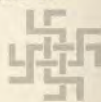


surviving her husband after fifty years of married life, and since she never had occasion to take him to the police court, we may reasonably conclude that Hals was *not* an habitual wife-beater.

He appears to have been a jovial and very human being, fond of a glass in good company, and now and then, perhaps, taking one too many ; a real Bohemian, as his paintings of gipsies and strolling players attest ; but he was not a social outcast, or he would not have been constantly employed by respectable citizens and important corporations, nor would he at the age of sixty-four have been appointed a director of the Guild of St. Lucas, which protected the interests of the artists and craftsmen of Haarlem.

Yet towards the end of his life, when his honourable position cannot be assailed, he was in sad financial difficulties. At one time he supplemented his income by teaching, and Adriaen Brouwer (1605-38) and A. J. van Ostade (1610-85) were among his pupils ; but this connection did not last, and in 1652 he was distrained upon for debt by his baker, Jan Ykess. Ten years later his distress was such that he had to apply to the Municipal Council for aid, and was given the sum of 150 florins ; two years later he had to apply again, and this time (1664) the Council voted the old man a yearly pension of 200 gulden. That year Hals, now eighty-four years of age, painted his last two pictures, portraits of the " Managers of the Almshouses at Haarlem," and in 1666 he died, and was buried on September 7 in the choir of the Church of St. Bavon.

Properly to appreciate the art of Frans Hals, there is one thing we must never forget, namely, that all the work of his maturity was done during the excitement of war. It was a war which must have thrilled every Dutchman through and through, for it was waged to defend hearth and home and to deliver the fatherland from a foreign yoke ; it was a war in which one of the smallest nations in Europe had the hardihood to challenge the mightiest empire of the time. It began in 1568, about twelve years before Hals was born, and as he grew up the apparent hopelessness of the conflict disappeared, and the gaiety and elation of victory in sight began to sparkle in his paintings. When Hals first painted the officers of the St. Joris' Shooting Guild in 1616 the issue was still doubtful ; when he painted the last of his great series of military groups in 1639, again of the " Officers of St. Joris' Shooting Guild," the ultimate triumph of Holland was a foregone conclusion. In the earliest group many of the faces appear anxious and worried, but see how happy they all are even in the " Reunion of the Officers of the Guild of Archers of St. Adriaen " a picture painted in 1633. These stout fellows bear their fortune with varying demeanours ; some are smiling and jovial, some are grave and stern, one or two are evidently elated, one or two are thoughtful, but *all are confident*. In no countenance can a trace of doubt be



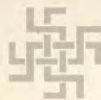


W. F. Mansell.

"THE LAUGHING CAVALIER," BY FRANS HALS (1580-1666)

Wallace Collection, London

"One of the most irresistible things ever painted" is the smile of this unknown young officer. "He looks out at you with an air of supreme contempt at one moment, of supreme good-nature at another," says the Rev. G. S. Davies, Master of Charterhouse; "but the expression is full of changefulness, full of that electric current which plays over the human face and tells you while you look at it at one moment what to expect from the next."



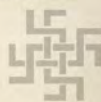


"NURSE AND CHILD," BY FRANS HALS

W. F. Mansell.

Berlin

Look well at the face of this babe and you will see it "just beginning to ripple all over with the laughter that will come in a minute." The picture shows the artist's power to seize a fleeting expression, and the keen eye and steady hand needed to paint the elaborate details of lace and embroidery.



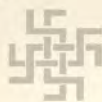
felt, and their freedom from anxiety finds its parallel in the flowing brush of the painter, equally confident and unerring.

If in the intoxication of victory, coming and assured, some of the soldier-patriots of Holland became boisterous in their exuberance, who will blame them? And who will blame Hals if in this great and exhilarating period his art also becomes boisterous and exuberant?

It was nearly a quarter of a century before the final victory and the Spanish acknowledgment of Holland's independence, when Frans Hals about 1624 painted that portrait of an officer known all over the world as "The Laughing Cavalier." The treatment and the subject are in complete unity, for the swagger of the brushwork is in harmony with the swaggering pose of the officer. G. S. Davies, the Master of Charterhouse, has commented on the extraordinary mobility of feature in the expression of this portrait—how at one moment the face of the cavalier seems provocatively disdainful, at another full of amused good-humour. Another brilliant example of the unrivalled power of Hals to catch a fleeting expression will be found in his later painting, "Nurse and Child," a work which with its wonderfully elaborate and intricate detail no alcoholic hand could possibly have painted. Look well at this babe with its odd little old face, and you will see it "just beginning to ripple all over with the laughter that will come in a minute." G. S. Davies thinks Hals must have learnt the knack of this from watching his own children in his own home, and surely we may say with conviction that the man who could paint babies with so penetrating an eye was a good father.

Splendid as these two paintings are, good as the portraits by Hals in the National Gallery, London, yet to know Hals to the uttermost it is necessary to visit his home-town of Haarlem and to see there the series of great portrait-groups he painted of the Guilds, the "Archers of St. George" (Joris) and the "Archers of Saint Adriaen." These shooting guilds may be roughly described as equivalent to our own Honourable Artillery Company when it was first instituted.

It is in these paintings of the citizen-soldiers of his own city that Hals displays his highest gifts both as a decorator and as a painter of actuality. The figures are so real that we who look at them seem to be one of the company; but though the arrangement appears so natural our eyes are always gladdened by a beauty of pattern, a flow of line, and a balancing of masses which testify to the painter's science of design. There is nothing with which we can compare them save "The Surrender of Breda," and in making this comparison we must not forget that if Velazquez was his contemporary he was also by nearly twenty years the junior of Hals. It is easy to count up the qualities lacking in the art of Frans Hals, who had neither the grave dignity and mastery of light that Velazquez possessed nor the





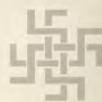
Hanfstaeufl.

"REUNION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GUILD OF ARCHERS OF ST. ADRIAEN,"

BY FRANS HALS

Haarlem

Very similar to our own Honourable Artillery Company when it was first instituted, these Guilds of Dutch citizen-soldiers played a gallant part in the eighty years' struggle with Spain which ended in the independence of the Dutch Republic.



scenic splendour of Rubens, nor the thought of his contemporary Rembrandt ; but a painter, like a man, must be judged by what he is—not by what he is not—and Hals keeps his place among the great masters by his own peculiar gifts as an exuberant, and indeed an inspired, portrayer of the bravery of Holland in her greatest hour.

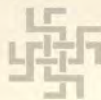
§ 2

There is this initial difference between Hals and Rembrandt, that whereas Hals passed the greater part of his working life during a time of war, Rembrandt attained his maturity and executed most of his greatest work after the conclusion of peace. Hals lived in and depicted a life of action, when men must be up and doing and there was no time to think ; Rembrandt's middle years and old age were spent in an age of comparative peace and quiet, when Holland had the leisure to think and to meditate not only on the greatness of her political achievements but on the problems of life. Hals expressed the gallantry of Holland in action ; Rembrandt, the profundity of her thought.

One ought not to lay too much stress on a mere coincidence, yet when we remember the philosophical temper of his art it seems peculiarly appropriate that Rembrandt should have been born in the university town of Leyden, the headquarters of Dutch philosophy and learning. He came into the world on July 15, 1607, being the fifth and youngest son of Hermon Gerritsoon van Rijn, a prosperous miller who possessed a mill, several fields, and other property. The parents were ambitious for their youngest son and sent him to school "to learn the Latin tongue to prepare himself for the Academy of Leyden, so that in the fulness of time he might serve the city and the Republic with his knowledge."

The boy, however, did not take kindly to book-learning, but was for ever drawing and designing. At school Rembrandt is said to have been one of the idle pupils who "during their writing lessons, when they ought to be writing, scrawl figures of vessels and animals all over the margins of their books." He was at the University in 1620, but it soon became clear to his father that it was unprofitable for Rembrandt to continue his studies there. His aptitude for art was unmistakable, and accordingly he was apprenticed first to Jacob van Swanenburch, and afterwards to Pieter Lastman, of Amsterdam, a fashionable portrait-painter of the day.

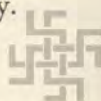
Six months were enough to satiate this earnest young student with the smooth and flattering trivialities of a fashionable merchant of likenesses, and in 1624 he returned to Leyden to study and practise painting by himself. One of the earliest of his known and dated pictures is "St. Paul in Prison," painted in 1627, now at Stuttgart. This picture shows the precise rendering



of detail characteristic of his early style, but also anticipates the light effect of his later work by the way in which the light is concentrated on the head of the apostle. That the painter had already attracted some attention is clear from the fact that in the following year Gerard Dou, a promising boy of fifteen, was placed with him as a pupil.

About 1631 Rembrandt removed from Leyden to Amsterdam, an important step taken no doubt owing to the increasing number of portrait commissions he received from the rich merchants of this flourishing city. He had also made some reputation for himself as an etcher, and in 1632 Hendrik van Uylenburg, who had previously published some of his etchings, commissioned Rembrandt to paint a portrait of Saskia van Uylenburg, a young cousin of the print-seller. The acquaintance thus begun soon ripened into love, and the form and face of this dainty little patrician, an orphan who had lost both her parents, suddenly becomes the prevailing theme both in the painted and etched work of Rembrandt. The attraction was mutual, and though her relatives disapproved of the attachment, considering the painter not good enough for a well-dowered young lady of quality, yet love won the day, and Rembrandt and Saskia were married in 1634. The veiled hostility shown by his bride's relations led the painter to relieve his feelings by painting a series of pictures illustrating the life of Samson, in which Saskia is the Delilah, the artist Samson, and the Philistines, of course, are his wife's relatives. These paintings not only express the artist's defiance of family pride, but also his attitude towards the world at large, and his recurring amazement at his having won for himself so sweet a maid. The joyous picture of himself with Saskia on his knee, shows Rembrandt at the zenith of his happiness. Still popular as a painter, his portraits were sought after, he had a crowd of pupils, and a charming wife who brought him a moderate fortune. The young couple felt that the world was their own, and behaved like children in their utter disregard of the value of money. Rembrandt kept on buying new jewels and fine stuffs with which to deck his beloved and paint her in a new guise : he bought the works of other artists and beautiful objects of all kinds, wishing to create a fairy world around a fairy wife. But soon all this luxurious beauty was overshadowed by sorrow. Two children died one after the other, and in 1642 Saskia herself died after giving birth to the boy Titus.

Rembrandt had had his fun, and now came the time to pay. Already money was beginning to be scarce, and his popularity as a portrait-painter was beginning to wane. In the year Saskia died, Rembrandt had completed his great picture, the "Sortie" or "Night Watch," which though to-day the most popular of all his works and universally ranked among his greatest achievements, almost destroyed the contemporary reputation of the painter and began that decline of his fortunes which ended in his bankruptcy.



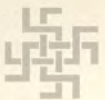


Alinari.

"THE ARTIST AND HIS FIRST WIFE," BY REMBRANDT (1607-69)

Dresden

In this early picture Rembrandt shows himself feast-making with his bride. It is almost the only riotously joyful self-portrait painted by an artist whose life was full of sorrow.



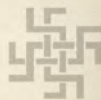


W. F. Mansell.

"THE NIGHT WATCH," OR "THE SORTIE," BY REMBRANDT

Amsterdam

"Turn out the guard!" This dramatic rendering of a company of militia about to march displeased the officers who had commissioned the painting, because Rembrandt had painted a scene mysterious in its light and shadow. The officers wanted a collection of recognisable likenesses. Now acknowledged as a great masterpiece, the picture ruined Rembrandt's practice as a portrait-painter.



The subject is explicitly stated on the back of a copy of it in water-colour : "The young Laird of Purmerlandt (Frans Banning Cocq) in his capacity as Captain gives to his Lieutenant, the Laird of Vlaerdingen, the command to march out his burgher-company." This amply justifies the more correct title of "The Sortie," but the purpose and hour of this "going out" of a company of civic militia are not easy to define. In the eighteenth century it was assumed to be a nocturnal watch turning out on its rounds by artificial light, hence the French name for the picture "Ronde de Nuit," which has been anglicised as "The Night Watch." But as Prof. Baldwin Brown of Edinburgh University justly pointed out, the time is "certainly the day and not the night. The shadow of the captain's outstretched hand and arm is thrown by the sun upon the yellow dress of the second in command, and it is easy to see by the relative positions of object and shadow that the sun is still pretty high in the heavens."

Before we too hastily condemn those who condemned this splendid picture, we must put ourselves in their position. To see what Captain Banning Cocq and his friends expected we should turn back and look at Hals' portrait group of the Guild of Archers. They expected to be painted like that, and Rembrandt painted them like this ! In point of fact, Rembrandt did not paint *them*, he painted the *scene*. Hals shows a collection of individual officers, each of whom is clearly seen and recognisable. Rembrandt shows a patrol, many of whose members are lost in shadow and unable to be identified. As a picture Rembrandt's work has splendid qualities of drama, lighting, and movement which we cannot find in the Hals ; but Captain Banning Cocq and his friends did not want to see these qualities, they wanted to see themselves. Rembrandt had painted a great picture, but he had dealt a heavy blow to human vanity, and his contemporaries could not forgive him.

It must be admitted that Rembrandt was wilful and wayward. He would go his own way, and he was only justified by the greatness of his genius. He was, as Muther has said, "the first artist who, in the modern sense, did not execute commissions, but expressed his own thoughts. The emotions which moved his inmost being were the only things which he expressed on canvas. He does not seem to think that anyone is listening to him, but only speaks with himself ; he is anxious, not to be understood by others, but only to express his moods and feelings."

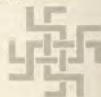
An interesting example of the liberties Rembrandt took with his nominal subject will be found in the Wallace Collection. The picture now known as "The Centurion Cornelius" used to be called "The Unmerciful Servant," and commentators explained that the figure in the turban and red robe was Christ, and enlarged on the displeasure shown in his face and the guilt and fear of the Unrighteous Servant, whom they took to be the central of the



three figures to the right. Then a mezzotint by James Ward, published in 1800, was discovered, and in this reproduction the correct title was given. The red-robed figure proved to be Cornelius, in no way "displeased," while the remaining three figures are "two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually" (Acts x. 7). This widely-spread error shows how easy it is to misread pictures if they are approached with preconceived ideas. The misunderstanding, of course, has been brought about by Rembrandt's fondness for oriental splendour, which led him to put a Roman centurion in Asiatic costume! It is not "correct" in the way that Alma-Tadema's classical scenes are; but real greatness in art does not depend on accuracy of antiquarian details—however praiseworthy this may be—but on largeness of conception, noble design, and splendid colour.

Overwhelmed by his domestic sorrows—he lost his old mother two years before Saskia died—neglected by his former patrons, Rembrandt turned to Nature for consolation. He wandered about the country-side recording all he saw. Practically all his landscapes were painted between 1640 and 1652. Many of his most beautiful landscape etchings were also executed during this period. The most famous of them all, "The Three Trees" was done in 1643. It shows a view of Amsterdam from a slight eminence outside the town, and a storm-cloud and its shadow are used to intensify the brilliance of the light and the dramatic aspect of this mood of Nature. This is landscape in the grand style; but its homelier, more intimate note appealed equally to the artist. A lovely example of the picturesque corner portrayed for its own intrinsic beauty is the etching executed in 1645 known as "Six's Bridge." Tradition relates that this plate was etched against time for a wager at the country house of Rembrandt's most loyal friend, Jan Six, while the servant was fetching the mustard, that had been forgotten for a meal, from a neighbouring village. There is nothing impossible in the story, for Rembrandt is known to have been an impetuous and rapid worker on occasion; but if this little masterpiece was done in haste, we must not forget that it was also done with "the knowledge of a lifetime."

Even while Saskia was alive Rembrandt was in want of ready money, and when on his mother's death in 1640 he inherited a half-share of a mill, he hastened to have it transferred to his brother Wilhelm and his nephew. Though he lost money by the transaction, he probably gained his end in keeping all the mill in the family instead of a share going to his creditors. Then in 1647 he became involved in lawsuits with Saskia's family, who objected to Rembrandt's connection with his servant Hendrickje Stoffels, and wished to prevent him from being trustee for his and Saskia's son Titus. These lawsuits, which lasted till after 1653, and ended in Saskia's relatives

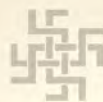




W. F. Mansell.

"THE BLINDNESS OF TOBIT," ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

Never has the pathos of a blind man's groping been more movingly expressed than in this etching.

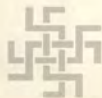




"THE THREE TREES," ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

W. F. Mansell.

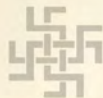
Though we see to the left a distant view of Amsterdam, this masterly etching is not merely a transcription of something seen, but a dramatic rendering of a mood of Nature. Its grandeur is unequalled in etching and has rarely been approached in painting.





“SIX'S BRIDGE,” BY REMBRANDT

Etched for a wager while a servant was fetching mustard, forgotten for lunch, from a neighbouring village, this delightful little landscape shows the delicacy of Rembrandt's handling and the swift sureness of his drawing.



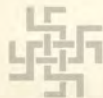


“CHRIST WITH THE SICK AROUND HIM, RECEIVING LITTLE CHILDREN,”

W. F. Mansell.

ETCHING BY REMBRANDT

The most famous of Rembrandt's etchings, this is popularly known as the “Hundred Guilder Print” from the price it once realised at auction early in the eighteenth century. No work shows more splendidly Rembrandt's command of the etcher's art and his deep insight into manifold phases of human character and emotion.



obtaining the trusteeship but not the custody of Titus, greatly contributed to Rembrandt's difficulties.

His marriage with Hendrickje Stoffels, a woman of humble birth, was another cause of offence to aristocratic patrons ; all the same, it was a wise action. This devoted woman mothered Titus with loving and unremitting care ; she made great efforts to stem the tide of ill-fortune, and when the crash came and Rembrandt was made bankrupt in 1656, she loyally shared her husband's troubles and used her wits to rebuild their fortunes. As soon as Titus was old enough she combined with him in keeping an old curiosity shop, starting, one imagines, with some relics of the treasures Rembrandt had amassed for Saskia. Money, or the want of it, however, was not a thing which could profoundly trouble a philosophic dreamer like Rembrandt. If he had it, he spent it royally ; if he had it not, he went without. Only a year after his bankruptcy he achieved one of the world's masterpieces of portraiture, "The Artist's Son Titus," in the Wallace Collection. If you look at the Pellicorne portraits, also in the Wallace Collection, you will obtain a fair idea of Rembrandt's ordinary professional style in 1632-34, when his painting was still popular. But how thin and shallow these early portraits seem beside this haunting and passionate portrait of the son he loved so dearly. Turning to the "Titus" after these early works, we see how far Rembrandt has travelled. Three or four years later he painted the wonderful "Portrait of Françoise van Wasserhoven," in the National Gallery, one of the most reverent, sympathetic, and intimate studies of old age ever painted.

