

J. M. W. Turner

PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF

“MODERN PAINTERS.”

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., 65. CORNHILL.

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LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

Houses of the Oireachtas

TO

FRANCIS HAWKSWORTH FAWKES, ESQ.,
OF FARNLEY,

These Pages,

WHICH OWE THEIR PRESENT FORM TO ADVANTAGES GRANTED

BY HIS KINDNESS,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,

JOHN RUSKIN.

Houses of the Oireachtas

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PREFACE.

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

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

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

point out the kind of merit which, however deficient in some respects, those works possess beyond the possibility of dispute.

Denmark Hill,
Aug. 1851.

PREFACE.

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

It may be proved, with much certainty, that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. It is written, "in the sweat of thy brow," but it was never written, "in the breaking of thine heart," thou shalt eat bread: and I find that, as on the one hand, infinite misery is caused by idle people, who both fail in doing what was appointed for them to do, and set in motion various springs of mischief in matters in which they should have had no concern, so on the other hand, no small misery is caused by over-worked and unhappy people, in the dark views which they necessarily take up themselves, and force upon others, of work itself. Were it not so, I believe the fact of their being unhappy is in itself a violation of divine law, and a sign of some kind of folly or sin in their way of life. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it — not a doubtful sense, such as needs some testi-

mony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

The first thing then that he has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be very safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: "I don't seem quite fit for a head-manager in the firm of —— & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer." Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: "I don't seem quite fit to be head-manager in the firm of —— & Co., but I dare say I might do something in a small greengrocery business; I used to be a good judge of pease;" that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom: once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing every one in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes. But this kind of humility is rendered especially difficult in these days, by the contumely thrown on men in humble employments. The very removal of the massy bars which once separated one class of society from another, has rendered it tenfold more shameful in foolish people's, i. e. in most people's eyes, to remain in the lower

grades of it, then ever it was before. When a man born of an artisan was looked upon as an entirely different species of animal from a man born of a noble, it made him no more uncomfortable or ashamed to remain that different species of animal, than it makes a horse ashamed to remain a horse, and not to become a giraffe. But now that a man may make money, and rise in the world, and associate himself, unreprouched, with people once far above him, not only is the natural discontentedness of humanity developed to an unheard-of extent, whatever a man's position, but it becomes a veritable shame to him to remain in the state he was born in, and everybody thinks it his *duty* to try to be a "gentleman." Persons who have any influence in the management of public institutions for charitable education know how common this feeling has become. Hardly a day passes but they receive letters from mothers who want all their six or eight sons to go to college, and make the grand tour in the long vacation, and who think there is something wrong in the foundations of society, because this is not possible. Out of every ten letters of this kind, nine will allege, as the reason of the writers' importunity, their desire to keep their families in such and such a "station of life." There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, or the moral good of the children, only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the molehill of the world — a calamity to be averted at any cost whatever, of struggle, anxiety, and shortening of life itself. I do

not believe that any greater good could be achieved for the country, than the change in public feeling on this head, which might be brought about by a few benevolent men, undeniably in the class of "gentlemen," who would, on principle, enter into some of our commonest trades, and make them honourable; showing that it was possible for a man to retain his dignity, and remain, in the best sense, a gentleman, though part of his time was every day occupied in manual labour, or even in serving customers over a counter. I do not in the least see why courtesy, and gravity, and sympathy with the feelings of others, and courage, and truth, and piety, and what else goes to make up a gentleman's character, should not be found behind a counter as well as elsewhere, if they were demanded, or even hoped for, there.

Let us suppose, then, that the man's way of life and manner of work have been discreetly chosen; then the next thing to be required is, that he do not over-work himself therein. I am not going to say anything here about the various errors in our systems of society and commerce, which appear (I am not sure if they ever do more than appear) to force us to over-work ourselves merely that we may live; nor about the still more fruitful cause of unhealthy toil—the incapability, in many men, of being content with the little that is indeed necessary to their happiness. I have only a word or two to say about one special cause of over-work—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts: hope as vain

as it is pernicious ; not only making men over-work themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort*; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without* effort. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this — nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

I have said no great *intellectual* thing: for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of intense moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work — to the great fight with the Dragon — the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort. Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them: they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight: we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely,

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

Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favourite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: “If I *am* anything, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labour.” This was Newton’s way of talking, and I suppose it would be the general tone of

men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labour in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well as by its gigantic, incommunicable facility in exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man's business whether he has genius or not: work he must, whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done, false, hollow, and despicable.

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

“That awful independent on to-morrow,
Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile.”

