The writer of this was taken to see Mr. Sheepshanks' pictures at the time he proposed to give them to the nation. Struck by the mixture of comparatively common with refined works hanging side by side, he ventured to remark on the refinements of his taste. He replied, as for that he did not know, tone and colour were what he valued himself, though he bought occasionally as he was recommended. He had ceased to collect pictures at that time; and led us in front of a new cabinet made of beautiful wood, touching the shining panels of which lovingly, he explained that he now enjoyed rare specimens of fine woods more than anything.'

In this instance you have first the love of painting for colour, which is a purely sensuous, not at all an intellectual, pleasure; then painting itself is deserted for beautiful woods. The latest pleasure was not entirely one of the eyes. Did you not observe the expression, 'touching the shining panels lovingly?' That indicates the complex nature of the enjoyment which the panels gave. They could be touched, as well as seen, with pleasure. Their smooth surface was not less delightful than their pleasant colour and pretty veining. These delights seem at a great dis-

tance from Marc Antonio; yet we have arrived at them by the simple process of descent to lower and lower faculties.

SCIENTIST. I have seen a connoisseur derive pleasures of this kind from an etching. It was printed on thick Japanese paper, which is at the same time very smooth and soft to the touch. The more deeply bitten lines of the etching were in relief, the deepest in strongly embossed relief. My connoisseur passed his delicate finger-tips repeatedly from the smooth to the rough, and back again alternately. The tactile contrast appeared to give him a physical pleasure, like those satisfactions that make a cat purr. This is perhaps the lowest gratification that the fine arts can communicate to the human mind or nerves.

ARTIST. It is something, is it not, that they should be able to give even that pleasure?

CRITIC. Pleasures of sight and touch are often enjoyed without our being quite aware of them. To touch smooth paper is *une jouissance douce*, to touch rough paper gives the contrast that we need in all pleasures, as it is *une âpre jouissance.* But the smoothness of paper is not always for tactile gratification only. For the printing of woodcuts and all other typographic blocks it is essential to clearness of line. In these matters the higher artistic necessities often take the appearance of mere luxury. The gilt frames of pictures are an artistic necessity,

and if gilding were cheaper than tin it would still be preferred. So the luxury of paper in an illustrated book is always, in a great degree, necessary to the artistic presentation of the engravings.

SCIENTIST. I have always thought it a misfortune for the fine arts that they have a sort of natural connexion with luxury. It brings them too much within the sphere of fashion, and this is a pure evil. The extremely luxurious homes of certain painters in London and Paris exhibit this connexion very curiously. I once called upon a famous artist in Paris, and found him living in a house that had cost him sixteen thousand pounds. His painting-room was almost as big as a lecture-hall, and furnished quite as luxuriously as a fine drawing-room. I then went to the counting-house of an immensely wealthy banker, and found him sitting in a small room of almost Spartan plainness, with nothing to amuse the eyes, only account-books and correspondence.

ARTIST. The connexion between art and luxury is real, but it is curiously irregular and uncertain. Much of the best painting has been done in poor little rooms. The subjects, too, of the pictures that are hung in rich men's houses are often austere enough. Poverty is as often painted as wealth.

CRITIC. You may remember, perhaps, that William Morris sets himself in favour of art as against luxury, contrasting the two as if they were opposed. Speaking of the beautiful things now

treasured in our museums, such as that at South Kensington, Morris asks:—

> 'And how were they made? Did a great artist draw the designs for them—a man of cultivation, highly paid, daintily fed, carefully housed, wrapped up in cotton wool, in short, when he was not at work? By no means. Wonderful as these works are, they were made by "common fellows," as the phrase goes, in the common course of their daily labour.'