Throughout his life Rembrandt was a keen student of human nature, and no painter has ever penetrated further than he did into the inner lives of the men and women he painted. His wonderful insight into character made him the greatest psychologist in portraiture the world has yet seen, and since he searched faces above all for the marks of life's experience which they bore, old people—who had had the longest experience—were inevitably subjects peculiarly dear to him and subjects which he interpreted with consummate mastery. His own face he painted over and over again, and if we study the sequence of his self-portraiture from early manhood to ripe old age, we see not only the gradual development of his technical powers but also the steady advance made by Rembrandt in expressing with poignant intensity the thoughts and emotions of humanity.

Of Rembrandt's technique Sir John Everett Millais wrote : "In his first period Rembrandt was very careful and minute in detail, and there is evidence of stippling in his flesh paintings ; but in the fullness of his power all appearance of such manipulation and minuteness vanished in the breadth and facility of his brush, though the advantage of his early manner remained. . . . I have closely examined his pictures in the National Gallery, and have





Braun.

"THE 'LANSDOWNE' MILL," BY REMBRANDT

In his appreciation of the veil of beauty which atmosphere casts over a scene, as well as in his capacity to find strangeness in the familiar and beauty in the commonplace, Rembrandt anticipated the romantic landscapes of the nineteenth century. A few years ago this picture was sold for £100,000 by Lord Lansdowne to an American collector, Mr. J. E. Widener.



FRANÇOISE VAN WASSERHOVEN, BY REMBRANDT

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

10 This noble rendering of the dignity of age teaches us that while physical beauty may be only "skindeep" and quickly fade, beauty of character endures while life lasts.





"HENDRICKJE STOFFELS," BY REMBRANDT

First his maidservant, and then his second wife, Hendrickje was a loyal helpmate to Rembrandt. By her own efforts she practically supported him during his worst financial crisis, and she was a devoted mother to Titus, his son by his first wife.

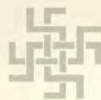


W. F. Mansell.

"THE ARTIST'S SON, TITUS," BY REMBRANDT

Wallace Collection, London

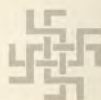
In this portrait of his only son we see a superb example of Rembrandt's later style which should be compared with his earlier portrait group on page 291. The features here are built up boldly by patches of light and shade, and the portrait has a consequent softness and richness as compared with the earlier work.



actually seen beneath the grand veil of breadth, the early work that his art conceals from untrained eyes—the whole science of painting.” Among his contemporaries the minute detail in the work of his earlier period was far more admired than the “veil of breadth” which he cast over his later paintings, and it was long before people who admired his early portraits could be persuaded that his later paintings were not only equally good, but vastly superior both in workmanship and expression.

Gradually among the discerning few the outstanding excellence of Rembrandt's portraiture was again acknowledged, and in 1661 he received a commission for another official picture. He was asked to paint a portrait group of five officials of the Clothmakers' Company, and staging them on the dais on which they presided over a meeting, Rembrandt produced the wonder-work known as “The Syndics.” Avoiding the dangers of “The Sortie,” Rembrandt places all five figures in a clear light and yet gives them the unity of a scene taken from life.

Alas ! this fresh artistic triumph was dearly paid for by more domestic misfortunes. Soon after this work was completed, Hendrickje, the loyal helpmate, died. Titus, now grown up, married his cousin, and after less than a year of married life he also died. Now, indeed, Rembrandt was alone in the world, and though a posthumous daughter to Titus was born in 1669, the artist, now in his sixty-third year, was too worn out to struggle much longer against “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” He lived long enough to see his little grand-daughter Titia christened after her father, and then, crushed by the accumulated sorrows of a lifetime, passed to his long rest on October 4, 1669. To all appearance the illness and death of the greatest man Holland ever produced passed unnoticed, and only the bare fact of his burial in the Westerkerk, Amsterdam, is attested by an official entry.



XIX

DUTCH PAINTING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE ART OF CUYP, DOU, HOBBEA, DE HOOCH, POTTER, MAES,
RUISDAEL, VAN DE VELDE, AND VERMEER OF DELFT

§ I

WE saw in the previous chapter how, after a long struggle, the yoke of the Spaniards was broken, and the independence of the Dutch Republic was established in 1648 by the Peace of Münster. This event is commemorated by Terborch's picture in the National Gallery of the signing of the Treaty; in this it will be noticed that the Protestant Dutch delegates raise their hands to affirm, while the Roman Catholic plenipotentiaries of Spain lay their hands on the Gospels to take the oath. Careful and exact both in the portraiture of those present and in the painting of every little detail, this moderate-sized picture expresses the sober spirit in which Holland celebrated her victory.

While of considerable historic interest, this picture is not a supreme masterpiece of art; it is not so effective as the same painter's "Portrait of a Gentleman," a small full-length figure which also hangs in the National Gallery. Historical subjects did not call forth the highest powers of the painters of the Netherlands. The art of Holland was neither an ecclesiastical nor a state art: it was a domestic art which produced pictures, not for churches or public buildings, but for the private homes of citizens. So wonderful was the artistic activity inspired by the wave of patriotism which swept through Holland, that the name of these so-called "Little Masters" is truly legion, and no attempt can be made in this OUTLINE to mention each by name. Only a few representative artists can be selected for individual notice.

Chronologically, the first place among the Little Masters is claimed by Adrian Brouwer (1605-38), whose "Boor Asleep" is one of the most precious Dutch pictures in the Wallace Collection. It is still a matter of dispute whether Brouwer was born in Holland or Flanders, but he certainly spent his youth in Haarlem, where he studied under Frans Hals. Afterwards he worked both in Amsterdam and Antwerp. How highly Brouwer was esteemed by other painters of his time is shown by the fact that Rubens

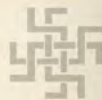




"BOOR ASLEEP," BY ADRIAN BROUWER (1605-38)

Wallace Collection, London

The absolute realism of later Dutch Painting sent its masters to the ordinary life of the people for their subjects. They showed us men and women often at their least dignified, but sometimes, as in this masterpiece, invested them with dignity nevertheless.

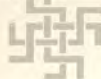


possessed seventeen of his pictures, while even Rembrandt, in spite of his financial difficulties, managed to collect and retain eight Brouwers. A humorous vividness of vision, concise and vigorous drawing, and an enamel-like beauty of colour are the distinctive qualities of his art.

Apart from the landscape-painters—whom we must consider subsequently—most of the Dutch painters of the home descended artistically either from Hals or from Rembrandt. Gerard Dou (1613–75), one of Rembrandt's many pupils, was the most successful painter financially of his day. He made his fortune by never progressing beyond the first manner of his master and by painting with a careful literalness which demanded no exercise of the beholder's imagination. "The Poulterer's Shop" is a typical example of Dou's minutely finished style. It has always been popular because it is much easier to recognise industry than to understand inspiration, and in rendering this everyday incident in a shopping expedition Dou has spared no pains to render each detail with laborious fidelity.

How even in the rendering of detail there is all the difference in the world between the Letter of Exactitude and the Spirit of Truth may be seen when we compare the pictures of Dou with those of similar scenes by Terborch, De Hoogh, or Vermeer. Each one of these three exquisite painters has an eye for detail as keen as that possessed by Dou, but they all have far more ability than Dou possessed to subordinate details to the unity of the whole. The eldest of these three masters, Gerard Terborch or Terburg (1617–81), has already been mentioned. As a young man he studied at Haarlem, where he was probably influenced by Hals and Brouwer, but Terborch did not found his style only on what he found within the borders of Holland. He was more a man-of-the-world than most of his artist contemporaries. He visited England, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, and in the last country he certainly studied the paintings of Velazquez, who was only eighteen years his senior. Like Velazquez, but unlike most of his fellows in Holland, Terborch was aristocratic in the temper of his art, so that his pictures as a rule show us a higher strata of Dutch society than that depicted by the majority of Dutch artists.

Here it may be well to pause in order to emphasise the fact that these Dutch painters were preoccupied with rendering the *manners* of their time. This characteristic, which gives their work a lasting historical value, has caused their little pictures of courtyards, interiors, tavern scenes, conversations, toilet-scenes, and the like to be known as "genre" painting, from the French word *genre* (i.e. manner or style). A few, like Terborch, show us the manner of dress and living of the upper classes; others show us the middle classes, and still more concern themselves with the manners of the peasants and lower classes. Among these last the best known is Jan Steen (1626–79), who is often amusingly satirical in his outlook; other painters



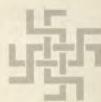


W. F. Mansell.

"THE POULTERER'S SHOP," BY GERARD DOU (1613-75)

National Gallery, London

A typical example of the precise, minutely finished style of this artist, a pupil of Rembrandt, who made his fortune by imitating the first manner of his master. Though Dou lacked imagination and dramatic grandeur, his faithful rendering of everyday incidents makes him a valuable chronicler of the manners of his time.



of a similar style were Adrian van Ostade (1610-85) and the Fleming David Teniers (1610-90).

These painters may amuse us for the moment, but they do not hold us spellbound as some of the others do. The greatest rival of Terborch was Peter de Hooch or de Hoogh (1629-77), who was only twelve years his junior. De Hooch's figures may not be so aristocratic as those of Terborch, but they are seen as finely and have their being in the same clear light which both these masters observed and rendered so lovingly. This passion for the rendering of light began to show itself in the paintings of Brouwer; it becomes still more marked in the work of Terborch, and it approaches perfection in the pictures of De Hooch. His chief interest, as the late Sir Walter Armstrong remarked, "is always absorbed by the one problem, that of capturing and bottling the sunlight." How supremely well he succeeded in his object is shown by our illustration of "A Girl Reading," a masterpiece of interior illumination, in which every object is not only perfectly rendered but keeps its proper distance within the room owing to the painter's delicately exact notation of the relative degrees of lighting.

In his youth, as Armstrong has pointed out, De Hooch liked the broadest daylight, but with advancing years he preferred "merely to suggest the outside sun, as it creeps down tiled passages, through red curtains and half-open shutters." An interesting example of De Hooch's earlier period when he chose the broadest daylight for his scene is the "Interior of a Dutch House." Nothing could be more brilliant or more faithful to Nature than the bright sunlight which streams down on the group near the window. It is instructive to observe here that the standing figure by the fireplace was an afterthought, put in by the artist to improve his design. This woman forms the apex of a triangle of which the wall with the windows forms the base. We know that she was an afterthought because the artist had already painted the black-and-white tiled floor right up to the fireplace before he began the figure, and that is why we can still see the tiling through the woman's skirt. This correction would not have been visible to De Hooch's contemporaries, but it is a peculiar property of oil paint that an underpainting, invisible when the paint is fresh, will in time work its way up to the surface. Since De Hooch was a consummate craftsman whose handling of pigment approached perfection, the fact that even he has been unable to disguise a correction is a useful lesson to a living painter that he must get his picture right from the start, or otherwise, however clever he may be, his errors will be found out after his death. In De Hooch's interior, this emergence of what it was endeavoured to hide is too trivial and unimportant to affect seriously the beauty and merit of the painting.

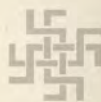


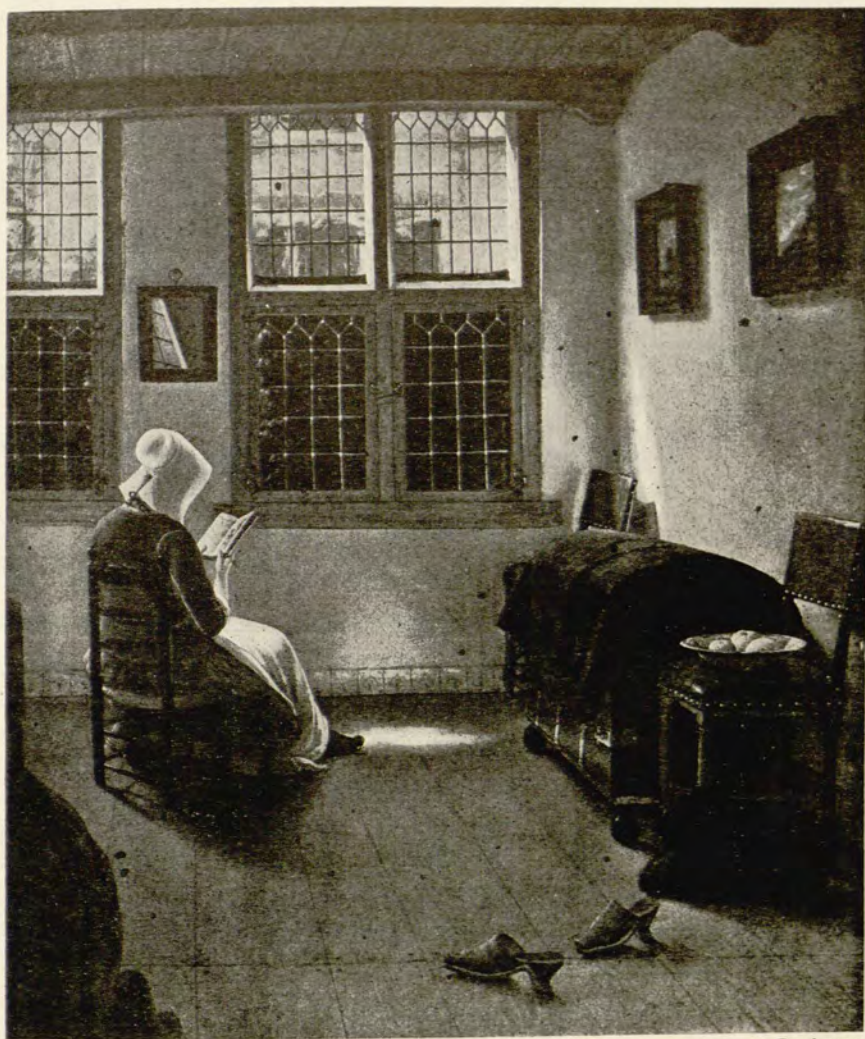


"INTERIOR OF A DUTCH HOUSE," BY DE HOOCH (1629-77) W. F. Mansell

National Gallery, London

The artist's joy in painting sunlight is delightfully expressed in his brilliantly lit interior. The figure standing before the fireplace is an afterthought added to improve the design of the grouping after the picture had been finished, and that is why the black and white tiling of the floor can be seen through the woman's skirt.



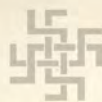


Bruckmann.

"A GIRL READING," BY DE HOOCH

Munich

Whatever his subject, de Hooch was absorbed by one problem, that of "capturing and bottling the sunlight." Compare this masterpiece of illumination with Dou's picture and it will be seen how Dou's details appear hard and unsympathetic, while every object in de Hooch's interior is soft and atmospheric owing to the greater subtlety of his lighting.



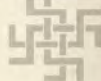
§ 2

Jan van der Meer, commonly known as Vermeer of Delft (1632-75), is one of the Old Masters whom modern research has rescued from unmerited neglect. Houbraken, a historian who wrote only forty years after his death, does not even mention him, and for two centuries his name was almost forgotten and his paintings were sold as works by De Hooch, Terborch, Metsu, or even Rembrandt. Then in the middle of the nineteenth century a French exile named Thoré spent three years (1858-60) studying records and archives in Holland and patiently searching out Vermeer's paintings. Since Thoré published his account of his studies, the fame of Vermeer has rapidly spread and increased. To-day he is one of the most costly and one of the most popular of the old masters.

Of his private life very little is known. Vermeer was three years younger than De Hooch, and fifteen years younger than Terborch. We know that as soon as he came of age in 1653 he married Catherine Bolenes and by her had eight children. He was evidently esteemed in his native city, for in 1662 and again in 1670 he was elected one of the principal officers of the Guild of St. Luke of Delft. But fame is one thing and fortune is another. When Vermeer died in 1675 he had nothing to leave his wife and family but twenty-six unsold pictures. If these were put into the market to-day they might fetch anything *over* a quarter of a million pounds, but there were no American millionaires in the seventeenth century; so poor Vermeer was judged to have died insolvent and his widow's affairs had to be put in the hands of a liquidator, who happened to be the naturalist Leeuwenhoek.

To explain in words the incomparable charm of Vermeer's painting is as simple and as difficult as to explain the beauty of light. The illumination in his pictures is as perfect as it is in the best works of De Hooch; and if the pictures of Vermeer are still more beautiful than those of De Hooch it is because Vermeer was a still finer and more subtle colourist. He was, indeed, one of the greatest colourists the world has ever known. He excelled in all subjects. His "Head of a Young Girl" is one of the loveliest portraits in the world. This young girl is not strikingly beautiful in herself. She has a sweet face, and Vermeer has brought out the sweetness of her disposition and the charm of her youth; but he has done more than this: by the loveliness of his colour—particularly by the contrast of the blue and lemon-yellow of which he was so fond—Vermeer has made her a joy for ever. Colour of this lyrical beauty sings its own sweet song.

Vermeer's "View of Delft," also at The Hague, is the loveliest street scene or town view in art. It has the crystal purity of colour and limpid atmosphere of Delft itself, which a living writer has described as "the





W. F. Mansell.

"HEAD OF A YOUNG GIRL," BY JAN VERMEER OF DELFT (1632-75)

The Hague

"The Perfect Painter" is the name E. V. Lucas gave to this artist, who, long numbered among the "Little Masters" of seventeenth-century Holland, is now recognised to have been probably the greatest colourist who ever lived. This head is his masterpiece in portraiture.

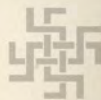


"VIEW OF DELFT," BY VERMEER

W. F. Mansell.

The Hague

The loveliest view of a town in art, this picture is exquisite in its quality of light and sense of airiness.
Nothing could be more natural, more true to the thing seen.





Bruckmann.

"THE PEARL NECKLACE," BY VERMEER

Berlin

In this picture of a lady looking in a mirror to see how her necklace suits her, we are fascinated by the artist's rendering of light, which softly illumines every object in the scene.



cleanest city in Europe, looking as if all the houses were thoroughly scrubbed down and polished each day before sunrise." Nothing could be more natural, more true to the thing seen, than this painting, yet nothing could be more perfect in every quality that goes to the making of a work of art.

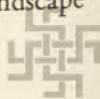
These two pictures are exceptional even among the paintings of Vermeer, and when we come to consider his more numerous paintings of small figures in interiors, the richness he offers us makes selection embarrassing. It would be perilous to say "The Pearl Necklace" is better than "The Milkmaid" or other pictures one could mention; but it is certainly one of the best and shows how Vermeer could compete with De Hooch in "bottling sunlight" and beat that master even at his own favourite game.

Vermeer's art undoubtedly affected his contemporaries, those of his own age as well as those who were his juniors. Gabriel Metsu (1630-67) sometimes comes near to Vermeer, and the colour of "The Letter Writer Surprised" in the Wallace Collection has a tenderness which is apt to make even a Terborch look a little hard. Metsu knows how to set his stage decoratively; his pictures are always sprightly; but his observation is less subtle, and his research into light and shade is not carried to the point of perfection reached by De Hooch and Vermeer.