I am persuaded that the real nourishment and help of such a feeling as this is nearly unknown to half the workmen of the present day. For whatever appearance of self-complacency there may be in their

outward bearing, it is visible enough, by their feverish jealousy of each other, how little confidence they have in the sterling value of their several doings. Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up; and there is too visible distress and hopelessness in men's aspects to admit of the supposition that they have any stable support of faith in themselves.

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

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

This is the case, to the same extent, in no other profession or employment. A lawyer may indeed suspect that, unless he has more wit than those around him, he is not likely to advance in his profession; but he will not be always thinking how he is to display his wit. He will generally understand, early in his career, that wit must be left to take care of itself, and that it is hard knowledge of law and

vigorous examination and collation of the facts of every case entrusted to him, which his clients will mainly demand: this it is which he is to be paid for; and this is healthy and measurable labour, payable by the hour. If he happen to have keen natural perception and quick wit, these will come into play in their due time and place, but he will not think of them as his chief power; and if he have them not, he may still hope that industry and conscientiousness may enable him to rise in his profession without them. Again in the case of clergymen: that they are sorely tempted to display their eloquence or wit, none who know their own hearts will deny, but then they *know* this to *be* a temptation: they never would suppose that cleverness was all that was to be expected from them, or would sit down deliberately to write a clever sermon: even the dullest or vainest of them would throw some veil over their vanity, and pretend to some profitableness of purpose in what they did. They would not openly ask of their hearers—Did you think my sermon ingenious, or my language poetical? They would early understand that they were not paid for being ingenious, nor called to be so, but to preach truth; that if they happened to possess wit, eloquence, or originality, these would appear and be of service in due time, but were not to be continually sought after or exhibited; and if it should happen that they had them not, they might still be serviceable pastors without them.

Not so with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but every one

expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, every thing is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking — honesty and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter. What function? asks the reader in some surprise. He may well ask; for I suppose few painters have any idea what their function is, or even that they have any at all.

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

But he was never meant to be this. The sudden and universal Naturalism, or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe, at the moment when the invention of printing superseded their legendary labours, was no false instinct. It was misunderstood and misapplied, but it came at the right time, and has maintained itself through all kinds of abuse;

presenting, in the recent schools of landscape, perhaps only the first fruits of its power. That instinct was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—*the faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty existent at the period*; representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep faithful record of every monument of past ages which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change.

The instinct came, as I said, exactly at the right moment; and let the reader consider what amount and kind of general knowledge might by this time have been possessed by the nations of Europe, had their painters understood and obeyed it. Suppose that, after disciplining themselves so as to be able to draw, with unerring precision, each the particular kind of subject in which he most delighted, they had separated into two great armies of historians and naturalists;—that the first had painted with absolute faithfulness every edifice, every city, every battle-field, every scene of the slightest historical interest, precisely and completely rendering their aspect at the time; and that their companions, according to their several powers, had painted with like fidelity the plants and animals, the natural scenery, and the atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth—suppose that a faithful and complete record were now in our museums of every building destroyed by war, or time, or innovation, during these last 200 years—suppose that each recess of every mountain chain

of Europe had been penetrated, and its rocks drawn with such accuracy that the geologist's diagram was no longer necessary—suppose that every tree of the forest had been drawn in its noblest aspect, every beast of the field in its savage life—that all these gatherings were already in our national galleries, and that the painters of the present day were labouring, happily and earnestly, to multiply them, and put such means of knowledge more and more within reach of the common people—would not that be a more honourable life for them, than gaining precarious bread by “bright effects?” They think not, perhaps. They think it easy, and therefore contemptible, to be truthful; they have been taught so all their lives. But it is not so, whoever taught it them. It is most difficult, and worthy of the greatest men's greatest effort, to render, as it should be rendered, the simplest of the natural features of the earth; but also be it remembered, no man is confined to the simplest; each may look out work for himself where he chooses, and it will be strange if he cannot find something hard enough for him. The excuse is, however, one of the lips only; for every painter knows, that when he draws back from the attempt to render nature as she is, it is oftener in cowardice than in disdain.

I must leave the reader to pursue this subject for himself; I have not space to suggest to him the tenth part of the advantages which would follow, both to the painter from such an understanding of his mission, and to the whole people, in the results of his labour. Consider how the man himself would be

elevated; how content he would become, how earnest, how full of all accurate and noble knowledge, how free from envy — knowing creation to be infinite, feeling at once the value of what he did, and yet the nothingness. Consider the advantage to the people: the immeasurably larger interest given to art itself; the easy, pleasurable, and perfect knowledge conveyed by it, in every subject; the far greater number of men who might be healthily and profitably occupied with it as a means of livelihood; the useful direction of myriads of inferior talents, now left fading away in misery. Conceive all this, and then look around at our exhibitions, and behold the “cattle pieces,” and “sea pieces,” and “fruit pieces,” and “family pieces;” the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls, and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers; — and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been.