In another lecture, 'On the Lesser Arts,' Morris argues strongly against burdening ourselves with superfluities; and says that there are tons upon tons of unutterable rubbish that ought to be cleared out of London houses; and that these accumulations of things, useless alike for mind and body, are the result of that vulgar love of luxury and show which is of all obvious hindrances the worst to overpass. Then he points to simplicity as the remedy. 'Simplicity of life, begetting simplicity of taste—that is, a love for sweet and lofty things—is of all matters most necessary for the birth of the new and better art we crave for: simplicity everywhere, in the palace as well as in the cottage.'

ARTIST. The whole question about luxury and the fine arts might be settled at once by reference to the really artistic needs. Luxury is not in itself artistic; it is only the exaggeration of comfort for the body, and of display for the mind. An engraving by Albert Dürer in a plain little oak frame is a work

of art, but not an object of luxury at all. The *Theseus* at the British Museum is not an object of luxury: a cathedral is not a luxurious room.

SCIENTIST. Let us try to define, then, what are the artistic needs of illustrated books, as distinguished from the luxuries of the *livre de luxe.*

ARTIST. Well, this cannot be a difficult task. Engravings of all kinds require margin, but not too much margin. This settles the question of size, when once you have determined the size of your engraving. Now, as to the engravings. A great deal of both nature and art can be put into a very small space; especially with the photographic processes, where reduction is possible to any extent compatible with the purchaser's eyesight. For my part, however, I object to reduction because it alters the character of the artist's execution. That which was bold becomes delicate and minute; strong and vigorous execution entirely loses the qualities of strength and vigour, to take upon itself an appearance of extreme care such as a man must bestow upon work done on a very small scale. Suppose there is to be no reduction at all. The German engravers whom we call 'The Little Masters,' especially the Behams, could give the most energetic action to muscular figures an inch high; and represent a furious battle in a little frieze of such figures five or six inches long. Some of their most important engravings do not measure three inches by two: and they would put half-a-dozen

figures into them full of action and expression. The clearness with which they drew was partly the consequence of a conventionalism; as they discarded all natural light and shade, as well as all local colour, shading only in an arbitrary way for roundness and relief, but in the case of figure subjects something of their conventionalism might be revived. It would not do in landscape. All I say is, that very small plates may be made to express a great deal; and consequently that an illustrated book need not be more cumbrous than another. As for luxury all that it requires is good paper and careful printing. The binding has nothing to do with the inside of a book, and the simpler it is the better.