Nicolas Maes (1632-93), another pupil of Rembrandt, though less gifted than Metsu, used to be thought of chiefly as a portrait-painter, but is now much esteemed for the anecdotal pictures he painted in his youth. "The Idle Servant" is an amusing example of his work in this style, and shows both his own powers of observation and what he learnt from Rembrandt in the way of using lighting to enhance a dramatic effect. But if we look critically at the picture, say at the cat stealing the plucked bird, or at the whole area of the tiled floor, we shall have to admit that in drawing Maes was inferior to Dou, and in illumination far inferior to De Hooch or Vermeer. All these subject pictures were painted between 1655 and 1665, after which date circumstances drove Maes into "pot-boiling" portraiture.

§ 3

We have seen now with what variety and perfection the Dutch artists painted their national hearthside: and next we must consider how they painted their homeland. Midway between the genre painters and the landscape-painters stands Aart van der Neer (1603-77), who forms a bridge, as it were, between the two groups. Born three years before Rembrandt, he, like Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), is one of the early pioneers of landscape painting, yet by the little figures in his landscape he tells us a great deal of the life of Holland. Thus his "Skating Scene" in the Wallace Collection has been ranked by the famous Dr. Bode as "among the most perfect landscape



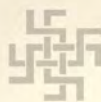


W. F. Mansell.

"THE IDLE SERVANT," BY NICOLAS MAES (1632-93)

National Gallery, London

An amusing example of this artist's powers of humorous observation. Maes was a pupil of Rembrandt and enjoyed a considerable vogue as a portrait-painter, though his drawing was not equal to Dou's, and his illumination is far less perfect than that of de Hooch or Vermeer.



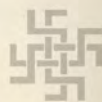


W. F. Mansell.

"A SKATING SCENE," BY VAN DER NEER (1603-77)

Wallace Collection, London

One of the "most perfect landscape delineations of winter," this picture also illustrates the life of Holland in times of frost when the canals and rivers become highways for the traffic of the country.



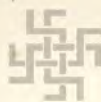
delineations of winter," but it is also a charming picture of manners, giving us a glimpse of the life in seventeenth-century Holland.

Towards the end of his life Aart van der Neer deteriorated as other "Little Masters" did also; in addition to painting, he kept a tavern, and possibly business losses in the wine-trade drove him to do inferior but more immediately saleable work during his last years. Nearly all his best work was done before 1665, when he was not dependent on painting for a livelihood, but a happy amateur who could paint what he liked. He was one of the first artists to attempt painting night scenes, but though the novelty of his moonlight views attracted attention, his winter landscapes in daylight are usually considered to be his best work.

Agriculture has always been an important industry in Holland, and the local artists who catered so well for the needs of the citizen did not forget to make an appeal also to the farmers. Of many who made a speciality of painting cattle, Paul Potter (1625-54) is the most celebrated, though he died in his twenty-ninth year. His big picture "The Bull" is a favourite show-piece at The Hague, where guides—most conservative critics—were enthusiastic about its accuracy. Courageous people, however, have been known to confess that they find its precise statement of fact a little dull, though few dare to be so severe as Muther, who once described Potter's cattle as "essentially Dutch, for they know neither passions, nor struggles, nor movement, but chew the cud phlegmatically or lie down in comfortable repose."

Cattle also figure largely in the paintings of Albert Cuyp (1620-91), who is splendidly represented in English collections. Cuyp was no mere animal-painter: his principal interest lay neither in the beast nor in the earth, but above in the mighty vault of the heavens. He does not so much set out to paint cattle as to *use* cattle, and we may see in his "River Scene" how effectively cows can be used as dark spots which bring out by contrast the luminosity of the sky, and as prominent objects in the foreground which emphasise the great stretch of flat landscape which reaches out to the horizon. The glowing light and golden colour of Cuyp have placed him among the great sky-painters of the world, and his work has for centuries been an example and an incentive to British landscape painting.

Apart from all other Dutch painters of landscape—seeming, indeed, to belong to another race—stands the austere and majestic figure of Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-82). Though he took all Nature for his province, and in his youth painted her more peaceful aspects, we instinctively associate his sublime spirit with holy spots "both savage and enchanted." It is difficult to think of him as eight years younger than Cuyp, for so serious and austere is his vision that we can hardly believe Ruisdael was ever young. Even when he paints a simple seaside scene like "The Shore at Scheveningen" he gives dramatic intensity to the scene by the rolling clouds in the sky



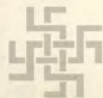


“THE BULL,” BY PAUL POTTER (1625-54)

W. F. Mansell.

The Hague

One of the earliest and most celebrated cattle-pictures in the world, Potter's “Bull” is a show-piece which delights farmers to-day as it did in the seventeenth century.



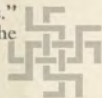


"RIVER SCENE," BY ALBERT CUYP (1620-91)

Rischgltz.

National Gallery, London

The glowing light and golden colour of Cuyp's skies have placed him in the front rank of those painters who "set the sun in the heavens." In this picture we see how effectively he uses cows as dark spots which bring out the luminosity of the sky and lend enchantment to the distant horizon.



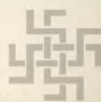


"THE MILL," BY JACOB VAN RUISDAEL (1628-82)

W. F. Mansell.

Amsterdam

"His grave and solemn mind gives to the simplest and most commonplace of landscapes a look of sad importance, which is almost like a reproach of lightmindedness to any other man's work which happens to hang alongside."





W. F. Mansell.

"THE SHORE AT SCHEVENINGEN," BY JACOB VAN RUISDAEL

National Gallery, London

Scheveningen to-day is a fashionable watering-place, but this beautiful picture shows it as it was nearly three hundred years ago, when the majesty of Nature was undisturbed by the villadom of Man.

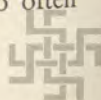


which seem to repeat the restlessness of the agitated waves. Again, in his famous painting of "The Mill," for all the stillness of the scene, we feel that this is the calm before the storm—as, indeed, the sky betokens. Grandly designed as this painting is, it is one of the quietest works of the artist, who, though infinitely varied in his choice of subject, delighted especially in painting waterfalls, cascades, and rocky cliffs. Ruysdael, says a gifted American painter, John La Farge,

is as different from Cuyp as shadow is from sunshine ; and his grave and solemn mind gives to the simplest and most commonplace of landscapes a look of sad importance, which is almost like a reproach of lightmindedness to any other man's work which happens to hang alongside.

Meindert Hobbema (1638–1709) was Ruysdael's pupil and friend, but as different in temperament from his master as a man could well be. Ruysdael approaches Nature with the devoutness of a worshipper approaching a shrine ; Hobbema, with the unconscious ease of a man entering his own home. He painted the same subjects over and over again, but he painted them so naturally, so freshly and convincingly, that they take us straight back to Nature, not to the pictures of another artist. In the humbleness and sincerity of his naturalism he expresses everybody's feeling of delight and thankfulness in sunny weather and fresh country air. "The Avenue" is probably the best beloved landscape in the National Gallery, London, and this and other works by Hobbema have had a profound and far-reaching effect on British landscape. Out of his smiling and friendly art grew our Norwich school of landscape. Gainsborough acknowledged his worth by word and deed, and the last sentence ever uttered by John Crome was, "Oh, Hobbema, my dear Hobbema, how I have loved you !" It is sad to think that this simple, honest, and most easily understood painter, a man of genius who has given happiness to millions for six generations, fared so poorly in his profession of painting that when he was thirty he sought another means of livelihood. He sought and obtained a small position in the wine-customs, and thus made himself independent of picture-buyers and dealers. He saw his master, the great painter Ruysdael, battling with poverty and becoming no more prosperous as the years rolled on, so Hobbema wisely determined to look elsewhere for his bread-and-butter and make landscape painting his hobby and pastime. It is significant to note that his supreme masterpiece, "The Avenue," was painted some years after he had become a civil servant, and when, without having to think of what the buyer might or might not like, he could indulge to the full his feeling for the pattern in landscape and his sense of beauty in the elements of Nature.

It must be admitted that if Holland had a galaxy of artistic talent during the seventeenth century she did little to encourage genius. As so often



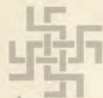


"THE AVENUE," BY HOBBEEMA (1638-1709)

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

The most popular landscape in the National Gallery, this masterpiece expresses the joy and thankfulness we all feel for bright weather and fresh country air. For all his genius Hobbema could not earn his living by painting, and at thirty he had to take a small position in the Civil Service.

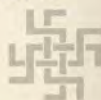


happens in modern times, the mediocre painters made the best income, while the men of genius starved. This state of affairs is not satisfactory, but it is not inexplicable. The men who prospered and made money were, as a rule, painters like Gerard Dou, who painted every feather on a bird, every scale of a fish, the shine of a copper pan, and the lustre of an earthenware pot. These were things within the range of everybody's observation and interest, and demanded no imagination, no culture. Therefore the painters of pots and pans, of insects, fruit and flowers, all prospered, while great artists like Rembrandt, Hals, Vermeer, and Ruisdael, who concentrated their attention on higher things, were neglected. Anybody could understand a picture of a cat stealing a fish, but to appreciate the beauty of pearly light stealing through high windows to lighten an apartment, presupposes some sense of poetry in the mind of the beholder.

§ 4

All classifications of so individual a thing as art are bound to be artificial and imperfect ; but just as we may say that the genre-painters of Holland depicted the life of the city, and the landscape-painters the life of the country, so a third group of artists mirrored another phase of national activity in constituting themselves painters of shipping and the sea. Holland, as England once knew to her cost, was, and still is, a great maritime nation, and her sea-captains and shipowners inevitably set up a demand for pictures of the element on which they triumphed and prospered. Moreover, this low-lying land was at the mercy of the sea, which was only kept back by the dykes, so that every Dutchman may be said to have had a personal interest in the ocean. One of the earliest painters of sea-pieces with shipping was Hendrik Dubbels (1620-76), who was the master of a more famous sea-painter, Ludolf Bakhuizen (1631-1708). Bakhuizen is as much a painter of shipping as of the sea, and in addition to being a picture-painter he was a naval architect who made constructive drawings of ships for the Russian Tsar Peter the Great. There is a great deal of spirit in his sea-pieces, particularly in his tempestuous subjects, but his storms, as John Ruskin pointed out, were storms that belonged to melodrama rather than to Nature.

We do not feel, however, that there is anything theatrical in the marines of his far greater contemporary, Willem van de Velde the Younger (1633-1707), who belonged to a famous family of artists settled in Amsterdam. Some critics hold that the younger Van de Velde is at his best when depicting shipping in a calm, and assuredly he has painted the stillness of the sea with a beauty and true dignity which go straight to the heart of every sailor. But there are pictures also in which Van de Velde has portrayed crashing waters under a charged sky, and if he rarely essayed to express the terrors of





"A GALE," BY WILLEM VAN DE VELDE (1633-1707)

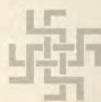
W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

"It was in Holland that marine painting first began to play an important part, for the sea was both the glory and the menace of this low-lying naval power." By a strange freak of fortune Van de Velde, born in the country of De Ruyter, came to England in later life as marine painter to Charles II. He died at Greenwich after his own countryman, William of Orange, had ascended the throne of England.

a great storm, yet he succeeds perfectly in conveying the excitement and somewhat perilous exhilaration of a stiff breeze. An example of his powers in this direction is "A Gale," in which we see the waves washing over a fishing-smack in the foreground, while farther on a frigate proudly approaches with bellying sails, and still farther in the distance a second frigate rides out the gale at anchor beneath the dark clouded sky. This gale is not awe-inspiring, as it might have been had Ruisdael painted it, but it is a picture that instinctively makes us square our chests and brace ourselves to meet the wind. Both the Willem van de Velde, the father and the son who soon surpassed him in accomplishment, came over to London in 1677 and entered the service of Charles II. Willem van de Velde the Younger died at Greenwich, and owing to his long sojourn in England his pictures are plentiful in our public galleries, where they have served as models for Turner and other British sea-painters.

Painting, so flourishing in Holland at the beginning of the seventeenth century, was dead or dying when the next century dawned. The rapid rise of art to the eminence attained by Rembrandt was followed by an equally rapid decadence, so that in the early years of the eighteenth century Dutch painting, while maintaining a creditable level of craftsmanship, had sunk to the meticulous and uninspired painting of fruit, flowers, and the odd collections of inanimate objects known as "still-life." In the Netherlands the vein of Rubens was now exhausted, and his true heir appeared in France in the person of that strangely attractive painter, Antoine Watteau.



XX

THE RISE OF FRENCH PAINTING

THE ART OF WATTEAU, CHARDIN, BOUCHER, FRAGONARD, AND GREUZE

§ 1

COMING events in the world of politics cast their shadows before them on the field of art, and as soon as we begin to study closely the national painting of France during the seventeenth and succeeding century, we become conscious of two streams of tradition, one democratic and derived from the Low Countries, the other aristocratic and inspired by Italy.

These two French schools of painting, which mirror respectively the life of the nobles and the life of the peasants, give us warning of that sharp division of the classes which were afterwards to meet and mingle in the clash and conflict of the French Revolution.

The seventeenth century, which in its beginning and middle period had seen art flourishing in Holland with the rise of the Dutch Republic, witnessed towards its close the shifting of political interest from Holland to France, and the rapid growth and development of a group of artists who added to the glory of the Court of Louis XIV. Although France had given birth to artists of considerable distinction long before the end of the seventeenth century, it was not till the reign of the "Grand Monarch" that she evolved a distinct national style of her own.

When, after the Hundred Years' War, French art slowly crept back into existence, it was no longer the church art of the earlier centuries. The French painters were still almost wholly under the influence first of Flanders and then of Italy. Thus Jean Clouet, who in 1516 was appointed Court Painter to King François I, was the son of a Brussels artist, and both he and his son François Clouet (c. 1510-72), who succeeded him, carried on a Flemish tradition. Though the feminine grace of the drawing of the Clouets has been held to be characteristic of France, yet the style of both artists was so close to that of their great contemporary Holbein that it can hardly be accepted as distinctly national.

Flemish again in character was the work of the three brothers Le Nain—Antoine and Louis, who both died in 1648, and Matthieu, died 1667—who came from Laon and settled in Paris. The gentle seriousness of their paintings



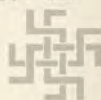
of rustics foreshadows the peasant masterpieces of Jean François Millet. They are the ancestors of the democratic painters of France. Another painter closely associated with the age of Louis XIV, Philippe de Champaigne (1602-74), who painted numerous portraits of Cardinal Richelieu, was actually born in Brussels, though he established himself in Paris at the early age of nineteen. His portraiture, with its clear outline and suave colouring, is also northern rather than southern in character.

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude le Lorrain (1600-82) were great masters whose innovations left an indelible impress on landscape painting—the development of which will be traced in a subsequent chapter—but though born in France, both of them spent the greater part of their lives in Rome. Their art belongs to Europe generally rather than to France. The portrait-painter Pierre Mignard (1610-95) and his great rival Charles le Brun (1619-90), who as architect and sculptor as well as painter dominated the Louis Quatorze period, were both trained in Rome and were entirely Italian in style.

None of these men was strong enough to found a distinct and national French style ; and the kind of painting which we look upon to-day as being essentially and characteristically French was not born till Antoine Watteau left his home in Valenciennes for Paris. It was this weakling, whose frail form was prematurely ravaged by consumption, who founded the greatest and strongest of all the modern schools of painting.

Antoine Watteau was born in 1683 at Valenciennes, near the Franco-Flemish frontier. His father, a tiler and carpenter, was in poor circumstances, and the boy is said to have had an unhappy childhood. Watteau senior bore the reputation of being a hard man, and wanted his son to become a tiler like himself ; and when young Antoine at last obtained permission to work in the studio of a local artist, one Guerin, who was painter to the municipality of Valenciennes, the father refused to pay the expenses of his son's education.

After the death of Guerin in 1702, Antoine Watteau, then aged nineteen, ran away to Paris with a scene-painter called Metayer. But when they had arrived in Paris, this man soon abandoned his young companion when he had no more work to give him, and henceforward Watteau, already in delicate health and disowned by his father, was alone in Paris, without money, clothes, or resources of any kind. In desperate poverty he at last found employment in a wretched workshop where cheap religious pictures were produced by the dozen, to be retailed by country shopkeepers. Nowadays chromolithographs have saved artists from this kind of drudgery, but in the early eighteenth century even the lowest-priced coloured card had to be done by hand. What was required of Watteau and his fellow-labourers was rapidity of execution in making copies of popular subjects, and for this





"BEGGARS," BY LE NAIN

W. F. Mansell.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

With the work of Le Nain we have a beginning in French Art of that tradition of democracy which was destined to be so definitely its spirit. His groups of simple people, posed rather rigidly, have a delightful dignity because they are treated so seriously as subjects for art.

work the pay was the equivalent of half-a-crown a week and one daily meal of soup !

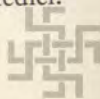
Yet even in this miserable trade Watteau managed to distinguish himself, and was entrusted with the reproduction of a " St. Nicholas " that was in great demand. One day the mistress of the workshop forgot to give Watteau the " St. Nicholas " to copy, and remembering her oversight later in the day, she climbed up to Watteau's attic to scold him for idling. After she had worked herself up into a passion, Watteau amazed her by showing her his day's work, a perfect St. Nicholas, which he had completely finished from memory.

Through all this period of drudgery and semi-starvation, Watteau never despaired, and snatched every opportunity to improve his art, drawing from Nature at night and during his rare holidays and leisure moments. Then by a happy chance he made the acquaintance of the decorative artist Claude Gillot, who, after seeing Watteau's drawings, invited the young man to live with him.

Rescued from his miserable factory, Watteau worked with enthusiasm at the ornamental painting of his new friend, who was then chiefly engaged in representing scenes from Italian comedy. Watteau, who in his poverty and ill-health worshipped elegance and all the graces of life, soon rivalled and surpassed his tutor in painting slim Harlequins, simple Pierrots, dainty Columbines, and other well-defined characters of Italian comedy ; and it may be that Gillot grew jealous of his *protégé*. After a period of warm friendship, the two artists parted on bad terms, and though Watteau in after-life never ceased to praise Gillot's pictures, he kept silent about the man, and would never answer when questioned about the breach between them. Gillot, on the other hand, tacitly acknowledged his pupil's superiority, for some time after the quarrel he abandoned painting and devoted himself to etching.

When Watteau left Gillot, his fellow-assistant, Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743), who afterwards became his pupil, left with him, and both young men found employment with Claude Audran, a painter of ornaments, who was also a guardian of the Luxembourg Palace. This stay with Audran had a profound influence on the art of Watteau. There were no gardens of the Luxembourg in those days, and the park attached to the royal palace was full of wild and natural beauty which appealed to the young artist, and drew forth his powers as a landscape-painter. It was here that he discovered and learnt to paint those noble clumps of trees which form the background to the figures of his idylls and pastorals.

Inspired thus by the externals of the palace, Watteau was also profoundly moved by what was within, the picture-gallery containing the series of great paintings by Rubens which illustrated the life of Marie de' Medici.



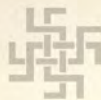


W. F. Mansell.

"LADY AT HER TOILET," BY ANTOINE WATTEAU (1683-1721)

Wallace Collection, London

Unique as the "Venus" of Velazquez, this picture is held by many to be the most beautiful Watteau ever painted. Though almost directly inspired by the figure paintings of Rubens, which Watteau studied at the Luxembourg, this charming little painting is exquisite in its grace and refinement.