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

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

But is there to be no place left, it will be indignantly asked, for imagination and invention, for poetical power, or love of ideal beauty? Yes; the highest, the noblest place—that which these only can attain when they are all used in the cause, and with the aid of truth. Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would

give them would be the best they could receive. The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose that they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I ever have written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers, — the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets? — of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labour? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases

numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could any thing come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense, should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty, and look to heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaelesque, but yet original, manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever, all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions

between the lips and chin ; but partly also in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This I say is the kind of teaching which through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters !

But we do worse than this. Within the last few years some sense of the real tendency of such teaching has appeared in some of our younger painters. It only *could* appear in the younger ones, our older men having become familiarised with the false system, or else having passed through it and forgotten it, not well knowing the degree of harm they had sustained. This sense appeared, among our youths, — increased, — matured into resolute action. Necessarily, to exist at all, it needed the support both of strong instincts and of considerable self-confidence, otherwise it must at once have been borne down by the weight of general authority and received canon law. Strong instincts are apt to make men strange, and rude ; self-confidence, however well founded, to give much of what they do or say the appearance of impertinence. Look at the self-confidence of Wordsworth, stiffening every other sentence of his prefaces into defiance ; there is no more of it than was needed to enable him to do his work, yet it is not a little ungraceful here and there. Suppose this stubbornness and self-trust in a youth, labouring in an art of which the executive part is confessedly to be best learnt from

masters, and we shall hardly wonder that much of his work has a certain awkwardness and stiffness in it, or that he should be regarded with disfavour by many, even the most temperate, of the judges trained in the system he was breaking through, and with utter contempt and reprobation by the envious and the dull. Consider, farther, that the particular system to be overthrown was, in the present case, one of which the main characteristic was the pursuit of beauty at the expense of manliness and truth; and it will seem likely, *à priori*, that the men intended successfully to resist the influence of such a system should be endowed with little natural sense of beauty, and thus rendered dead to the temptation it presented. Summing up these conditions, there is surely little cause for surprise that pictures painted, in a temper of resistance, by exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts and positive self-trust, and with little natural perception of beauty, should not be calculated, at the first glance, to win us from works enriched by plagiarism, polished by convention, invested with all the attractiveness of artificial grace, and recommended to our respect by established authority.

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

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

And as if these were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small, slimy way. The very day after I had written my second letter to the Times in the defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, I received an anonymous letter respecting one of them, from some person apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a specimen of petty malignity as ever blotted paper. I think it well that the public should know this, and so get some insight into the sources of the spirit which is at work against these men — how first roused it is difficult to say, for one would hardly have thought that mere eccentricity in

young artists could have excited an hostility so determined and so cruel; — hostility which hesitated at no assertion, however impudent. That of the “absence of perspective” was one of the most curious pieces of the hue and cry which began with the Times, and died away in feeble maundering in the Art Union; I contradicted it in the Times — I here contradict it directly for the second time. There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. But if otherwise, would it have been anything remarkable in them? I doubt, if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there were one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy; I never met but with two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane, so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished among them, the author of several most valuable works, I found he actually did not know how to draw a circle in perspective. And in this state of general science our writers for the press take it upon them to tell us, that the forest-trees in Mr. Hunt’s *Sylvia*, and the bunches of lilies in Mr. Collins’s *Convent Thoughts*, are out of perspective.*

* It was not a little curious, that in the very number of the Art Union which repeated this direct falsehood about the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of “linear perspective” (by-the-bye, the next time J. B. takes upon him to speak of any one connected with the

It might not, I think, in such circumstances, have been ungraceful or unwise in the Academicians themselves to have defended their young pupils, at least by the contradiction of statements directly false respecting them*, and the direction of the mind and

Universities, he may as well first ascertain the difference between a Graduate and an Under-Graduate), the second plate given should have been of a picture of Bonington's, — a professional landscape painter, observe, — for the want of *aerial* perspective, in which the Art Union itself was obliged to apologise, and in which the artist has committed nearly as many blunders in *linear* perspective as there are lines in the picture.