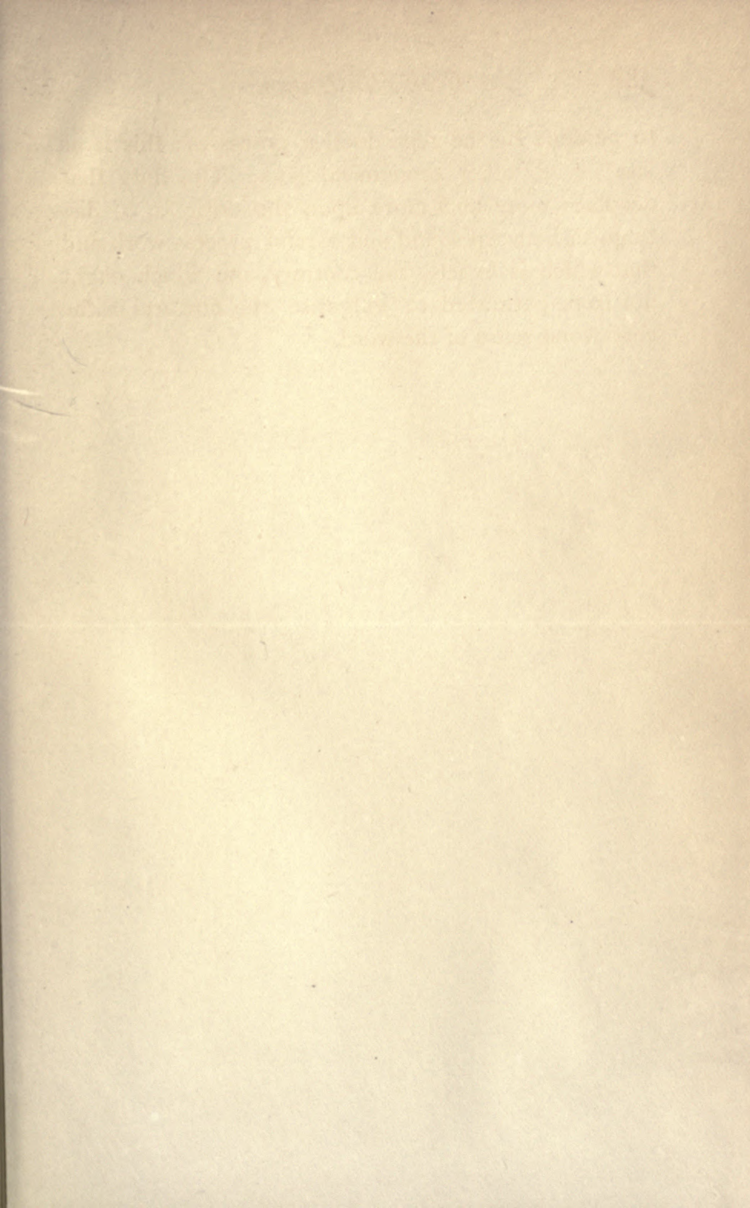
CRITIC. With regard to what you say about much art and nature in a small space, I remember how strongly Samuel Palmer once insisted on the marvellous concentrating power of art, that is able to put so much in so little room, and that by suggestion, in a great measure, without any excessive minuteness of labour. A massive wood, a great stretch of river or lake, and a remote mountainous horizon, may all be suggested to the mind by a drawing two inches long and an inch and a half high. With regard to reduction, it certainly puts into the hands of modern artists and publishers a new facility for giving an immense quantity of material in a small space; and it spares artists the extreme fatigue of working on a tediously minute scale.

SCIENTIST. There is one unfortunate truth never to be forgotten, namely, that it is the nature of Fashion to be unreasonable, as we see in changes of dress, and to leave what is rational and convenient, when it has it and holds it, to go to the irrational and the inconvenient. All that we can positively predicate about fashion is that it will never rest for very long together satisfied with the same thing. In one word, it will desire novelty; and I, for one, am utterly perplexed to discover what this search after novelty will lead to in ten years—in a hundred years.