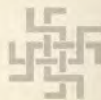
Watteau viewed these spirited paintings again and again ; he copied them with zest, and became so saturated with Rubens that eventually he was able to deflect his fellow-countrymen from Italian ideals and revivify French painting with the vigorous realism of Rubens. His worship of the great Fleming, to whom he felt himself related by ties of race as well as artistic sympathy, never degenerated into servile imitation : "by means of a gradually widening realism," says the distinguished French critic Camille Mauclair, Watteau "arrived at the point of preserving in his small canvases all Rubens' admirable breadth, while achieving a masterly originality of grouping." A superb example of Watteau's powers in this respect is his exquisite "Lady at her Toilet" in the Wallace Collection. Here a theme, in which Rubens could hardly have avoided a certain coarseness, becomes a model of grace and refinement.

Once again the jealousy of a senior threatened Watteau's progress. Watteau showed his master a realistic painting of soldiers on the march, and Audran, who naturally did not want to lose so talented an assistant, advised him not to paint realistic pictures lest he should lose his skill as a decorator. But Watteau, determined to devote himself to original work, was now diplomat enough to avoid a quarrel, and desirous of leaving Audran courteously, he informed him that he must return to Valenciennes to visit his family. At Valenciennes the young artist continued his studies of nature and contemporary life, and he painted a series of military pictures illustrating camp-life, marches, and outpost duty. But after staying there long enough to justify his visit, he returned to Paris, where he was now not altogether unknown.

At this time his great desire was to win the Prix de Rome and to visit Italy, and with this object he competed in 1709, the subject set by the Academy being "David granting Abigail Nabal's Pardon." The prize, however, was won by a student named Grison, Watteau being placed second and thus losing his opportunity of visiting Rome.

Still desirous of studying in Italy, and still hopeful that the Academy might help him to accomplish his desire, Watteau three years later contrived to get two of his military pictures hung in a room through which Academicians were in the habit of passing. Several admired the "vigorous colouring, and a certain harmony which made them appear the work of an old master," and one Academician, de la Fosse by name, made inquiries as to the painter. It was then discovered that this young painter, already twenty-nine, was so modest that all he wanted from the Academy was its influence with the King that he might receive a small grant to enable him to study in Italy.

Attracted by his talent and modesty, de la Fosse sought an interview with Watteau which had the most surprising results. With a rare generosity the Academician told the young man that he had no need to seek instruction



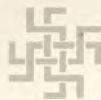
in Italy, that he undervalued his own ability, and the Academicians believed he was already capable of doing them honour ; in short, he had only to take the proper steps to be accepted a member of their society. The young artist did as he was told, and was immediately received as a member of the French Academy.

In all the long and memorable history of the Academy of France no incident similar to this has ever been recorded. That a young artist, without friends or fortune, who had failed to win the Prix de Rome and humbly begged for help in his studies, should spontaneously and unanimously be elected an Academician, is a miracle without precedent or sequel in the history of all Academies. This unique event was the turning-point in Watteau's career, and henceforward his fame was assured and he was able to earn his living in comfort.

It was on August 28, 1717, that Watteau was definitely admitted to the Academy. All successful candidates are required to deposit a diploma work after their election, and it was for this purpose that Watteau eventually painted his famous masterpiece, "L'Embarquement pour Cythère," which is now in the Louvre. In this poetically conceived picture, which shows a crowd of gallant youths and fair maidens about to embark for the legendary isle of perfect love, Watteau revealed a science of colour harmony which was one hundred and fifty years ahead of his day. He had already excited the admiration of his contemporaries by a method of painting which was as successful as it was original. He would cover his canvas copiously and, to all appearance, vaguely with a thick layer of pigment, and on this he would proceed, so to speak, to *chisel* out his detail. Figures, sky, and landscape background were then built up by a series of minute touches, which gave his pictures a peculiarly vibrating and scintillating effect. His division of tones and his wonderful orchestration of complementary colours make Watteau a forerunner of the prismatic colouring of the more scientific painters of the nineteenth century.

Unfortunately he was not destined to enjoy long the fame and fortune which now awaited him. The privation and hardship of his early manhood had undermined his always frail constitution and left him a prey to phthisis.

As if he knew the end was approaching, he worked feverishly during his last years. For a time he lived with a wealthy collector named Crozat, for whose dining-room he painted a set of "The Four Seasons." Though very comfortable at Crozat's house, which was filled with precious things and with paintings and drawings by old masters he admired, a desire for more complete independence led Watteau to leave it and live with his friend Vleughels, who afterwards became Principal of the Academy at Rome. In 1718 he left Vleughels, and shut himself up in a small apartment alone with his dreams and his illness, displaying then that craving for



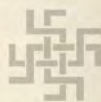


"THE CONVERSATION," BY ANTOINE WATTEAU

W. F. Mansell.

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Conceived in a poetical spirit, in spite of the artificial atmosphere of the mock pastoral style of his day, this typical example of Watteau's art enchants us by the exquisite precision of his observation, the light brilliancy of his colour, and the gentle melancholy which pervades even the fairyland of his creation.



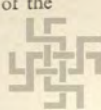


From the picture in the Wallace Collection, by permission.

"A LADY WITH A FAN," BY VELAZQUEZ

Wallace Collection, London

This treasure of the Wallace Collection reveals Velázquez at the height of his powers creating a wonderful harmony of subtle colour and a monumental design. The ivory white of the gloves set against the blue-white cuffs; the brown of the dress between the warmer tones of the fan and the black of the mantilla: such things as these have caused Velázquez to be called "the Painter's Painter."



Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts



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"PALLAS ATHENE," BY REMBRANDT

Gulbenkian Collection, National Gallery, London

Rembrandt's passion for rich materials and the opportunities they gave for effects of chiaroscuro and of lighting led him often to this use of precious armour and of cloaks. This picture and the "Mars" in Glasgow were probably companion pieces. In both, the crimson and gold flood the shadows with warmth.

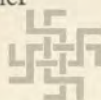
solitude which is said to be one of the symptoms of phthisis. Later, somebody having spoken well of England, he suddenly had an almost morbid longing to cross the Channel.

In 1719 he came to London, where he painted and had some success, till the climate made him ill and unable to work. He returned to France more exhausted and weaker in health than he had ever been before, but slightly recovered during a six months' stay with his friend, the art-dealer Gersaint, for whom he painted a sign, an exquisitely finished interior with figures, in the short space of eight mornings—he was still so weak that he could only paint half the day. Then, hoping that he might recover his strength in the country, he moved to a house at Nogent which had been lent to him, but there his health rapidly declined and he gave himself up to religion, his last picture being a Crucifixion for the curate of the parish. Still pathetically hopeful that change of air might do him good, he begged his friend Gersaint to make arrangements for him to journey to Valenciennes. But while waiting for strength to move to his native town the end came, and on July 18, 1721, he died suddenly in Gersaint's arms. He was only thirty-seven years old.

The real sweetness and generosity of Watteau's nature is well illustrated by a touching incident during the last months of his life. His pupil, Jean Pater (1696–1736), had offended him, as Lancret had also done, by imitating his own style and subjects too closely, and in a fit of ill-temper he dismissed him from his studio. But during his last illness Watteau remembered how he had suffered in his youth from the jealousy of his seniors, and he reproached himself with having been unjust as well as unkind to Pater. He besought his friend Gersaint to persuade Pater to return to him, and when the latter arrived the dying man spent a month giving Pater all the help and guidance that he could in order to atone for his former injustice.

Pater, though possessed of less individuality than Lancret, was in many respects the best of Watteau's followers, and, like his master, he also died young. He was haunted by a fear that he would become old and helpless before he had saved enough to live upon, and he worked so incessantly and feverishly to gain his independence that eventually his health broke down and he died in harness at forty.

Lancret, who lived on till 1743, continued Watteau's Italian comedy manner, and had considerable success with his theatrical portraits, two of which are in the Wallace Collection. He is seen at his best in the portrait of an actress known as "La Belle Grecque," which has a vivacious charm of its own and is full of life. The pose of the figure is particularly happy and conveys admirably a sense of movement. But while they could imitate more or less cleverly the superficial appearance of Watteau's pictures, neither



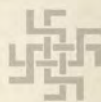


W. F. Mansell.

PORTRAIT OF AN ACTRESS ("LA BELLE GRECQUE"), BY LANCRET (1690-1743)

Wallace Collection, London

This superb portrait of an actress shows that in quality, that of dramatic force, Lancret surpassed his master Watteau. We can almost hear this graceful creature recite her lines, and her gesture is eloquent of the point she has turned to make.



Lancret nor Pater were able to give their paintings that undercurrent of pathos which lifts Watteau's work high above the trivial.

Only a very superficial observer of Watteau's pictures would accuse him of being a painter of frivolities, a chronicler of picnics. Watteau lived in an artificial age, and being a true artist he could not help reflecting something of its artificiality. The French Court life of his day had the splendour of autumn leaves about to fall. Watteau, himself a dainty rose with canker in the bud, shows us the hectic charm of a civilisation already being consumed by mortal malady; but his honesty and intellectual insight prevented him from pretending that the happiness of his puppets was anything more than a passing moment of self-deception. His pictures haunt us, not because of their gaiety, but by reason of their gentle, uncomplaining melancholy; and the late Sir Frederick Wedmore penetrated to the secret of Watteau when he laid stress on "the reflective pathos, the poignant melancholy, which are among the most appealing gifts of him who was accounted the master of the frivolous, of the monotonously gay."

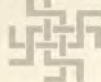
Watteau is unique in his qualities of drawing and colour. There have been many painters who were great draughtsmen, and a number of painters who have been great colourists; but those who were supreme both in drawing and colour we can count on the fingers of one hand. Watteau is among them. If we look at the little figures in a typical Watteau like "The Conversation," we perceive that the drawing rivals that of Raphael in its perfection of form and that of Rembrandt in its expressiveness. Watteau's draughtsmanship may be studied still further in his chalk drawings in the British Museum Print Room.

As for his paint, hardly among his predecessors will you find anything so exquisite in colour and so jewel-like in quality. The brightness of his palette, and the little touches with which he laid on his colour, make his pictures vibrate and sing as those of no other artist had done before. Watteau was not only a great master; he was one of those pioneer artists whose original research and brilliant achievements have given a new impetus to the art of painting.

§ 2

While Watteau was laying the foundation for the romantic and impressionist painting of modern France, another group of French figure-painters were evolving a national "grand style" for French portraiture. This new style first made its appearance when Largillière began painting Louis XIV and his family, and a typical example of it may be found in the Wallace Collection.

Nicolas Largillière (1656-1746), who was nearly thirty years older than Watteau, was born in Paris, but worked for many years in London, where



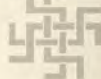
he was an assistant to Sir Peter Lely and a great favourite with King Charles II. But unlike his master Lely—who rivalled the Vicar of Bray in keeping in with both sides—Largillière was a Royalist through and through, and like the fallen Stuarts he returned to France and made Paris his home during the latter part of his life. His drawing is accurate but rather hard, his colour harmonious and lighter in hue than that of his predecessors Mignard and Le Brun, and his great canvas at the Wallace Collection of Louis XIV with the Dauphin, the Duc de Bourgogne, the infant Duc d'Anjou (afterwards Louis XV), and Madame de Maintenon, shows how magnificently he could stage and present a royal group.

Among his contemporaries were Hyacinth Rigaud (1659–1743), and his pupil Jean Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755), who won much fame as superintendent of the royal tapestry manufactories of the Gobelins and Beauvais; but his most famous successor was Jean Marc Nattier (1685–1766), a Parisian-born, who became one of the favourite portrait-painters at the Court of Louis XV. Nattier commenced his career as a historical painter, and only took up portraiture in 1720 after he had lost all his savings through the speculations of John Law, the Scottish financier and adventurer. His paintings are also a little hard, but they are light and gay in colour and remarkably stately in their grouping and arrangement.

Another Paris-born artist acquired still wider fame. This was François Boucher (1703–70), who gained the first prize at the Academy when he was only twenty years old and afterwards studied in Rome. “No one,” wrote the late Lady Dilke of this artist, “ever attacked a greater variety of styles; his drawings—often extremely good—are to be met with in every important collection. Innumerable were his easel pictures, his mural decorations, his designs for tapestries at Beauvais or the Gobelins, his scene paintings for Versailles and the Opera.”

No artist more completely illustrates and represents French taste in the eighteenth century than François Boucher, who was indeed the leader of fashion in this direction, and by his creative genius brought a new note into European painting. He introduced a lighter and gayer scheme of colour into tapestries and decorative paintings, pale blues and pinks being predominant in his colour-schemes. He designed many paintings and decorations for the famous Madame de Pompadour, and the sweet colour now generally known as *rose du Barry* was invented by Boucher and was originally called *rose Pompadour*.

To do justice to the French portraiture of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, we must remember the ornate gilt furniture of the period with which they were surrounded. Portraits like Nattier's “*Made-moiselle de Clermont*” and Boucher's “*Marquise de Pompadour*”—both of which are in the Wallace Collection—must not be judged as easel paintings,





"LOUIS XIV AND HIS HEIRS," BY LARGILLIÈRE (1656-1746)

Wallace Collection, London

The desire of Louis XIV to be a great patron of the arts failed to attract to the Court of France the greatest artists. Largillière and Rigaud attempted to create something of lasting value, but the artificial life and costume defeated them. This group-portrait is one of the best of the period.

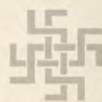


W. F. Mansell.

MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR, BY BOUCHER (1703-1770)

Wallace Collection, London

This notorious favourite of the King of France possessed an unerring instinct for beauty, and during the twenty years of her reign she exerted a great and, on the whole, a beneficial influence on the arts. "Her death in 1764," says Lady Dilke, "deprived the great group of artists employed by the Crown of a court of appeal whose decisions were ruled by a taste finished to the point of genius."



but as items in an elaborate scheme of interior decoration. There is nothing like them in the history of portraiture, just as there never was a Court exactly like that of the "Grand Monarch" or of his immediate successors. These portraits reconvey to us all the splendours of Versailles, its luxury and its heartlessness. They are the quintessence of aristocratic feeling, so full of culture that there is little room for humanity. The pride they express ends by alienating our sympathy, for they are the most pompous pictures the world has ever seen.

§ 3

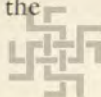
Side by side with these artistocratic painters whose art reflected the temper of the French Court, we find now and then an artist of genius who expresses the life and feelings of the people. The greatest of these was Jean Baptiste Simeon Chardin (1699-1779), who was also born in Paris. Though he worked for a time under the Court painter Van Loo at Fontainebleau, and was elected a member of the Academy in 1728, Chardin was never a favourite with the nobles of France, nor did he make any effort to pander to their taste. His pictures, like those of his predecessors the brothers Le Nain, were "tainted with democracy," and the intense humanity of Chardin links him to his great contemporary on the English side of the Channel, William Hogarth.

Though Chardin, as Lady Dilke once said, "treated subjects of the humblest and most unpretentious class, he brought to their rendering, not only deep feeling and a penetration which divines the innermost truths of the simplest forms of life, but a perfection of workmanship by which everything he handled was clothed with beauty."

Like the Persian poet, Chardin could compose a song about a loaf of bread and a glass of red wine—as his beautiful still-life in the National Gallery, London, proved—while "The Pancake-Maker" shows what beauty and tenderness he could find in the kitchen.

Amid all the artificiality of the gaudy Court of Versailles, Chardin stands out as the supreme interpreter of the sweetness and sane beauty of domesticity. He was a poet with the unspoilt heart of a child who could reveal to us the loveliness in the common things of life.

How strong a character Chardin must have been to resist the current of the time and adhere unswervingly to his simple democratic ideals we realise when we contemplate the talent and career of Jean Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), who was for a time his pupil. We have only to look at Fragonard's charming domestic scene, "The Happy Mother," in the National Gallery, London, to see that this artist also might have been a painter of the people. He shows us here the home of a blacksmith, whose forge is seen in the

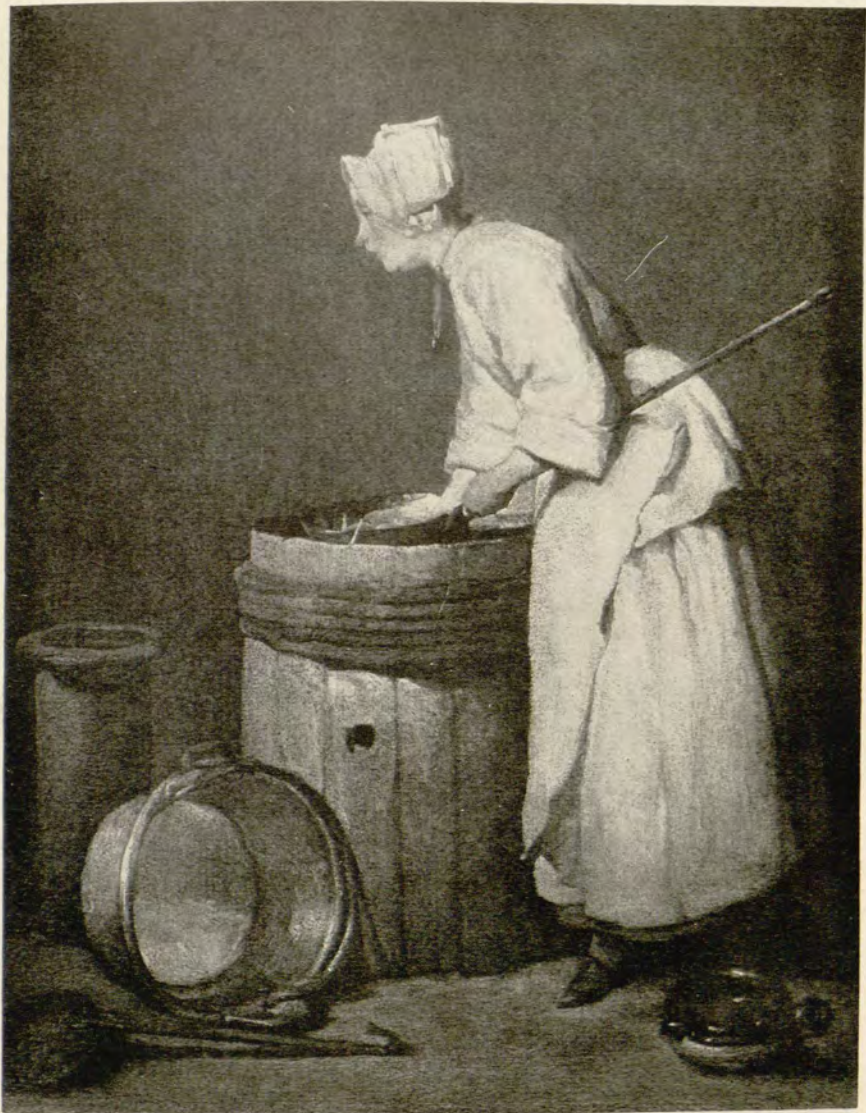




T. & R. Annan.

"LADY MAKING TEA," BY CHARDIN (1699-1779)
Hunterian Museum, Glasgow

Revealing a power of observation and justness of lighting which rivals the exquisite work of the best Dutch Masters, this painted fragment of everyday life also shows a grace and subtle refinement which is characteristic of France. Its beauty is as indisputable as its truth.