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

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

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

sight of the public to such real merit as they possess. If Sir Charles Eastlake, Mulready, Edwin and Charles Landseer, Cope, and Dyce would each of them simply state their own private opinion respecting their paintings, sign it, and publish it, I believe the act would be of more service to English art than any thing the Academy has done since it was founded. But as I cannot hope for this, I can only ask the public to give their pictures careful examination, and to look at them at once with the indulgence and the respect which I have endeavoured to show they deserve.

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

For it is always to be remembered that no one but if so, they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. I hope all things from the school.

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

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

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

Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thoughts of seizing transient effects, or giving general impressions of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the intensity of his perceptions, or the fulness of matter in his subject.

Meantime, the other has been watching the change

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

function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

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

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

It is hardly necessary to point out the earnestness or humility in the works of William Hunt; but it may be so to suggest the high value they possess as records of English rural life, and *still* life. Who is

there who for a moment could contend with him in the unaffected, yet humorous truth with which he has painted our peasant children? Who is there who does not sympathise with him in the simple love with which he dwells on the brightness and bloom of our summer fruit and flowers? And yet there is something to be regretted concerning him: why should he be allowed continually to paint the same bunches of hot-house grapes, and supply to the Water Colour Society a succession of pineapples with the regularity of a Covent Garden fruiterer? He has of late discovered that primrose banks are lovely, but there are other things grow wild besides primroses: what undreamt-of loveliness might he not bring back to us, if he would lose himself for a summer in Highland foregrounds; if he would paint the heather as it grows, and the foxglove and the harebell as they nestle in the clefts of the rocks, and the mosses and bright lichens of the rocks themselves. And then, cross to the Jura, and bring back a piece of Jura pasture in spring; with the gentians in their earliest blue, and a soldanelle beside the fading snow! And return again, and paint a grey wall of alpine crag, with budding roses crowning it like a wreath of rubies. That is what he was meant to do in this world; not to paint bouquets in China vases.

I have in various other places expressed my sincere respect for the works of Samuel Prout: his shortness of sight has necessarily prevented their possessing delicacy of finish or fulness of minor detail; but I think that those of no other living artist furnish an

example so striking of innate and special instinct, sent to do a particular work at the exact and only period when it was possible. At the instant when peace had been established all over Europe, but when neither national character nor national architecture had as yet been seriously changed by promiscuous intercourse or modern "improvement;" when, however, nearly every ancient and beautiful building had been long left in a state of comparative neglect, so that its aspect of partial ruinousness, and of separation from recent active life, gave to every edifice a peculiar interest—half sorrowful, half sublime;—at that moment Prout was trained among the rough rocks and simple cottages of Cornwall, until his eye was accustomed to follow with delight the rents and breaks, and irregularities which, to another man, would have been offensive; and then, gifted with infinite readiness in composition, but also with infinite affection for the kind of subjects he had to portray, he was sent to preserve, in an almost innumerable series of drawings, *every one made on the spot*, the aspect borne, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by cities which, in a few years more, re-kindled wars, or unexpected prosperities, were to ravage, or renovate, into nothingness.

It seems strange to pass from Prout to John Lewis; but there is this fellowship between them, that both seem to have been intended to appreciate the characters of foreign countries more than of their own, nay, to have been born in England chiefly that the excitement of strangeness might enhance to them

the interest of the scenes they had to represent. I believe John Lewis to have done more entire justice to all his powers, (and they are magnificent ones,) than any other man amongst us. His mission was evidently to portray the comparatively animal life of the southern and eastern families of mankind. For this, he was prepared in a somewhat singular way — by being led to study, and endowed with altogether peculiar apprehension of, the most sublime characters of animals themselves. Rubens, Rembrandt, Snyders, Tintoret, and Titian, have all, in various ways, drawn wild beasts magnificently; but they have in some sort humanised or demonised them, making them either ravenous fiends, or educated beasts, that would draw cars, and had respect for hermits. The sullen isolation of the brutal nature; the dignity and quietness of the mighty limbs; the shaggy mountainous power, mingled with grace as of a flowing stream; the stealthy restraint of strength and wrath in every soundless motion of the gigantic frame; all this seems never to have been seen, much less drawn, until Lewis drew and himself engraved a series of animal subjects, now many years ago. Since then, he has devoted himself to the portraiture of those European and Asiatic races, among whom the refinements of civilisation exist without its laws or its energies, and in whom the fierceness, indolence, and subtlety of animal nature are associated with brilliant imagination and strong affections. To this task he has brought not only intense perception of the kind of character, but powers of artistical

composition like those of the great Venetians, displaying, at the same time, a refinement of drawing almost miraculous, and appreciable only, as the minutiae of nature itself are appreciable, by the help of the microscope. The value, therefore, of his works, as records of the aspect of the scenery and inhabitants of the south of Spain and of the East, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is quite above all estimate.