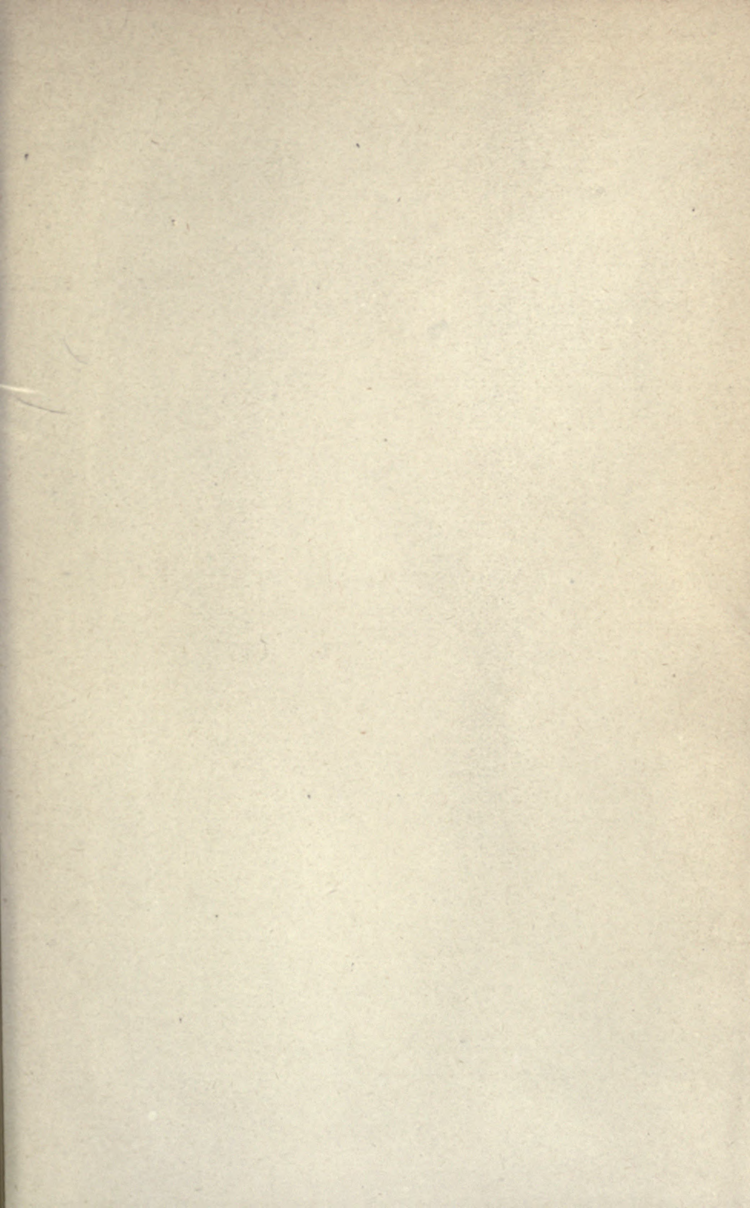
CRITIC. The chief source of novelty in the world is the coming into existence of new human beings. A new genius is the most novel thing, and the most prolific parent of novelties, that the world ever sees. Nobody in the eighteenth century could have foreseen the various forms that book-illustration has taken in the nineteenth, and which are due to the influence of a few men of genius and a number of men of talent. Fashion may encourage this thing or that; but it is generally some genius who sets the fashion, and then he gives encouragement to the arts that live upon him, as Gustave Doré gave a new vitality to wood-engraving, and as Mr. Pennell is just now strongly encouraging the reproduction of pen-drawings. Caldecott gave a most powerful stimulus to coloured caricatures; and we all know how influential Miss Kate Greenaway has been in giving a quaint kind of refinement to coloured illustrations in

children's books. Leech, Tenniel, and Charles Keene have done much for facsimile wood-cutting; and Birket Foster for interpretative wood-cutting. An old art becomes fresh and new again when it is used by a new genius. A process like photogravure can imitate so many arts with wonderful accuracy, that, of itself, it offers variety enough to gratify the love of change for many years together. The taste of the public is certainly much broader and better informed than it was thirty or forty years ago. I distinctly remember being told by a great dealer and print-publisher, still living, that etchings were perfectly unsaleable. He appreciated them himself, but said it was useless to publish them. A well-known editor of artistic publications told me that pen-drawings could never be accepted by the public. We now see artistic periodicals chiefly illustrated by etchings and pen-drawings. This catholicity of feeling about the graphic arts makes variety easily attainable, without leaving the soundest and best of the arts. In conclusion, there is one thing I want to say, which is, that the future of book-illustration would be certainly more encouraging if one could be quite sure that good reproductions would be heartily welcomed by the critics, and bad ones justly condemned by them. Unfortunately, good and bad are too frequently classed together as things 'done by process,' as if there were not vast differences of quality. Most of the book-illustration of the future is clearly destined

to be done by the reproductive processes: this is as fatal as all other economical laws. The duty that devolves more and more upon the critic is, to distinguish between sound and careful process work and that which is exactly the contrary, and which ought not to be permitted to 'vulgarise' the fine arts in the very worst sense of the word.



to be done by the typewriting process, and [illegible] field as of other economical [illegible]. This [illegible] devolves more and more upon the critic is, to [illegible] distinguish between sound and [illegible] process work and that which is exactly the contrary and which ought not to be permitted to 'vulgarise' the fine arts in the very worst sense of the word.



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