T. & R. Annan.

“THE PANCAKE-MAKER,” BY CHARDIN
Hunterian Museum, Glasgow

Unmoved by the affections of his age and the artificialities of the French Court, this great artist painted humble scenes of domesticity with a penetration that divined their innermost truths and with a perfection of workmanship that invested them with beauty.

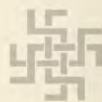


W. F. Mansell.

"THE SWING," BY FRAGONARD (1732-1806)

Wallace Collection, London

In this picture we have an example of that affectation of rustic simplicity which thinly veiled the real sensual character of Court life at Versailles. After squandering his great artistic gifts on pandering to the taste of a depraved nobility, the greatest decorator of his age lived to see his patrons sent to the guillotine and though the painter himself escaped the worst terrors of the French Revolution he died in poverty.



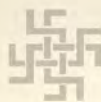
background, while in the centre the young mother with her three children sits at a table, and beyond another woman rocks a cradle.

For good or ill Fragonard chose another path, and after he had gained from Chardin a knowledge of sound craftsmanship which he never afterwards lost, he chose a more fashionable master and became the pupil of Boucher. In 1752, at the age of twenty, he won the Prix de Rome, and in 1756 he went for four years to Italy, where he made a particular study of the decorative paintings of "The Last of the Venetians," namely, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1769). He returned to Paris in 1761 and almost immediately became a favourite with the French nobility.

"In Fragonard," wrote Lady Dilke, "Boucher found his true heir. The style of Court fashions and customs, highly artificial even in the affectation of nature and simplicity, the temper of society, purely sensual in spite of pretensions to sentiment, gave birth to innumerable fictions which took their place in the commerce of ordinary life. Eternal youth, perpetual pleasure, and all the wanton graces, their insincere airs masked by a voluptuous charm, came into seeming—a bright deceitful vision which cheated and allured all eyes. . . . The hours float by in waves of laughter, and the scent of flowers which breathe of endless summer fills the air. Existence in the gardens of Fragonard is pleasure; its penalties and pains are ignored just as sickness and sorrow were then ignored in actual life."

Highly typical of the period and of the manner in which Fragonard catered for the taste of his patrons is his picture "The Swing," painted to order and exhibiting all the characteristics which Lady Dilke has so brilliantly analysed in the passage quoted. The workmanship is beautiful, the drawing and colour are alike charming, but these displays of so-called "gallantry" are detestable to many people, and through it all we are conscious of the insincerity of a clever and highly gifted painter.

Pictures which Fragonard painted purely to please himself, like "The Happy Mother" and the "Lady Carving her Name," are less typical of Fragonard, but often pleasanter to gaze upon than his commissions and elaborate decorations. But even in these subjects Fragonard is always frolicsome and playful where Chardin was serious and earnest, and it is impossible to escape the conclusion that Fragonard's was essentially a shallow nature. For all his cleverness he paid the penalty of his insincerity; he outlived his popularity and ultimately died in dire poverty. In 1806 the times had changed: Napoleon and the French Revolution had swept away the frivolities of Versailles.



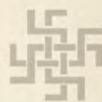


"GIRL WITH DOVES," BY GREUZE (1725-1805)

W. F. Mansell.

Wallace Collection, London

Though she appears the incarnation of sweet innocence and simplicity, the original of this portrait broke Greuze's heart by her infidelities and eventually robbed him of his savings. She was the daughter of a Paris bookseller. The artist married her in haste, and by his paintings made her a reigning beauty of her day.



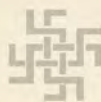
§ 4

Contemporary with Fragonard was a painter who, though never the equal of Chardin as a craftsman, nevertheless approached him in the democratic temper of his art. Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805), who was born near Macon and came to Paris in 1746, suddenly acquired fame and popularity when he was thirty by exhibiting at the Salon of 1755 his picture "A Father Explaining the Bible to his Family." This familiar scene, with its everyday details and its personages taken from humble life, made an immediate appeal to the bourgeois, who found in it those new ideas of simplicity and morality which Jean Jacques Rousseau had spread among the middle classes. Lady Dilke, who evidently suspected the moral sincerity of Greuze, pronounced his pictures to be "stained by artificiality." His pictures were rendered attractive, she argued, by "a vein of wanton suggestion which found an echo in the dainty disorder in which his heroines are dressed."

There are some strange parallels between the life of Greuze and that of Watteau, who died four years before his birth. Greuze's father was also a carpenter, and he also opposed his son's determination to become an artist. Greuze also began his career in extreme poverty, but fortunately he had a more robust constitution and withstood hardship better than Watteau. Greuze's father whipped him when he caught him drawing, and Greuze also ran away to Paris with another painter, and he, too, when he got there, found that nobody wanted to give him any employment. Both men were close on thirty before the turning-point came, Watteau by his election to the Academy, and Greuze by the exhibition of his picture at the Salon. But there the parallel ends, and the close of Greuze's life is more like that of Fragonard. For he also outlived his popularity and died in poverty.

It seems extraordinary that Greuze, the most popular of painters at all times, should have fared so badly at the end of his life. We cannot account for it by saying that Greuze could not accommodate himself to the change of taste brought about by the French Revolution, for throughout his career he was distinctly a bourgeois rather than an aristocratic painter.

The miserable truth is that the seemingly sweet and innocent little person, who looks out at us continually from those pictures of girls' heads which have brought the painter his greatest posthumous fame, was the cause of her immortaliser's wretched end. To look at all the portraits of her which hang in the Wallace Collection, or at the one entitled "Girl Looking Up," which is in the National Gallery, is to find it difficult to believe that the original was an arrant little baggage. Yet some people, who profess to be judges of character, say that the Greuze girl is not so innocent as she pretends to be.





W. F. Mansell.

"HEAD OF A GIRL LOOKING UP," BY GREUZE

National Gallery, London

A beautiful example of one of the many fanciful portraits of his lovely but erring wife by which this artist has attained world-wide fame and popularity.



Mlle. SOPHIE ARNOULD, BY GREUZE

Wallace Collection, London

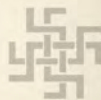
W. F. Mansell.

No artist owes so much of his fame to the beauty of his models as Greuze did, but it must be admitted that he knew how to present them to advantage and to paint them with a rare tenderness and atmospheric softness. He also, like Fragonard, outlived his popularity and died in poverty.

In fact she was the daughter of a bookseller on the Quai des Augustins, Paris, and Greuze, attracted by her beauty, is said to have married her to save her reputation. He married Anne Gabriel in haste, and he repented at his leisure. Owing to her husband's constant exposition of her charms, Madame Greuze became one of the noted beauties of the day, and though her husband was devoted to her and gave her crazily everything he could that she wanted, the ungrateful little hussy repaid him by robbing him not only of his peace of mind but of large sums of money that he had saved.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and John Rivers in his book on *Greuze and his Models* maintains that every feature of Anne Gabriel "announced a hasty, passionate, and rather voluptuous nature"; nevertheless we are inclined, as human beings ourselves liable to error, to give our sympathy to Greuze and praise him for a generous and chivalrous action rather than to condemn him for having made an imprudent marriage. Though he painted other beautiful women, it is by his various fanciful portraits of his erring wife that Greuze has obtained his world-wide popularity, and there is hardly another instance in art of a painter who has achieved so great a fame by his exposition of the physical charms of a single model.

So, as the rumbling of the Revolution sounded just around the corner of time, this art of Chardin and Greuze heralded it. Lightness, gaiety, frivolity gave place to earnestness, moral purpose, and concern for the ordinary affairs of the average man which was the growing philosophy of those years.



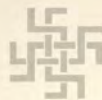


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"A LADY STANDING AT THE VIRGINALS," BY VERMEER

National Gallery, London

The utmost serenity of Dutch seventeenth-century art is enshrined in the still, sunlit interiors of this most perfect of Dutch painters. The wealth of exquisite possessions, the rich stuffs of the costumes, the security of that golden age, is expressed in compositions statically built in rectangular patterns and brilliant with cool, clean colour.



Indira Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts



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"VISCOUNT KILMOREY," BY GAINSBOROUGH

National Gallery, London

A typical Gainsborough Portrait with the landscape setting which he loved. It is fascinating to notice how differently he has modelled the face as compared to the tree trunk. Despite the charm of the background the focus is on the portrait, with its profound indication of individuality and character.

ENGLISH MASTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE ART OF HOGARTH, RICHARD WILSON, AND REYNOLDS

§ 1

IN this eighteenth century which was witnessing the rise of painting in France, art in England rose to a peak. Throughout the preceding centuries it had been overshadowed by one after another of the foreign artists who received patronage from the court and the aristocracy. Since those very early days of the cathedral builders and the church crafts which accompanied it, no outstanding names, no great achievements mark English art. Mors, Holbein, Van Dyck, Rubens, had been doing the work which English artists might have done. English painting had either been imitation of this foreign art, or had tended to turn towards miniature of which we had had an incomparably brilliant school. Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) in the reign of Elizabeth and James was truly a splendid artist as his miniatures at South Kensington reveal. We have not paid sufficient attention to, nor sufficiently valued, Hilliard, who had in him the qualities of a great artist, and was genuinely and essentially English. A goldsmith, a sculptor, a painter, a miniaturist, he was Court Illuminator to Elizabeth and afterwards to James the First. An author also, he wrote a delightful treatise on painting, full of common sense.

One of the most delightful of his miniatures is that "Portrait of a Young Man" at South Kensington, an open-air study of a gallant which has all the poetry of Spenser in it. Interestingly, too, it is taken out of doors (another prophecy of the English tradition) with a gay pattern of roses. An exquisite portrait of his wife in the Buccleuch collection is another work which shows Hilliard's quality. Yet few have heard of him, for his native genius was overshadowed by the brilliance of Holbein, and, less justly by the third-rate art of the Gheeraedts, father and son.

This art of miniatures remained the English glory through late Tudor and Stuart times. The Olivers, Isaac (1564-1617) and his son Peter (1594-1648) did lovely and important work on the small scale which seems always to have appealed to the British temperament. A score of other artists worked in the same genre. Of larger-scale work the foreign tide still swept everything away: Van Dyck succeeded Holbein worthily;



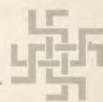


Copyright.

"MARTHA HORTON OF SOWERBY," BY JOHN RILEY(?)

National Gallery, London

We cannot certainly say that this picture of an English Puritan lady is by Riley, but we can claim that it is one of the finest portraits of its period. The homely features are given a beauty by the magnificent handling of the paint and the fine draughtsmanship of an artist who suffered neglect while British patronage went to lesser men from abroad.



but there were the Gheeraedts, Lely, and Kneller. Meantime our own portraitists, Cornelius Johnson (1593-1664), Robert Walker (1600-58), the painter of Cromwell, William Dobson (1610-46), and John Riley (1646-91), found it more profitable to imitate the foreigners than to pursue their own vision. Yet as one looks at the masterly portrait of "Martha Horton of Sowerby" in the National Gallery we realise what greatness was lost. This is one of the great portraits of the world, depending for its value upon no tricks of pose or embellishment or fine costume. The sitter is far from beautiful, but the portrait is so full of character and so honestly painted that she is immortalised as truly as the "Mona Lisa" or Holbein's "Duchess of Milan." This fine work is attributed to Riley before he succumbed to imitation of Lely, who was himself an echo of the true quality of Van Dyck.

And Riley's pupil was a certain Jonathan Richardson to whom Joshua Reynolds acknowledged his debt. So the English tradition persisted: a thin stream through the marsh of foreign influence to flood at last into the widespread glories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Raeburn and their fellow portrait painters; then the marvellous line of landscape artists from Wilson to Turner and Constable, Girtin, Crome, Cotman, Cox; such men made it impossible for even the British to neglect their artists. Certain strongly marked characteristics marked the British art. One was our love of water-colour in which our artists had always led the world, and still do. Another was our interest in small-scale work, and a certain distrust of the flamboyant. A third was our love of nature which was destined to bring recognition at last to the British painters, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But the great days of our painting began a hundred years earlier when genius strangely asserted itself in the person of Hogarth.

§ 2

In all the annals of British Art there is no more illustrious name than that of William Hogarth. Not only was he, as E. V. Lucas has pointed out, "the first great national British painter, the first man to look at the English life around him like an Englishman and paint it without affectation or foreign influence, but he was the first to make pictures popular. Hogarth's engravings from his own works produced a love of art that has steadily increased ever since. During Hogarth's day thousands of houses that had had no pictures before acquired that picture habit which many years later Alderman Boydell and his team of engravers were to do so much to foster and establish."

That is where Hogarth differs from the French democratic painters, from



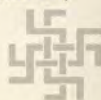
Chardin and Greuze, mentioned in the previous chapter ; he was an engraver as well as a painter, and so was one of the first artists in Europe to devote talent of the highest order to providing art for the masses as well as the classes. People who could not afford to buy oil-paintings could buy engravings, and it was by his engravings that Hogarth first acquired fame.

William Hogarth was born in Bartholomew Close, Smithfield, on November 10, 1697. He was the son of a schoolmaster and printer's reader, who was apparently a man of some education and had the intelligence to recognise his son's talent for drawing, and to place no obstacle in his path. At an early age young Hogarth was apprenticed to a silversmith near Leicester Fields (now Leicester Square), for whom he chased tankards and salvers, and two years after his father's death in 1718 he felt sufficiently confident in his powers to set up as an engraver on his own account. Meanwhile he had taken every opportunity of improving his drawing, and had attended classes at the art academy of Sir James Thornhill (1676-1734), a portrait-painter and decorative artist much in favour with Queen Anne. Thornhill was especially renowned for his ceilings, and the Painted Hall at Greenwich is a famous example of his art.

Hogarth did not get on very well with Thornhill and his method of tuition, which consisted principally of giving his pupils pictures to copy. This did not suit a youth so enamoured of life as Hogarth, who had a habit of making notes on his thumb-nail of faces and expressions and enlarging them afterwards on paper. In this way he trained his memory to carry the exact proportions and characteristics of what he had seen, so that his drawings, even done from memory, were extraordinarily vivacious and full of life. "Copying," Hogarth once said, "is like pouring water out of one vessel into another." He preferred to draw his own water, and this sturdy determination to see life for himself set him on the road to greatness. Previous English artists had not done this ; they had looked at life through another man's spectacles, and their pictures were more or less good imitations of the manner of Van Dyck, Lely, and Kneller.

Nevertheless he continued for a long time to frequent Thornhill's academy, the real attraction being not the master's tuition but his pretty daughter Jane. In the end Hogarth eloped with Miss Thornhill, whom he married without her father's consent and very much against his will. At the time the match was considered a *mésalliance*, for Thornhill was a Member of Parliament and a knight, whereas Hogarth had as yet acquired little fame and had rather scandalised society by bringing out in 1724 a set of engravings, "The Talk of the Town," in which he satirised the tendency of fashionable London to lionise foreign singers.

Four years later, however, the tide was turned in Hogarth's favour when Mr. Gay lashed the same fashionable folly in *The Beggar's Opera*, which,





W. F. Mansell.

"THE SHRIMP GIRL," BY HOGARTH (1697-1764)

National Gallery, London

"Life more abundant in her face you see."

Though hardly more than a sketch in its lightness of handling and reticence of colour, this is the most famous of all Hogarth's portraits for its amazing vitality and actuality.

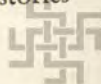


produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in January, 1728, proved to be as great a popular success then as it has been in our own day. Hogarth was naturally attracted to a piece that revealed a spirit so akin to his own, and he painted several pictures of its scenes, one of which is now in the Tate Gallery. His genial, bohemian temperament delighted in the society of actors and writers, and Hogarth's association with the company of *The Beggar's Opera* indirectly led him to take up portrait-painting. One of his earliest portraits is "Lavinia Fenton as *Polly Peachum*," the gay young actress who created the part and became Duchess of Bolton.

This portrait is a wonderful achievement, as indeed are all of Hogarth's. It has nothing of the manner of Lely or Kneller or any of his predecessors; it is fresh, original, unmannered, and sets life itself before us. To some extent, perhaps, he was influenced by Dutch painting, which has the same quality of honesty, but in the main he was "without a school, and without a precedent." Unlike the portrait-painters who preceded and those who immediately succeeded him, Hogarth does not show us people of rank and fashion. His portraits are usually of people in his own class or lower, his relatives, actors and actresses, his servants. Hogarth was too truthful in his painting and not obsequious enough in his manner to be a favourite with society, and it was only occasionally that a member of the aristocracy had the courage to sit to him. Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, did, and the magnificent little full-length in the National Portrait Gallery shows how vividly Hogarth grasped and expressed his character.

Still more amazing as an example of Hogarth's vivid characterisation and vivacity of expression is "The Shrimp Girl." It is only a sketch, mostly in greys with a few touches of other colours, but there is no work in the National Gallery more abounding with life. These portraits, painted with joy for the painter's satisfaction, never produced an income. He made his living by other pictures, and especially by his engravings, which had a wide sale and made his name a household word. The series of pictorial dramas which he invented brought him both fame and fortune; and after "The Rake's Progress" and other sets had firmly established Hogarth in popular favour, Sir James Thornhill became reconciled to his son-in-law, whom he now saw to be capable of earning a good living.

Narrative pictures were not a new thing in the history of art; the reliefs of Trajan's Column at Rome tell the story of the Emperor's Dacian campaigns, and we saw in Chapter VIII how Giotto and other early Italian painters recounted Bible stories and the lives of the saints in a series of pictures. But no painter before Hogarth had invented the story as well as illustrating it. Without any text familiar to the public, Hogarth by paint and engraving told new and original stories of his own time, and told them so clearly that they were universally understood. Sometimes these stories





W. F. Mansell.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE I. THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

National Gallery, London

The first scene in Hogarth's celebrated picture-drama. Note how the young lawyer ("Silvertongue") is already beginning to court the bride, while her prospective husband admires himself in the mirror.

In a splendid apartment the father of the bridegroom points to his pedigree, while the rich alderman, father of the bride, studies the marriage settlement. "The three figures of the young nobleman, his intended bride, and her innamorato, the Lawyer, show how much Hogarth excelled in the power of giving soft and effeminate expression. . . . Nothing can be more finely managed than the differences of character in these delicate personages."

HAZLITT





W. F. Mansell.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE II. SHORTLY AFTER MARRIAGE

National Gallery, London

The mutual boredom resulting from a "marriage of convenience" is the moral Hogarth points in this morning scene, adorned with a wealth of exquisitely painted details.