I hardly know how to speak of Mulready: in delicacy and completion of drawing, and splendour of colour, he takes place beside John Lewis and the pre-Raphaelites; but he has, throughout his career, displayed no definiteness in choice of subject. He must be named among the painters who have studied with industry, and have made themselves great by doing so; but having obtained a consummate method of execution, he has thrown it away on subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation. "The Cherry Woman," exhibited in 1850, may be named as an example of the first kind; the "Burchell and Sophia" of the second (the character of Sir William Thornhill being utterly missed); the "Seven Ages" of the third; for this subject cannot be painted. In the written passage, the thoughts are progressive and connected; in the picture they must be co-existent, and yet separate; nor can all the characters of the ages be rendered in painting at all. One may represent the soldier at the cannon's mouth, but

one cannot paint the "bubble reputation" which he seeks. Mulready, therefore, while he has always produced exquisite pieces of painting, has failed in doing any thing which can be of true or extensive use. He has, indeed, understood how to discipline his genius, but never how to direct it.

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

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

Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy,

signed W. Turner.* There was nothing, however, in them at all indicative of genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

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

Pictures executed on such a system are not, pro-

* He did not use his full signature, J. M. W., until about the year 1800.

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

This at least was the general theory,—carried out with great severity in many, both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in

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

Thus the “Crossing the Brook,” and such other elaborate and large compositions, are actually painted in nothing but grey, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local colour in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated colour occur not unfrequently in easy places; and even before the year 1800 he begins to introduce it with

evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies, just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit or other dangerous luxury to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft pencilling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colourless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-colour or gold; while, whenever the hues of nature in anywise fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigour, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear, Cairngorm-like pools, and the usual serenity of his aerial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

The system of his colour being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form ; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his colour is simple ; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him : we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farm-yard ; and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage ; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap ; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks ; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses ; Cuyp, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons ; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes (as he has himself divided them in the *Liber Studiorum*), no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal "gentlemen's seats," I suppose drawings commissioned by the owners ; then lowland pastoral scenery of

every kind, including nearly all farming operations, — ploughing, harrowing, hedging and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life — court-yards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, house-buildings, fairs, elections, &c.; then all kinds of inner domestic life — interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn, round the whole coast of England; — pilchard fishing at St. Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance, — one of the Victory after the battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the Death of Nelson, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealised into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes and Carthages and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures, — nymphs, monsters, and spectres; heroes and divinities.*

What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can possibly pervade all this? This, the greatest of all feelings — an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at

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

present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite — a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakspeare comparable with it. A soldier's wife resting by the roadside is not beneath it; Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carry away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

This is the root of the man's greatness; and it follows as a matter of course that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the characters of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed. The man who can best feel the difference between rudeness and tenderness in humanity, perceives also more difference between the branches of an oak and a willow than any one else would; and, therefore, necessarily the most striking character of the drawings themselves is the speciality of whatever they represent — the thorough stiffness of what is stiff, and grace of what is graceful, and vastness of what is vast; but through and beyond all this, the condition of the mind of the painter himself is easily enough discoverable by comparison of a large number of the drawings. It is singularly serene and peaceful: in itself quite passionless, though entering with ease into the external passion which it contemplates. By the effort of its

will it sympathises with tumult or distress, even in their extremes, but there is no tumult, no sorrow in itself, only a chastened and exquisitely peaceful cheerfulness, deeply meditative; touched, without loss of its own perfect balance, by sadness on the one side, and stooping to playfulness upon the other. I shall never cease to regret the destruction, by fire, now several years ago, of a drawing which always seemed to me to be the perfect image of the painter's mind at this period,—the drawing of Brignal Church near Rokeby, of which a feeble idea may still be gathered from the engraving (in the Yorkshire series). The spectator stands on the "Brignal banks," looking down into the glen at twilight; the sky is still full of soft rays, though the sun is gone, and the Greta glances brightly in the valley, singing its even-song; two white clouds, following each other, move without wind through the hollows of the ravine, and others lie couched on the far away moorlands; every leaf of the woods is still in the delicate air; a boy's kite, incapable of rising, has become entangled in their branches, he is climbing to recover it; and just behind it in the picture, almost indicated by it, the lowly church is seen in its secluded field between the rocks and the stream; and around it the low churchyard wall, and the few white stones which mark the resting places of those who can climb the rocks no more, nor hear the river sing as it passes.

There are many other existing drawings which indicate the same character of mind, though I think none so touching or so beautiful: yet they are not, as

I said above, more numerous than those which express his sympathy with sublimer or more active scenes; but they are almost always marked by a tenderness of execution, and have a look of being beloved in every part of them, which shows them to be the truest expression of his own feelings.

One other characteristic of his mind at this period remains to be noticed — its reverence for talent in others. Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they were the laws of nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great text-book of nature itself. Turner thus studied almost every preceding landscape painter, chiefly Claude, Poussin, Vanderveelde, Louthembourg, and Wilson. It was probably by the Sir George Beaumonts and other feeble conventionalists of the period, that he was persuaded to devote his attention to the works of these men; and his having done so will be thought, a few scores of years hence, evidence of perhaps the greatest modesty ever shown by a man of original power. Modesty at once admirable and unfortunate, for the study of the works of Vanderveelde and Claude was productive of unmixed mischief to him: he spoiled many of his marine pictures, as for instance Lord Ellesmere's, by imitation of the former; and from the latter learned a false ideal, which, confirmed by the notions of Greek art prevalent in London in the beginning of this century,

has manifested itself in many vulgarities in his composition pictures, vulgarities which may perhaps be best expressed by the general term "Twickenham Classicism," as consisting principally in conceptions of ancient or of rural life such as have influenced the erection of most of our suburban villas. From Nicolo Poussin and Louthembourg he seems to have derived advantage; perhaps also from Wilson; and much in his subsequent travels from far higher men, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese. I have myself heard him speaking with singular delight of the putting in of the beech leaves in the upper right-hand corner of Titian's Peter Martyr. I cannot in any of his works trace the slightest influence of Salvator; and I am not surprised at it, for though Salvator was a man of far higher powers than either Vandewelde or Claude, he was a wilful and gross caricaturist. Turner would condescend to be helped by feeble men, but could not be corrupted by false men. Besides, he had never himself seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as competent authority for it. But he *had* seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them.

One of the most characteristic drawings of this period fortunately bears a date, 1818, and brings us within two years of another dated drawing, no less characteristic of what I shall henceforward call Turner's Second period. It is in the possession of Mr. Hawkesworth Fawkes of Farnley, one of Turner's earliest and truest friends; and bears the inscription,

unusually conspicuous, heaving itself up and down over the eminences of the foreground — “PASSAGE OF MONT CENIS. J. M. W. TURNER, January 15th, 1820.”

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

light of the distance, though too far off for the whip to be seen.

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

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

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

These, accordingly, are the chief characteristics of

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

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

The colour is, however, a more absolute distinction; and we must return to Mr. Fawkes's collection in order to see how the change in it was effected. That such a change would take place at one time or other was of course to be securely anticipated, the conventional system of the first period being, as above stated, merely a means of study. But the immediate cause was the journey of the year 1820. As might

be guessed from the legend on the drawing above described, "Passage of Mont Cenis, January 15th, 1820," that drawing represents what happened on the day in question to the painter himself. He passed the Alps then in the winter of 1820; and either in the previous or subsequent summer, but on the same journey, he made a series of sketches on the Rhine, in body colour, now in Mr. Fawkes's collection. Every one of those sketches is the almost instantaneous record of an *effect* of colour or atmosphere, taken strictly from nature, the drawing and the details of every subject being comparatively subordinate, and the colour nearly as principal as the light and shade had been before, — certainly the leading feature, though the light and shade are always exquisitely harmonised with it. And naturally, as the colour becomes the leading object, those times of day are chosen in which it is most lovely; and whereas before, at least five out of six of Turner's drawings represented ordinary daylight, we now find his attention directed constantly to the evening: and, for the first time, we have those rosy lights upon the hills, those gorgeous falls of sun through flaming heavens, those solemn twilights, with the blue moon rising as the western sky grows dim, which have ever since been the themes of his mightiest thoughts.

I have no doubt, that the *immediate* reason of this change was the impression made upon him by the colours of the continental skies. When he first travelled on the Continent (1800), he was comparatively a young student; not yet able to draw form as he

wanted, he was forced to give all his thoughts and strength to this primary object. But now he was free to receive other impressions; the time was come for perfecting his art, and the first sunset which he saw on the Rhine taught him that all previous landscape art was vain and valueless, that in comparison with natural colour, the things that had been called paintings were mere ink and charcoal, and that all precedent and all authority must be cast away at once, and trodden under foot. He cast them away: the memories of Vandewelde and Claude were at once weeded out of the great mind they had encumbered; they and all the rubbish of the schools together with them; the waves of the Rhine swept them away for ever; and a new dawn rose over the rocks of the Siebengebirge.