Note the delicious touch of satire in the four pictures of saints which adorn the walls of a worldly interior. An old steward, shocked at the way things are going, is leaving with a bundle of bills and one receipt. The wife sits yawning at breakfast, while the card-tables and the candles, still burning, in the room seen beyond, show how the husband, lazing in his chair, has spent the night. "The figure, face, and attitude of the husband are inimitable. Hogarth has with great skill contrasted the pale countenance of the husband with the yellow-whitish colour of the marble mantelpiece behind him, in such a manner as to preserve the fleshy tone of the former. The airy splendour of the view of the room in this picture is probably not exceeded in any of the productions of the Flemish school."

HAZLITT





W. F. Mansell.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE III. THE VISIT TO THE QUACK DOCTOR

National Gallery, London

The harsh faces of the quack and his companion and the gay unconcern of the Earl are contrasted with the rigid figure of the little girl, the victim of his profligacy, in this third scene, which shows how the married couple are drifting apart.

The peer, with a cane in one hand and a box of pills in the other, rallies the sardonically smiling quack for having deceived him. "The young girl, who is represented as the victim of fashionable profligacy, is unquestionably one of the artist's chefs-d'œuvre. The exquisite delicacy of the painting is only surpassed by the felicity and subtlety of the conception. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast between the extreme softness of her person and the hardened indifference of her character."

HAZLITT



"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

W. F. Mansell.

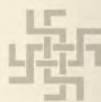
SCENE IV. THE COUNTESS'S DRESSING-ROOM

National Gallery, London

Hogarth's powers as a satirist find their fullest expression in this mocking picture of a polite company enduring an exhibition of "culture."

"The gradations of ridiculous affectation in the Music Scene are finely imagined and preserved. The preposterous, overstrained admiration of the Lady of Quality, the sentimental, insipid, impatient delight of the Man, with his hair in paper and sipping his tea, the pert, smirking, conceited, half-distorted approbation of the figure next to him, the transition to the total insensibility of the round face in profile, and then to the wonder of the negro boy at the rapture of his mistress, form a perfect whole. The sanguine complexion and flame-coloured hair of the female virtuoso throw an additional light on the character. . . . The gross, bloated appearance of the Italian Singer is well relieved by the hard features of the instrumental performer behind him, which might be carved of wood. The negro boy holding the chocolate, both in expression, colour, and execution, is a masterpiece. The gay, lively derision of the other negro boy, playing with the Actæon, is an ingenious contrast to the profound amazement of the first."

HAZLITT





W. F. Mansell.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

SCENE V. THE DUEL AND DEATH OF THE EARL

National Gallery, London

"Silvertongue, the young lawyer whom in the last scene we saw passing a masquerade ticket to the Countess, has now been found out. The Earl, who surprised him with his wife, has fought a duel and is dying as the result, while the young lawyer escapes through a window as the Watch enters."

HAZLITT





W. F. Mansell.

"MARRIAGE À LA MODE," BY HOGARTH

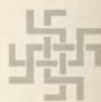
SCENE VI. THE DEATH OF THE COUNTESS

National Gallery, London

The last act showing the suicide of the Countess, while her father seems more intent on securing her rings than on consoling the orphan daughter, whom a nurse holds up to the dying mother.

"A bottle of poison on the floor shows that the Countess's death is self-sought, while the paper near it, with the words, 'Counsellor Silvertongue's Last Dying Speech,' reveals the end of another leading character in the drama. While the father absent-mindedly draws the rings from the fingers of his dying daughter, the half-starved dog ravenously snatching the meat from the table suggests with subtlety the straitened resources of the household as a result of previous prodigal expenditure."

HAZLITT



were almost wholly humorous, as in "The Election" series, but more often they had a serious intention and amusing incidents were introduced only by way of light relief.

To regard Hogarth as a satirist first is wrong : he was more than that : he was a great moralist. For though no man more severely scourged the folly of his time, Hogarth taught his lessons not only by exposing the ridiculous, but also by revealing the tragedy of wrong and the beauty of goodness. Among his many inventions none more beautifully display his method than the "Marriage à la Mode" series which we reproduce from the original paintings at the National Gallery ; and though each one of these pictures tells its own story clearly, it may be helpful to summarise the action of each scene, and add the illuminating comments made by the great critic Hazlitt.

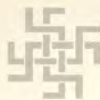
While the merited success of his prints and subject-pictures made Hogarth a very prosperous man, he preserved his simple character to the last, and on one occasion he walked home in the rain, completely forgetting that now he had his own coach, which was waiting for him. He had a town house at 30 Leicester Square (now rebuilt) and a country house at Chiswick, now a Hogarth Museum, and when he died in 1764 he was buried in Chiswick Churchyard.

§ 3

The greatest of Hogarth's contemporaries, the link indeed between him and Sir Joshua Reynolds, was the artist known as "The Father of British Landscape," Richard Wilson. His is one of the saddest stories in British Art, for, though acknowledged to be one of the most eminent men of his day, and attaining a modest measure of success in middle life, Fortune, through no fault of his own, turned her back on him, and his later years were spent in the direst poverty.

Richard Wilson was born at Penegoes in Montgomeryshire on August 1, 1714, the day Queen Anne died and George I ascended the throne. His father was a clergyman of limited means, but his mother was well connected, and one of her well-off relatives took sufficient interest in young Richard's talent for drawing to have him sent to London to learn painting. Though it is by his landscapes that Wilson acquired lasting fame, he began life as a portrait-painter ; one of his earlier portraits of himself is in the National Portrait Gallery, while a very much later portrait, in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, we reproduce. This magnificent work, which speaks for itself, is enough to prove that even in portrait-painting Wilson had, among his immediate predecessors, no equal saving Hogarth.

Like Hogarth, Wilson was of a sturdy, independent disposition, little inclined to truckle to the conceit of fashionable sitters or to flatter their





W. F. Mansell.

"PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST," BY RICHARD WILSON (1714-1782)

Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy

A noble and dignified portrait of himself by the artist, who won lasting fame as "The Father of British Landscape." Owing to an ill-timed jest, Wilson lost Court favour, and his later years were spent in pitiful poverty and privation.

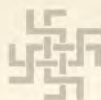
vanity, and consequently he was not the man to make it the staff of his professional practice, though in 1748 he had acquired a considerable eminence in this branch of art. In this year he was commissioned to paint a group of the Prince of Wales and Duke of York with their tutor—a portion of which now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery—and with the money earned by this and other commissions he decided in the following year to carry out a long-cherished wish to visit Italy.

Hitherto there has been a general belief that Wilson did not attempt landscape-painting till he found himself in Italy, but it has recently been ascertained¹ that he unquestionably painted landscapes before he left England.

In Italy Wilson devoted more and more of his time to landscape till he finally established himself in Rome as a landscape-painter, only doing an occasional portrait. His beautiful pictures of Italian landscapes, in which dignity of design was combined with atmospheric truth and loveliness of colour, soon gained him a great reputation in that city, and his landscapes were bought by the Earl of Pembroke, the Earl of Thanet, the Earl of Essex, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Dartmouth, and other Englishmen of high rank who were visiting Italy. Consequently, when he returned to England in 1756, his reputation preceded him and he enjoyed a considerable measure of success when he first established himself in London at Covent Garden. But unfortunately for Wilson, the taste of the eighteenth century was severely classical, and after the first novelty of his Italian landscapes wore off, only one or two enlightened patrons, like Sir Richard Ford, were capable of appreciating the originality and beauty of the landscapes he painted in England. Thanks to the discrimination of Sir Richard and Lady Ford, the best collection in the world of landscapes by Richard Wilson is still in the possession of the family, and by the courtesy of Captain Richard Ford we are permitted to reproduce two fine examples in these pages. It is only in the Ford Collection that the full measure of Wilson's greatness can be seen, for while the splendour of the flaming sunset sky in "The Tiber, with Rome in the Distance" reveals how Wilson showed the way to Turner, the sweet simplicity and *natural* beauty of "The Thames near Twickenham" proves him also to have been the artistic ancestor of Constable.

Wilson's English landscapes went begging in his own day. His memorandum-book, preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, shows how he sent them out on approval and often had them returned. As his fortunes dwindled, Wilson despairingly set about painting replicas of the Italian landscapes which he had found more saleable, and these repetitions of his Italian scenes have done much harm to his reputation in succeeding years, for the later Italian pictures do not always attain the

¹ Cf. *Richard Wilson and Farington*, by Frank Rutter, 1923.

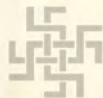




By courtesy of Capt. Richard Ford

“ITALIAN LANDSCAPE,” BY RICHARD WILSON

A beautiful example of Wilson's poetic rendering of Italian scenery, and of his power to render the glow in the sky and the limpid atmosphere in a spacious landscape. Note also the dignity and harmony of the carefully balanced composition.



quality of the first version when the painter was freshly inspired by the original scenery.

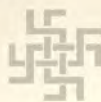
Nevertheless, with the help of one or two unaffected lovers of art and Nature, who bought his English landscapes, and more who bought repetitions of his Italian scenes, and with the fees of his pupils—among whom was the diarist, Joseph Farington, R.A.—Wilson managed for some years to make a tolerable living, and when the Royal Academy was established in 1768, George III—who in his boyhood had had his portrait done by this landscape-painter—nominated Richard Wilson as one of the founder-members of the Academy. At the Academy exhibitions Wilson exhibited with credit, if without much commercial success, and nothing serious happened till 1776, when he sent a picture of “Sion House from Kew Gardens,” which the King thought of buying.

Unfortunately he sent Lord Bute to bargain with the artist, and this canny nobleman thought the price asked, sixty guineas, was “too dear.” “Tell His Majesty,” said Wilson roguishly, “that he may pay for it by instalments.” Had an Irish peer been the intermediary he might have seen the joke and have made Wilson’s fortune, but Lord Bute belonged to a race that is reputed to take money very seriously, and to be not too quick at grasping the English sense of humour. He was shocked and scandalised, deeming the answer insulting to royalty.

The harmless gibe cost Wilson what little Court favour he had, and proved to be his ruin. Fortunately, before this disastrous retort had been made, he had secured the Librarianship of the Royal Academy, and the salary of this post, fifty pounds a year, was all Wilson had to live on during his later years. His few patrons fell away from him, his brother Academicians—most of whom had been rather jealous—now shunned him, and he lived in a miserable garret in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, existing chiefly on bread and porter. He had always been fond of the last—“though not to excess,” said Beechey, R.A., who knew him intimately.

Just before the end he had a year or two of quiet and comfort, for he left London and made his home with his relatives in Wales, where he died, at Llanberis, in 1782. Wilson did not altogether abandon portrait-painting when he returned from Italy, and in addition to the noble portrait of himself, there is in the Academy’s Diploma Gallery a very beautiful full-length of the young artist Mortimer, whom he painted about the same time. A splendid portrait of Peg Woffington, very rich in colour, which hangs in the Garrick Club, is another example of Wilson’s portraiture after his return from Italy.

Richard Wilson was the first English artist to show his countrymen not only the beauty of Nature but the beauty of their own country. He should not be judged by such large pictures as “Niobe” and “The Villa of



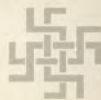


W. F. Mansell.

"THE AGE OF INNOCENCE," BY REYNOLDS (1723-92)

National Gallery, London

This delightful portrait of his little grand-niece, Theophila Gwatkin, aged six, while showing in its harmonious arrangement all Reynolds's mastery of the "grand style," also reveals the tenderness of his emotions and his reverent affection for the innocence of childhood.





W. F. Mansell.

"THE INFANT SAMUEL," BY REYNOLDS

National Gallery, London

Reynolds once told Hannah More that he was mortified to be asked by even his more enlightened sitters for information "who" Samuel was !



welcomed him—such as Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Goldsmith—and his house became a centre of good talk.”

Reynolds was not only a great painter, but a great gentleman, for long before the King knighted him in 1769, five days before the opening of the first Academy exhibition, he had shown Court and Society “that a painter could be a wise man and a considerable man as well.”

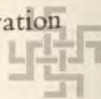
The story of Sir Joshua’s life is not dramatic ; it is the placid, smoothly running story of his art, of well-chosen friendships, of kindly actions, occasional displays of professional jealousy—for he was human and not an angel—and of a happy domestic life. When his brother-in-law Mr. Palmer died in 1770, Sir Joshua adopted his daughter Theophila, then thirteen, and later her sister Mary Palmer also came to live with him, so that though a bachelor Reynolds was not without young people in his house. Both his nieces remained with him till they married, and it was Theophila’s daughter, little Theophila Gwatkin, who was the original of one of Reynolds’s most charming and popular paintings, “The Age of Innocence.”

His grand-niece was six years old when Reynolds, in 1788, painted her portrait, a work which in conception and in every touch proclaims that it was “a labour of love.” Indeed, nowhere do the simplicity, the benevolence, and the affectionate nature of the man shine out more beautifully than in his paintings of children. Splendid and decorative in its colour-scheme and open-air setting, his “Mrs. Richard Hoare with her Infant Son” in the Wallace Collection has the same winning simplicity of intention ; for it is much more than a portrait, it is a tender expression of a mother’s love.

The other side of Sir Joshua’s art, “the grand manner,” is seen in the famous “Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse” and in other of his pictures. This was the side most admired by his contemporaries, and we must admit that Reynolds had a rare power of dramatic presentation, which found its happiest outlet when he was dealing with contemporary subjects. “The Tragic Muse” is something of a wreck to-day, because in his desire to emulate the deep, rich colouring of the Venetians, Reynolds made use of bitumen, a pigment which gives brilliant immediate results but never dries, and in time trickles down a canvas in channels, ruining its surface. This pigment, which liquefies like asphalt when the sun is hot, is chiefly responsible for the poor condition to-day of many paintings by Reynolds.

When Sir Joshua was sixty-six he lost the sight of his left eye, and from this calamity and the dread of losing the other, which was threatened, he never recovered. For three years he lingered on, seeing his friends and bearing his infirmity with fortitude, but the will to live was gone when he could no longer practise his art with assurance. He died on February 23, 1792, and was buried in state at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

“I know of no man who has passed through life with more observation



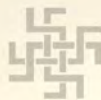


W. F. Mansell.

"MRS. SIDDONS AS THE TRAGIC MUSE," BY REYNOLDS

Dulwich Gallery

The most famous example of the "grand style" introduced by Reynolds into English portraiture : the great actress is shown as a queen of tragedy seated on her throne. As he put his signature at the bottom of the painted skirt, Reynolds, in his courtly manner, told the sitter he would go down to posterity on the hem of her garment.





W. F. Mansell.

"MRS. HOARE AND HER INFANT SON," BY REYNOLDS

Wallace Collection, London

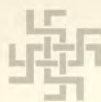
Unsurpassed as a decorative example of the typically British "open-air portrait," this picture is also a supremely beautiful expression of the tenderness of a mother's affection.



W. F. Mansell.

"MISS EMILY POTT AS THAIS," BY REYNOLDS

Reynolds's dramatic power is finely displayed in the arresting pose of the figure in this theatrical portrait. "Thais" was an Athenian beauty who accompanied Alexander the Great on his expedition to Asia. After his death she was claimed by Ptolemy, to whom she bore three children.



than Reynolds," said Dr. Johnson ; " when Reynolds tells me anything, I consider myself as possessed of an idea the more." Sir Joshua himself was distinguished by his literary abilities, and his " Discourses on Painting," which formed his yearly addresses to the students of the Royal Academy, are treasured and read to-day both for their literary merit and their instructive art teaching.



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH PORTRAITURE

THE ART OF GAINSBOROUGH, ROMNEY, RAE BURN,
HOPPNER, AND LAWRENCE

§ I

SHORTLY before little Joshua Reynolds celebrated his fourth birthday in the West of England, there was born in the Eastern Counties a babe destined to become his greatest rival in life and death. Thomas Gainsborough was born in 1727 at Sudbury, in Suffolk. He was one of a large family, his father being a wool manufacturer and clothier of moderate means, while his mother was a woman of education, the sister of a schoolmaster and herself a skilful painter of flowers. Thomas inherited his mother's love of Nature and her talent for art, and spent his boyhood rambling about the countryside and sketching the scenery round Sudbury. His gift for catching a likeness revealed itself early. One day, having seen a man robbing an orchard, he made a quick sketch of him, with the result that the robber was recognised from Gainsborough's drawing and arrested. The boy's faculty for copying, however, was not always exercised in the interests of law and order; and on another occasion, when he desired to play truant, he forged his father's handwriting in a letter to the schoolmaster, asking for a day's holiday. The ruse succeeded, but was subsequently found out, and seeing clearly that the boy would work at nothing but his drawing and his sketching, the father wisely sent his son at the age of fifteen to London to study art under the French engraver Henri Gravelot. Young Gainsborough also studied at the St. Martin's Lane Academy, and later became the pupil of the portrait-painter Francis Hayman (1708-76), with whom he continued nearly four years. In 1745 he returned to his native town of Sudbury, where he began practice as a portrait-painter and occasionally painted a small landscape for his own pleasure.

Unlike Reynolds, who was "wedded to his art," Gainsborough married when he was only nineteen. He fell in love with Margaret Burr, a beautiful girl of eighteen, who fortunately possessed an income of £200 a year of her own, and as no obstacles were raised to their wedding, the boy-and-girl couple settled down at Ipswich, where Gainsborough soon acquired a considerable local reputation as a portrait-painter. Here his two daughters were



born, and the painter led a happy domestic life, sketching in the country between the intervals of his professional portraiture and spending his evenings playing the violin—for he was devoted to music—either in his own home or in the houses of some of his friends.

In 1760 he was tempted to leave this simple life at Ipswich and moved to Bath, a fashionable centre to which everyone who was anyone in London society came sooner or later. From a professional point of view this move was the beginning of Gainsborough's fortune, for the fashionable world soon flocked to the studio of this "new man" who made his sitters look so august and distinguished; and the modest provincial, who had begun painting three-quarter lengths at five guineas apiece, now asked eight guineas, and was soon able to increase his figure to something nearer London prices. But while his fortune waxed, his happiness waned, and having now secured the entry into the fashionable world, Gainsborough began to pay attention to other ladies and so excite his wife's jealousy. His home life was no longer simple or happy, and as time went on his private troubles increased, for both Mrs. Gainsborough and his two daughters became subject to mental derangement. To the world, however, he continued to show a cheerful face, and his sprightly conversation and humour made Gainsborough a welcome favourite in all society.

In time the fame of the Bath painter spread to London, where Gainsborough occasionally exhibited at the Society of Artists, but though in 1768 he was chosen as one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy, he did not immediately leave Bath. He came there when he was thirty-three; and it was not till he was forty-seven that he was persuaded to move to London. In 1774 he took a part of Schomberg House in Pall Mall, and his success was immediate. "The King sent for him and Duchesses besieged his studio." Society was rent in twain, divided into a Reynolds faction and a Gainsborough faction, and under these circumstances it is not altogether surprising that Sir Joshua's jealousy did not allow him to be quite fair to his rival, whose power of securing a likeness he once formally denied.

Many stories are told of the rivalry between the two painters, and they have mostly increased with the telling in the course of years. As an example of the growth of legends, we may cite the widely circulated story that Reynolds at an Academy banquet once proposed the health of "Mr. Gainsborough, the greatest landscape-painter of the day," whereupon Richard Wilson is said to have retorted, "Ay, and the greatest portrait-painter, too."