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

and pointed joyously to the fish; — “They say that Turner can’t colour!” and turned away.

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

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

Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with his fingers in his ears. He retired into himself; he could look no longer for help, or counsel, or sympathy from any one; and the spirit of defiance in which he was forced to labour led him some-

times into violences, from which the slightest expression of sympathy would have saved him. The new energy that was upon him, and the utter isolation into which he was driven, were both alike dangerous, and many drawings of the time show the evil effects of both; some of them being hasty, wild, or experimental, and others little more than magnificent expressions of defiance of public opinion.

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

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

On looking over any catalogues of his works, or of particular series of them, we shall notice the recurrence of the same subject two, three, or even many times. In any other artist this would be nothing remarkable. Probably most modern landscape painters multiply a favourite subject twenty, thirty, or sixty fold, putting the shadows and the clouds in different places, and “inventing,” as they are pleased to call it, a new “effect” every time. But if we examine the successions of Turner’s subjects, we shall find them either the records of a succession of im-

pressions actually received by him at some favourite locality, or else repetitions of one impression received in early youth, and again and again realised as his increasing powers enabled him to do better justice to it. In either case we shall find them records of *seen facts*; *never* compositions in his room to fill up a favourite outline.

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

* The plate was, however, never published.

there is the "Fortrouge," Calais: that is what he saw after he had been home to Dessein's, and dined, and went out again in the evening to walk on the sands, the tide being down. He had never seen such a waste of sands before, and it made an impression on him. The shrimp girls were all scattered over them too, and moved about in white spots on the wild shore; and the storm had lulled a little, and there was a sunset — such a sunset,— and the bars of Fortrouge seen against it, skeleton-wise. He did not paint that directly; thought over it, — painted it a long while afterwards.

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

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

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

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

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

Some thirty years afterwards, with all his powers in their strongest training, and after the total change in his feelings and principles which I have endeavoured to describe, he undertook the series of "England and Wales," and in that series introduced the subject of Llanthony Abbey. And behold, he went back to his boy's sketch and boy's thought. He

kept the very bushes in their places, but brought the fisherman to the other side of the river, and put him, in somewhat less courtly dress, under their shelter, instead of himself. And then he set all his gained strength and new knowledge at work on the well-remembered shower of rain, that had fallen thirty years before, to do it better. The resultant drawing* is one of the very noblest of his second period.

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

This was evidently Turner's record of a quiet evening by the shore of Ulleswater, but it was a feeble one. He could not at that time render the sunset colours: he went back to it therefore in the England series, and painted it again with his new power. The same hills are there, the same shadows, the same cows, — they had stood in his mind, on the same spot, for twenty years, — the same boat, the same

* Vide *Modern Painters*, Part II. Sect. III. Chap. IV. § 14.

rocks, only the copse is cut away — it interfered with the masses of his colour : some figures are introduced bathing, and what was grey, and feeble gold in the first drawing, becomes purple, and burning rose-colour in the last.

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

Nor is it merely of entire scenes, or of particular incidents that Turner's memory is thus tenacious. The slightest passages of colour or arrangement that have pleased him — the fork of a bough, the casting of a shadow, the fracture of a stone — will be taken up again and again, and strangely worked into new relations with other thoughts. There is a single

sketch from nature in one of the portfolios at Farnley, of a common wood-walk on the estate, which has furnished passages to no fewer than three of the most elaborate compositions in the *Liber Studiorum*.

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

There is, however, one more characteristic of Turner's second period, on which I have still to dwell, especially with reference to what has been above advanced respecting the fallacy of overtoil; namely, the magnificent ease with which all is done when it is *successfully* done. For there are one or two drawings of this time which are *not* done easily. Turner had in these set himself to do a fine thing to exhibit his powers; in the common phrase, to excel himself;

so sure as he does this, the work is a failure. The worst drawings that have ever come from his hands are some of this second period, on which he has spent much time and laborious thought; drawings filled with incident from one side to the other, with skies stippled into morbid blue, and warm lights set against them in violent contrast; one of Bamborough Castle, a large water-colour, may be named as an example. But the truly noble works are those in which, without effort, he has expressed his thoughts as they came, and forgotten himself; and in these the outpouring of invention is not less miraculous than the swiftness and obedience of the mighty hand that expresses it. Any one who examines the drawings may see the evidence of this facility, in the strange freshness and sharpness of every touch of colour; but when the multitude of delicate touches, with which all the aerial tones are worked, is taken into consideration, it would still appear impossible that the drawing could have been completed with *ease*, unless we had direct evidence on the matter: fortunately, it is not wanting. There is a drawing in Mr. Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores: it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about sixteen inches by eleven: it does not appear one of the most highly finished, but is still farther removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator, seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her portholes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed; there are two other ships of the line in the middle

distance, drawn with equal precision; a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing-room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr. Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot.

Let this single fact be quietly meditated upon by our ordinary painters, and they will see the truth of what was above asserted, — that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; and let them not torment themselves with twisting of compositions this way and that, and repeating, and experimenting, and scene-shifting. If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept in most of my works, on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not “teaching people how to arrange masses;” for not “attributing sufficient importance to composition.” Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do;—so much importance, that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a *Divina Commedia*, or *King Lear*, as how to “compose,” in the

true sense, a single building or picture. The marvellous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that what they call, "principles of composition," are mere principles of common sense in every thing, as well as in pictures and buildings;— A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in any thing else, — no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was every thing, and so cover our academy walls with Shacabac feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered, but the dishes empty.

It is not, however, only in invention that men overwork themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence in failing portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so long upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any

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

ease in the outlines, which no *slow* effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.

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

In the summer either of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was then at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps; (the source of the Arveron, in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which could not have been painted till he

had seen the thing itself, bears date 1800,) and the direction of his journey in 1840 marks his fond memory of that earliest one; for, if we look over the Swiss studies and drawings executed in his first period, we shall be struck by his fondness for the pass of the St. Gothard; the most elaborate drawing in the Farnley collection is one of the Lake of Lucerne from Fluelen; and, counting the *Liber Studiorum* subjects, there are, to my knowledge, six compositions taken at the same period from the pass of St. Gothard, and, probably, several others are in existence. The valleys of Sallenche and Chamouni, and Lake of Geneva, are the only other Swiss scenes which seem to have made very profound impressions on him.

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

The perfect repose of his youth had returned to his mind, while the faculties of imagination and execution appeared in renewed strength; all conventionality being done away by the force of the impression which he had received from the Alps, after his long separation from them. The drawings are marked by a peculiar largeness and simplicity of thought: most of them by deep serenity, passing into melancholy;

all by a richness of colour, such as he had never before conceived. They, and the works done in following years, bear the same relation to those of the rest of his life that the colours of sunset do to those of the day; and will be recognised, in a few years more, as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect.

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

standing any thing nobler, or even of feeling the value of the results to which they lead. But even the best men are in a sort injured by them, and pay a definite price, as in most other matters, for definite advantages. They gain a peculiar strength, but lose in tenderness, elasticity, and impressibility. The man who has gone, hammer in hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are adorned in the mind of the passing traveller. In his more informed conception, they arrange themselves like a dissected model: where another man would be awe-struck by the magnificence of the precipice, he sees nothing but the emergence of a fossiliferous rock, familiarised already to his imagination as extending in a shallow stratum, over a perhaps uninteresting district; where the unlearned spectator would be touched with strong emotion by the aspect of the snowy summits which rise in the distance, he sees only the culminating points of a metamorphic formation, with an uncomfortable web of fan-like fissures radiating, in his imagination, through their centres.*

* This state of mind appears to have been the only one which Wordsworth had been able to discern in men of science; and in disdain of which, he wrote that short-sighted passage in the *Excursion*, Book III. l. 165—190., which is, I think, the only one in the whole range of his works which his true friends would have desired to see blotted out. What else has been found fault with as feeble or superfluous, is not so in the intense distinctive relief which it gives to his character. But these lines are written in mere ignorance of the matter they treat; in mere want of

That in the grasp he has obtained of the inner relations of all these things to the universe, and to man, that in the views which have been opened to him of natural energies such as no human mind would have ventured to conceive, and of past states of being, each in some new way bearing witness to the unity of purpose and everlastingly consistent providence of the Maker of all things, he has received reward well worthy the sacrifice, I would not for an instant deny; but the sense of the loss is not less painful to him if his mind be rightly constituted; and it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect; should make them dazzling with the splendour of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity; should restore to the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe the naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death.

sympathy with the men they describe: for, observe, though the passage is put into the mouth of the Solitary, it is fully confirmed, and even rendered more scornful, by the speech which follows.

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Houses of the Oireachtas