The original version of this incident is told by Thomas Wright in his *Life of Richard Wilson*, published in 1824, and here we learn that the dialogue took place, not at an Academy banquet, but at the Turk's Head in Gerrard Street, shortly after Gainsborough had arrived in London from Bath.

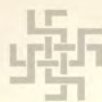


"THE MARKET CART," BY GAINSBOROUGH (1727-88)

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

This artist confessed once that he painted "portraits for money, landscapes for love." His delight in the simple happiness of country life is eloquently expressed in this masterly rendering of a typical scene in rural England.

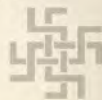


Meeting Richard Wilson there, Reynolds in a bantering spirit said, "Have you heard, sir, that our greatest landscape-painter has come to Town?"

"Nay, Sir Joshua," retorted Wilson, "you mean our greatest portrait-painter." Thus what was originally a piece of good-humoured chaff between two great artists has been twisted by inaccurate repetition into a display of maliciousness on both sides.

Nevertheless it must be admitted that there was a decided coolness between Reynolds and Gainsborough, and this was natural enough, for not only were the two men competitors for the patronage of Society, they were also temperamentally too far apart to understand one another completely. "With Reynolds," Sir Walter Armstrong has said, "deliberation counted for much; Gainsborough's good things are impromptus." The seriousness and slight pomposity of Reynolds could not mix easily with the free-and-easy gaiety of Gainsborough. To Gainsborough, Reynolds seemed something of a pedant; to Reynolds, Gainsborough appeared rather a frivolous person.

In his discourse to the Academy students in 1778, Reynolds observed that blue should not be massed together in a picture, whereupon Gainsborough proceeded subsequently to paint his famous "Blue Boy" and, by his brilliant success with the boy's blue dress, put Reynolds in the wrong. It is highly probable that the blues which figures so prominently in his beautiful portrait of "Mrs. Siddons" are another expression of Gainsborough's disapproval of Sir Joshua's dogmatic teaching. We have only to compare this Gainsborough portrait with Reynolds's painting of the same actress as "The Tragic Muse" to realise the difference between the two artists. Reynolds painted his picture in 1783, Gainsborough his in 1784, when Mrs. Siddons was twenty-eight; but, though actually a year younger, everyone will agree that the actress looks years older in Sir Joshua's picture. Reynolds emphasised the intellectual qualities of the great tragedienne, his endeavour was to show the sublimity of her mind; Gainsborough was content to show the charm and vivacity of her person, and that is why Mrs. Siddons looks younger in his portrait. Another temperamental difference between the two artists is shown in their hobbies; while Sir Joshua was interested in Literature and delighted in conversing with the learned, Gainsborough's ruling passion was Music. He was not only a good musician himself but was completely carried away by the playing of others. Once when a talented amateur, a Colonel Hamilton, was playing the violin at his house, Gainsborough called out, "Go on, go on, and I will give you the picture of 'The Boy at the Stile' which you have so often wished to buy of me." The Colonel "went on" and eventually returned home with the coveted picture as his reward. This love of music makes itself felt in Gainsborough's pictures, which are lyrical, the paintings of an artist who sings, while those



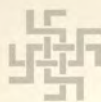


W. F. Mansell.

"PORTRAIT OF MRS. SIDDONS," BY GAINSBOROUGH

National Gallery, London

The most popular of all Gainsborough's portraits of women, this picture represents the celebrated actress, Sarah Kemble, afterwards Mrs. Siddons, in her prime. She was the daughter of an actor and the sister of John Philip Kemble. The painting was in the possession of the great actress till the day of her death, and Mrs. Jameson relates that once she found Mrs. Siddons, when she was seventy, seated beside this portrait, and "the likeness was still remarkable."



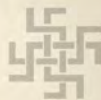


W. F. Mansell.

"MISS HAVERFIELD," BY GAINSBOROUGH

Wallace Collection, London

The most charming of all Gainsborough's portraits of children, this picture admirably illustrates the lightness of his touch. This little lady is as exquisite and fragile as the flower growing at her feet.



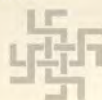
of Reynolds are more philosophical, the pictures of a man who thinks in paint.

Of all the English eighteenth-century portraitists Gainsborough is the lightest and airiest, and in freshness of colour and in gracefulness without affectation his portraits more than rival those of Reynolds. His "Miss Haverfield" is more of a little lady than any of Sir Joshua's children, and though her gentility may not be accounted a virtue, and while we must admit that Reynolds's "Age of Innocence" has more psychological profundity, yet we cannot find another portrait in the world which excels this Gainsborough in rendering the flower-like charm of childhood.

Though by his portraits Gainsborough acquired so considerable a fortune that he could afford to have country houses at Richmond and in Hampshire as well as his town house, his landscapes rarely found buyers, and remained "admired and unsold till they stood ranged in long lines from his hall to his painting-room." At his death his house was filled with his own landscapes. The end came with some suddenness. A pain in the neck, to which he had paid little attention, turned out to be due to a cancer, and when the physicians pronounced his case hopeless, he settled his affairs with composure and prepared to meet death. He was particularly anxious to be reconciled with Sir Joshua and begged him to visit him on his death-bed. When Reynolds came an affecting reconciliation took place: "We are all going to Heaven," said Gainsborough, "and Van Dyck is of the party." Thomas Gainsborough died on August 2, 1788, and by his own desire was buried as privately as possible in Kew Churchyard. Sir Joshua Reynolds was one of the pall-bearers, and in his presidential address to the Academy in the following year he paid an eloquent tribute to the memory of his former rival.

§ 2

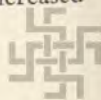
The third great English portrait-painter of the eighteenth century was George Romney, who never exhibited at the Royal Academy, and all his life was hostile to that institution and to its president, Sir Joshua Reynolds. Romney was born at Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire, in 1734, when Reynolds was a boy of eleven and Gainsborough a child of seven. He was one of eleven children, and his father was a man of many occupations—farmer, builder, cabinet-maker, and dealer—and little prosperous in anything he undertook. George Romney consequently had his education neglected: at eleven years old he was helping his father in the workshop, and there he displayed precocious ability in drawing portraits of the workmen and other people. When he was twenty he made the acquaintance of a vagabond artist named Christopher Steele, who journeyed from place to place making portraits, and in 1755 this man secured Romney as his pupil and took him



with him on his travels. In the following year Romney fell ill with a fever and was tenderly nursed by his landlady's daughter, a domestic servant named Mary Abbott, and being a highly-strung romantic youth Romney married this girl in the first burst of his gratitude, and later found her utterly unsuited to be his mate. Steele meanwhile had settled at York, and summoned Romney to join him there as soon as he was well enough, and since he was not earning enough to keep a wife, Mrs. Romney had to go back to service when her husband rejoined the man to whom he was apprenticed.

There was little good that Steele, a mediocre artist and a loose liver, could teach Romney, and their association was more profitable to the older than the younger man. After a year or two in bondage at York, Romney managed to purchase his freedom, and he then made a home for his wife at Kendal. With this town as his headquarters, he rambled about the Lake Country painting heads at two guineas each and small full-lengths at six guineas, till in 1762 he had at last managed to save a hundred pounds.

Romney was now twenty-eight, and he felt that if ever he was to make his fortune by his art he must seek it in London. So giving £70 to his wife, with the remaining £30 he came to the capital, where he at once competed for a prize offered by the Society of Arts for an historical picture on "The Death of Wolfe." Romney was at first awarded a prize of fifty guineas for his version of this theme, but later the judges reversed their verdict and awarded the fifty guineas to John Hamilton Mortimer (1741-79), a young friend of Richard Wilson and Reynolds, and gave Romney only a consolation prize of twenty-five guineas. Romney, not unnaturally, believed this reversal of the first judgment to be the result of favouritism, and to the end of his life he thought that it had been brought about by Reynolds, who had been actuated by fear of a rival. In 1766 Romney again gained a premium for his "Death of King Edward" from the Society of Arts, to which he was now admitted a member, and henceforward he exhibited regularly at the Society's exhibitions, but always held aloof from the Academy. In 1767 he paid a visit to his wife and two daughters at Kendal, and returning alone to London soon established himself in public favour, and in the early 'seventies he was making over a thousand a year by his profession. He thought the time had now come when he should visit Italy, and in March 1773 he set off for that country in the company of a brother artist, Ozias Humphrey (1742-1810), who afterwards became a famous miniature-painter. At Rome, Romney separated himself from his fellow traveller and led a hermit's life, shunning the society of his compatriots, and giving his whole time to work and study. In 1775 he made his way back to England via Venice and Parma, studying with advantage the work of Correggio in the latter city, and reaching London in the month of July. Greatly improved now in his colouring and confident in his increased





W. F. Mansell.

“THE PARSON’S DAUGHTER,” BY ROMNEY (1734–1802)

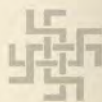
National Gallery, London

Known throughout the world by the title under which the picture was first exhibited, this pensive beauty, whose powdered auburn hair is bound up with green ribbon, is still an enigma whose identity has never been discovered. The charm of her person and the delicacy of the painting have combined to make this Romney’s masterpiece.

knowledge and power, Romney boldly took the house and studio of Francis Cotes, R.A. (1725-70), who had been one of the chief of the older portrait-painters, at 32 Cavendish Square, and there seriously entered into competition with Reynolds. Gainsborough, it will be remembered, did not come to London till 1779, so that Romney, though the younger man, was the first formidable rival that Reynolds had to endure. Charging fifteen guineas for a head life-size, Romney soon found himself surrounded by sitters, and Reynolds was alarmed at the way in which his practice for a time was diminished by the painter to whom he contemptuously referred as "the man in Cavendish Square." Later Romney had so many commissions that he was able to put up his prices, but even so he received only about eighty guineas for the full-length portraits which now fetch many thousands of pounds when they are sold by auction at Christie's. When Reynolds died he left a fortune of £80,000 earned by his brush, and though Romney was not successful to this extent he made a good living, his income in the year 1785 being £3635.

But Romney was never a mere money-grubber, and when at the age of forty-eight he first met his most famous sitter, the dazzlingly beautiful Emma Lyon, known to history as Lady Hamilton, he was so fascinated by her extraordinary personality, that time after time he refused all kinds of wealthy sitters in order that he might continue uninterruptedly to paint the lovely Emma. In 1782 the future Lady Hamilton was a mere girl of twenty or twenty-one, living under the protection of Charles Greville, who four years later—when he was in money difficulties—heartlessly handed her over to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, who treated her more kindly and honourably. For five years Romney painted this fascinating creature continually in a variety of characters, and though gossip soon busied itself making scandal out of their relations, there is no evidence that the painter's affection for her was anything but platonic. Of his many paintings of her we reproduce one of the most charming, the "Lady Hamilton" in the National Portrait Gallery.

In the art of George Romney there is a peculiar feminine quality which gives an extraordinary winsomeness, almost a pathos, to his paintings of frail women. There is a paternal tenderness rather than the passion of a lover in his paintings of Emma Hamilton and of another famous beauty, Mrs. Robinson, known as "Perdita." Romney's beautiful portrait of the last in the Wallace Collection was done while this gifted actress was under the protection of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. But that royal rascal soon tired of her, and at the age of twenty-four she had already been abandoned by "the first gentleman in Europe." When he sent her away the Prince gave her a bond for £20,000; but he never paid it, and "Perdita" Robinson died in 1800, poor and paralysed.

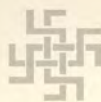




W. F. Mansell.

"LADY HAMILTON," BY ROMNEY
National Gallery, London

For nearly five years Romney neglected wealthy sitters in order that he might devote himself without interruption to portraying, in various guises, the inexhaustible fascination of the wonderful woman known to history as "Nelson's enchantress."



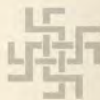
Nobody has yet discovered who was the original of Romney's most famous masterpiece, "The Parson's Daughter," but we may imagine that this beautiful creature, with a gentle melancholy behind her smile, was also one of the frail sisterhood to which both Lady Hamilton and Mrs. Robinson belonged. The extraordinary sweetness and simplicity of Romney's portraiture of women has the same tender reverence for the sex that we find in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, and the peculiar winningness of Romney is perhaps best described by placing him as the Goldsmith of English painting.

Though he never brought his wife and family to London—where it is probable that they would have felt ill at ease in a sphere to which they were not accustomed—Romney supported them in comfort, and when after years of hard work in London his health broke down, he went back to his wife at Kendal. She received him without reproaches, and under her affectionate care the tired, worn-out genius "sank gently into second childhood and the grave." He died at Kendal on November 15, 1802.

§ 3

The greatest portrait-painter that Scotland has ever produced, Sir Henry Raeburn, R.A., belonged to a younger generation than any of the artists whose lives we have so far recounted. Raeburn was born at Stockbridge, a suburb of Edinburgh, on March 4, 1756, and so was thirty-three years younger than Reynolds, twenty-nine years younger than Gainsborough, and twenty-two years younger than Romney. His father, a well-to-do manufacturer, died when young Henry was six, and his elder brother then looked after him, had him educated at Heriot's School—where he showed his leaning by making caricatures of his masters and school-fellows—and apprenticed him at the age of fifteen to an Edinburgh goldsmith. There he also began to paint miniatures, and these gradually attracted attention till Raeburn broadened out into oil portraits and landscapes.

Like Gainsborough, he loved to ramble about the countryside sketching, and in one of his open-air sketches he introduced the figure of a charming young lady whom he had seen crossing the meadow. Some time later this young lady presented herself at Raeburn's studio to have her portrait painted. She was the widow of a wealthy Frenchman, Count Leslie, but herself a Scottish girl, her maiden name having been Ann Edgar. During their sittings the artist and his model fell deeply in love with each other; there was no one to hinder their union, so they were quickly married, and at the age of twenty-two young Raeburn found himself the possessor of a charming wife, a fine house at Edinburgh, and a comfortable income which made "pot-boiling" unnecessary.





W. F. Mansell.

"MRS. MARY ROBINSON," BY ROMNEY

Wallace Collection, London

Famous as "Perdita," this beautiful actress was at one time loved by the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV, but though a reigning beauty in her day her vogue did not last, and she died in 1800 poor and paralysed.

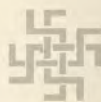


Under these happy circumstances he rapidly came to the front as a portrait-painter. About 1785 he visited London and called on Sir Joshua Reynolds, who, himself now almost an Old Master, showed the young artist every possible kindness and gave him much good advice. Reynolds urged him to visit Rome and "saturate" himself in Michael Angelo, generously offering to lend him money for the journey. This, however, Raeburn did not need, but he followed the advice of the veteran, and went to Rome, where he remained for nearly two years and greatly strengthened his art. In 1787 he returned to Edinburgh, and soon after, inheriting some property from his brother, he built himself the splendid studio and picture gallery in York Place, which still stands and is known as "Raeburn House."

From this time on till the day of his death in 1823, the career of Raeburn, was an unbroken sequence of happiness and success. Acting, it is said, on the advice of Lawrence, he wisely preferred to be the best painter in Edinburgh rather than one of several good painters in London. But though he never resided in England, he exhibited regularly at the Academy from 1792 to the year of his death; he was elected an Associate in 1812 and made a full Academician three years later. He was knighted when George IV visited Edinburgh in 1822 and soon afterwards appointed His Majesty's Limner for Scotland.

Raeburn was probably wise to remain in Scotland, for it is by no means certain that the rugged truthfulness which was the chief characteristic of his portraiture would have pleased London society. He was the most vigorous of all the eighteenth-century British portrait-painters, and none of them succeeded so well as he did in setting on canvas the splendid figure of a man. Though he has left us many noble and dignified paintings of women, Raeburn is held to have excelled himself in male portraiture, and his masterpiece, "Sir John Sinclair," can hold its own for vitality, solidity, and dignity with any painted man in existence.

Raeburn was one of the most methodical and industrious of all the world's great portrait-painters. He rose at seven, breakfasted at eight, entered his studio at nine, and worked there till five in the afternoon. It is said that he spent more time looking at his sitters than in painting them, for he would search the countenance before him till he had penetrated to the character of the person, and then beginning with forehead, chin, nose, and mouth, he would paint away rapidly, never making any preliminary drawing, and never using a mahl-stick to support his brush. His method was free and vigorous, and the results he obtained by it preserved the freedom and vigour of his process.

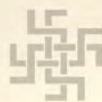




T. & R. Annan.

"SIR JOHN SINCLAIR," BY RAE BURN (1756-1823)

This Highland Chieftain in the tartan of his clan is one of the most superb male portraits ever painted. In truth, distinction, and dignity without haughtiness, Raeburn's masterpiece surpasses the elegance of Van Dyck and rivals the supreme achievements of Velazquez.

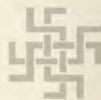


§ 4

Within the space of this OUTLINE it is not possible to enumerate all the talented painters who made England during the eighteenth century the most prolific country in Europe for the production of notable works of art. The wealth of the country and the patronage extended to art by the Court and Society brought painters from all over the world to London, and in addition to the native-born artists many foreign painters settled in London, among them being the two American historical painters, John Singleton Copley (1737-1815) and Benjamin West (1738-1820), who succeeded Reynolds as President of the Royal Academy.

In portraiture, however, the true heir of Reynolds was John Hoppner (1758-1810), who, though born at Whitechapel, was from childhood brought in touch with the high personages he was afterwards to paint. His mother was employed at Court, and his father—though there is some mystery about his birth—is said to have been a surgeon. George III was certainly interested in the boy when he was a chorister at the Chapel Royal, and perceiving his aptitude for art he made the lad a small allowance, and in 1765 got him admitted as a student to the Academy schools. There Hoppner gained the gold medal in 1782, and later when he settled at 18 Charles Street, St. James's Square—close to Carlton House—he at once had the favour of the Court. He painted Mrs. Jordan for the Prince of Wales, and the three princesses for the King, and soon became the fashion. Though too much influenced by Reynolds to be considered a very original artist, and too hard as a rule in his colour and not strong enough in his drawing to be considered that great man's equal, Hoppner has nevertheless left us many charming portraits, among which "The Countess of Oxford" is usually considered to be his master-work. In this thoughtful head we see that Hoppner, like Reynolds, was also a scholar and a thinker, and he not only had great intelligence but the capacity to express his thoughts clearly and well. He was associated with Gifford of the *Quarterly Review*, to the first numbers of which he contributed some brilliant articles, which do credit to his powers of literary expression, to his artistic judgment, and to his goodness of heart, but, owing to his intimate relationship with this famous Whig periodical and its editor, he gradually lost the favour of the Court, which was given to the Tory party and its protégé, Thomas Lawrence.

Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), who succeeded West as President of the Royal Academy in 1820, had the romantic career of a child prodigy. His father was an innkeeper who, when young Thomas was three, kept the "Black Bear" at Devizes, where people of fashion used to stay on their



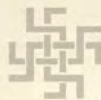


W. A. Mansell & Co.

"COUNTESS OF OXFORD," BY HOPPNER (1758-1810)

National Gallery, London

Jane Elizabeth Scott, wife of the 5th Earl of Oxford, was a celebrated beauty who counted Lord Byron among her lovers. She was twenty-five when Hoppner painted this portrait.



way to and from Bath. Though the child got little education, he was wonderfully gifted and a lovely child in appearance. He was petted by his father's guests and entertained them by quaint recitations and by drawing their likenesses with a precocious skill which soon made the child at the "Black Bear" the talk of the Bath Road. He was allowed to copy pictures in the great houses in the neighbourhood before he was ten years old, and once he was taken to London to be exhibited as a phenomenon, for his father, a complete adventurer, lost no opportunity of making money out of his son. Finding his son likely to be more profitable than his innkeeping, the father settled at Bath, where the pretty boy opened a studio and drew heads in charcoal for a guinea apiece.

In 1785, when he was only sixteen, Lawrence began to paint in oils, and two years later his father thought it worth while to remove to London, and this youth of eighteen was given a studio at 4 Leicester Square, near the great Reynolds, upon whom he called, and who was exceedingly kind and encouraging. While continuing to keep his family by the pictures he painted for money, Lawrence was now able to study at the Academy schools. Prosperity increased as his talent matured, and soon after he had turned twenty he took a larger studio at 24 Old Bond Street; he was already the talk of the town and the darling of Society. As gracious and charming in his manners as he was in his art, royalty delighted to honour him, and in 1791 George III compelled the Academy to admit him as an Associate, though according to its rules twenty-five was the minimum age at which an Associate could be elected, and Lawrence had only just turned twenty-two. The King's will broke through the Academy's law, and when Reynolds died in the following year, Lawrence, at the age of twenty-three, was appointed the King's principal portrait-painter-in-ordinary.

The way was now open for his unbroken triumph. John Opie (1761-1807), the Cornish painter, whose art was much stronger and more robust, might have been a formidable rival had he not been too abrupt and caustic in his speech to please a public that liked to be flattered. It was Opie who, when asked once how he mixed his colours, made the famous reply, "With brains, sir."

Hoppner also had lost his chance by attaching himself to the wrong political party, so young Lawrence had it all his own way, and after being made a full R.A. when he was only twenty-five, on the death of Benjamin West in 1820 he was unanimously elected the new President. Five years before this he had been knighted, and during the interval between his knighthood and his Presidency he had visited the chief Courts of Europe and painted more crowned heads than any other English artist before or since. His prices were higher than those of any artist before him: for a head he received 200 guineas, for a full-length his usual terms were 600 to



W. F. Mansell.

"LADY BLESSINGTON," BY LAWRENCE, (1769-1830)

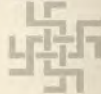
Wallace Collection, London

At the beginning of the last century the Countess of Blessington was famous for her beauty, her wit, and her Salon. The last was frequented by all the men of talent and all the men of fashion, including Count d'Orsay, celebrated as "the last of the dandies."

700 guineas, but for some portraits—like that of “Lady Gower and Child”—he received as much as 1500 guineas.

Like Reynolds, Lawrence never married, but he was engaged for a time to the daughter of Mrs. Siddons, and treated the poor girl so badly that a tragedy ensued. He was so notorious a flirt that when he was painting the portrait of Caroline of Brunswick he was required to draw up an affidavit as to the propriety of his conduct. Though popular and tremendously successful, the private life of Lawrence was not particularly happy; and though he made great sums he was often in financial difficulties owing to foolish purchases. He was constantly tempted to pay extravagant prices for paintings by Old Masters, and his numerous acquaintances—for he had few real friends—often took advantage of his kindness and generosity. His fame is lower to-day than it was in his lifetime, for there was an inherent weakness both in his art and in his character. The refinement of his drawing is still to be admired, but he had not the love of truth which distinguished his great predecessors, and beside their work the portraits of Lawrence are apt to appear artificial and insipid. He is seen at his best in his portrait of “Lady Blessington” in the Wallace Collection, and looking at this elegant portrait of an elegant woman we perceive the subtlety of what Campbell said about the artist. “Lawrence,” the poet remarked, “makes one seem to have got into a drawing-room in the mansions of the blest and to be looking at oneself in the mirrors.”

Another precocious child artist of the eighteenth century was the famous woman-painter, Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807). She was the daughter of a mediocre Swiss portrait-painter who settled in England, and when she was ten years old Angelica was executing portraits in crayons with the assurance of a professional. Owing to the sex prejudice which existed in her day, she was taken by her father to the Academy *in boy's clothes*, so that she might improve her drawing. When she was in her middle teens she accompanied her father to Milan, Florence, Rome, and Venice, and it was at the latter city in 1764 that she made the acquaintance of the wife of the English Ambassador, who took a great fancy to the clever young artist and brought her back with her to England. Thus introduced to England in 1765, she soon became a general favourite, the young Queen being particularly attracted by her scholarly mind and amiable personality. In 1769 she was nominated one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy. The same year she was unhappily deceived into a secret marriage with the valet of Count de Horn, who had passed himself off for his master. This scoundrel treated her badly, and she only managed to buy back her liberty by giving him £300 on condition that he took himself off to Germany and did not return to England. With the exception of this painful episode, the private life of Angelica Kauffmann was as happy and serene as her own

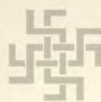




Anderson.

"PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST," (SELF) BY ANGELICA KAUFFMANN (1741-1807)

This artist, with the flower-painter Mary Moser, R.A. (1744-1827), was one of the two first women members of the Royal Academy. Speaking four languages fluently, skilled both in vocal and instrumental music, and amiable in disposition, she was as accomplished in her person as in her art.



pictures, and after the false count had died she married again in 1780. Her second husband was a Venetian painter, Antonio Zucchi, with whom, and with her father, she returned to Italy two years after her marriage, and finally settled in Rome, where, happy, popular, and universally esteemed, she lived twenty-five years till her death in 1807. "The Portrait of the Artist," which we reproduce, gives a good idea of the personal charm of Angelica Kauffmann as a young woman, and of the soft graciousness which distinguishes her painting.



XXIII

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ART

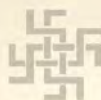
THE WORK OF DAVID, VIGÉE LEBRUN, GROS, INGRES, AND GOYA

§ 1

TO look at the calm and serene British portraits illustrated in the two previous chapters, it is difficult to realise that England was engaged in warfare almost continuously during the century in which they were painted. While Reynolds, Gainsborough, and their successors were building up the reputation of English art, statesmen, soldiers, and sailors were laying the foundations of the present British Empire, Wolfe in Canada, Clive in India, and Nelson on the high seas. We have seen how profusely art flowered in England while her empire abroad was expanding, and we must now turn our attention to the progress of art in that country which throughout the century was England's constant foe.

To appreciate the effect of the French Revolution on the painters of France, it is advisable to consider briefly the condition of artists in the eighteenth century. The French Academy, founded in 1648 for the advancement of art, had become a close body, exercising a pernicious tyranny. Artists who were neither members nor associates were not allowed to exhibit their works in public, and even Academicians were not supposed to show elsewhere: one of them, Serres by name, was actually expelled from the Academy because he had independently exhibited his picture "The Pest of Marseilles" for money. The only concession the Academy made to outsiders was to allow them once a year, on the day of the Fête Dieu, to hold an "Exhibition of Youth" in the Place Dauphine, which was open for only *two hours*.

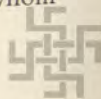
At the last Salon held under the old monarchy in 1789 only 350 pictures were exhibited: in 1791 the National Assembly decreed that an exhibition open to all artists, French and foreign, should be held in the Louvre, and the number of pictures shown was 794. In the year of the Terror (1793) the number of exhibits exceeded 1000: in 1795 the number of pictures shown increased to 3048. These figures tell their own story, and show that the first thing the French Revolution did for art was to give painters a fuller liberty to display their work to the public. Further, notwithstanding the exhausted



state of the finances, the Revolutionary Government encouraged artists by distributing annual prizes to a total value of 442,000 francs, and began the systematic organisation of public museums. On July 27, 1793, the Convention decreed that a museum should be opened in the Louvre, and that art treasures collected from the royal palaces, from monasteries, and from the houses of aristocrats who had fled the country should be placed there. At the same time a sum of 100,000 francs was voted for the further purchase of works of art.

While in some parts of the country an ignorant and savage mob ruthlessly destroyed many precious monuments, libraries, and art treasures, the leaders of the Revolution throughout showed a special solicitude not only for contemporary art but also for the monuments of the past. Yet while the Revolution did everything it could to foster contemporary art, and to preserve and popularise the best art of the past, it could not produce one really great master of painting or sculpture. Now, if ever, we might expect to find a realism and a rude, savage strength in art; yet the typical painting of the French revolutionary period is cold and correct, and its chief defect is its bloodlessness. While in England the taste, as we have seen, was all for a happy Romanticism in art, the taste of revolutionary France was for a stern Classicism. A nation aspiring to recover the lost virtues of antiquity was naturally disposed to find its ideal art in the antique, and just as politically its eye was on republican Rome rather than on Athens, so its Classicism in art was Roman rather than Greek. The man who gave a new direction to French painting was Jacques Louis David (1748-1825), a distant relative of Boucher. For a time he worked under that master, whose art in later years he cordially detested. Later he became the pupil of Vien (1716-1809), whom he accompanied to Rome when Vien was appointed director of the French Academy in that city. In Rome David became absorbed in the study of the antique, and began painting pictures of classical subjects, which were well received when exhibited in Paris. During the Revolution David became an enthusiastic supporter of Robespierre, and though he was in danger for a time after the fall of Robespierre, he escaped the perils at the end of the Terror by wisely devoting himself to art and eschewing politics. When the Directory created the Institute of France on the ruins of the old monarchical academies, David was appointed one of the two original members of the Fine Arts section and charged with the delicate mission of selecting the other members.

Henceforward David was omnipotent in French art. Like so many other revolutionaries, he was completely carried away by the genius of the First Consul, who seemed to him the right Cæsar for the new Romans. One morning, after Bonaparte had given him a sitting for a head, David spoke enthusiastically of the General to his pupils. "He is a man to whom



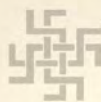


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"M. SÉRIZIAT," BY DAVID (1748-1825)

Louvre, Paris

We think of David as the painter of those semi-classical pictures in praise of the Empire under Napoleon, but his highly organised and technical art was capable of creating fine portraits as this striking picture proves.



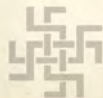


"MME. RÉCAMIER," BY DAVID

W. F. Mansell

The Louvre, Paris

Reputed to be the most brilliant conversationalist of her age, Mme. Récamier was famous for her "salons," which were attended by all the most eminent men of the Directory and First Empire. This refined and sympathetic portrait shows the most gracious and human side of a painter who was fanatical in his adoration of Greek and Roman art. Even the furniture in this picture is said to have been made from classical models designed by David.



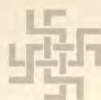
altars would have been erected in ancient times ; yes, my friends, Bonaparte is my hero." But the portrait of his hero was never completed, and only the head remains to-day, for Napoleon disliked long sittings and did not care for exact likenesses. What he demanded from an artist was a picture to rouse the admiration of the people, and to satisfy this demand David painted "Bonaparte crossing the Alps," "Napoleon distributing the Eagles to his Army," and similar pictures which, though correct and precise in drawing, seem cold, strained, and dull to-day.

The best works of David are not his official pictures, but some of his portraits, which have more force and life. The most celebrated of these portraits is his "Madame Récamier," now in the Louvre, though the painter himself did not regard it as more than an unfinished sketch which he once threatened to destroy. The sitter greatly displeased David by leaving him when the portrait was half finished and going to his pupil Gerard (1770-1837), who had suddenly become the fashion, to have another portrait of herself painted by him. A few years later Madame Récamier, tired of Gerard's flattering portraiture, came back to David and begged him to go on with his picture. "Madame," he replied, "artists are as capricious as women. Suffer me to keep your picture in the state where *we* left it."

After Waterloo and the restoration of the Bourbons, David, who had taken so prominent a part in the Revolution, was exiled from France in 1816, and not being allowed to go to Rome as he wished, he settled in Brussels, where he continued painting classical pictures, now chiefly of Greek subjects, till he died in 1825. Even in exile David was still regarded as the head of his school, and few painters of so moderate a talent have so profoundly influenced the art of Europe. He completely crushed for the time being the ideals of Watteau and his school and of Boucher—"cursed Boucher," "that Boucher of ridiculous memory"—as he called him ; and as a good republican he delighted other republicans by maintaining that the art of the last three Louis represented "the most complete decadence of taste and an epoch of corruption." To David and his pupils Europe owes that revival of classical subjects which was a feature of nineteenth-century painting in all north-western Europe, and France owes him in addition that tradition of fine drawing which has characterised her art for the last century.

§ 2

Most attractive of all the portraitists of this period is the woman artist Madame Elizabeth Louise Vigée Lebrun (1755-1842). Her father, a portrait-painter himself, died when she was only twelve years old, and his daughter carried on his practice almost at once, for when she was only fifteen she was already painting portraits with success and talent. While still young she



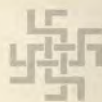
married Lebrun, a prosperous and enterprising picture-dealer, who managed her affairs well, and whose stock of Old Masters afforded the young artist many models which she studied with good results. In 1783 Vigée Lebrun was admitted to the French Academy, and during the last years of the French monarchy she was a favourite at Court and painted several portraits of Marie Antoinette and her children. In 1789, alarmed at the way things were going in France, she went to Italy, where she was received with enthusiasm and made a member of the Academies of Rome, Parma, and Bologna. Thence she went to Vienna, where she stayed three years, and subsequently visiting Prague, Dresden, Berlin, and St. Petersburg, she only returned to France in 1801. Thus she escaped the Revolution altogether and saw little of the Empire, for about the time of the Peace of Amiens she came to England, where she stayed three years, and then visited Holland and Switzerland, finally returning to France in 1809.

Entirely untouched by the Revolution and by the wave of Classicism which followed it, Mme. Vigée Lebrun was a cosmopolitan artist whose art belonged to no particular country, and whose style had more in common with English Romanticism than with the asceticism then in vogue in France. Among all her portraits none is more charming than the many she painted of herself, and of these the best known and most popular is the winning "Portrait of the Artist and her Daughter" at the Louvre. Though in time she belongs to the revolutionary era, Mme Lebrun is, as regards her art, a survival of the old aristocratic portrait-painters of monarchical France.

§ 3

How great was the influence of David on the painters of his generation is revealed by the tragic story of Antoine Jean Gros (1771-1835), who killed himself because he thought he was bringing disgrace on the tradition of his master. Gros entered David's studio in 1785, and though he was unsuccessful when he tried for the Prix de Rome in 1792, in the following year his master helped him to get a passport for Italy, and so Gros got as far as Genoa, where in 1796 he made the acquaintance of Josephine, afterwards Empress. Josephine carried him off to Milan and presented him to Bonaparte, who took a liking to the young man, attached him to his staff, and allowed him to paint that wonderful portrait, now in the Louvre, of "Napoleon at Arcole," which is the most haunting and poetic of all the many portraits of the Emperor.

Thenceforward the career of Gros was outwardly a series of triumphs. Owing to his experiences in Italy—where, in 1799, he was besieged with the French army at Genoa—he had a closer acquaintance with the realities of war than any of his artist contemporaries.



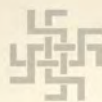


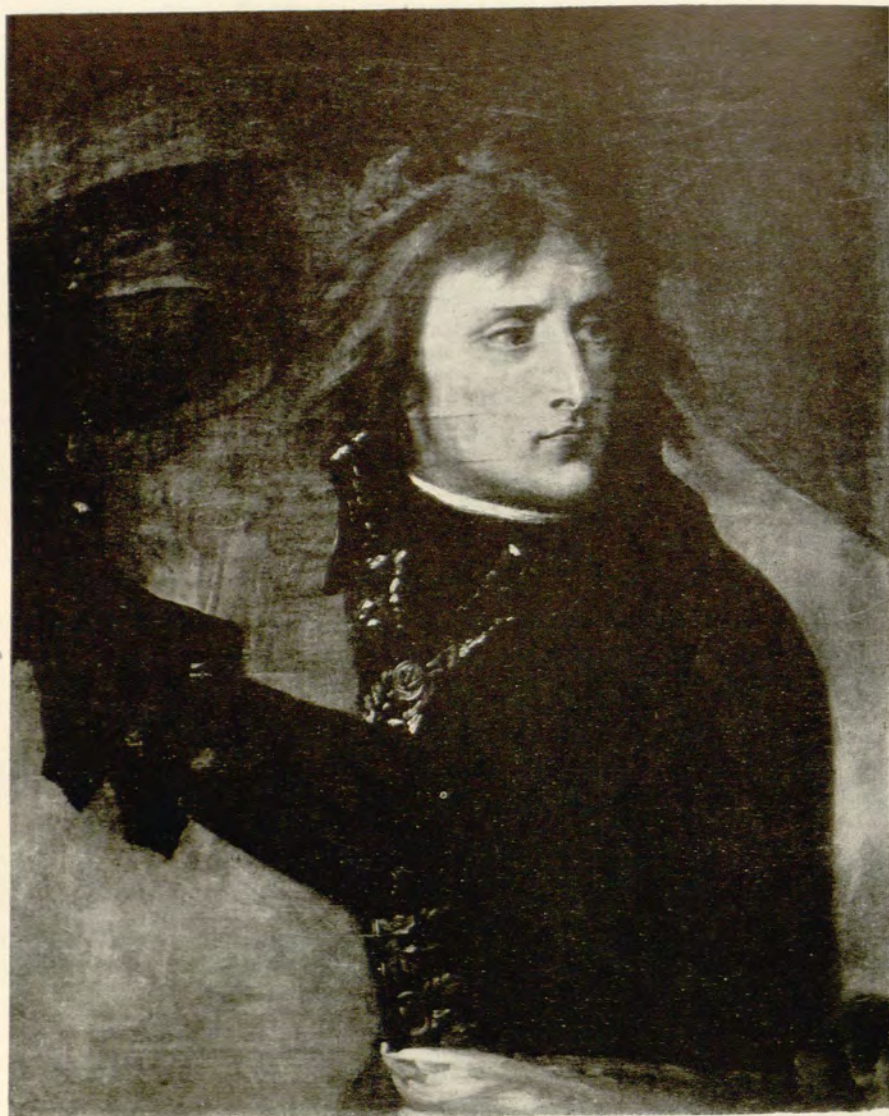
W. F. Mansell.

"THE ARTIST AND HER DAUGHTER," BY E. L. VIGÉE LEBRUN (1755-1842)

The Louvre, Paris

One of the first woman-painters to reach high distinction in her art, Mme. Elizabeth Louise Vigée Lebrun painted Queen Marie Antoinette in her youth and lived late into the nineteenth century. She married very young, and this charming portrait of herself and her daughter was painted shortly before the outbreak of the French Revolution.



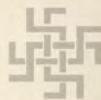


W. F. Mansell.

"BONAPARTE AT ARCOLE," BY BARON GROS (1771-1835)

The Louvre, Paris

A poetic portrait of the young Napoleon as he was at the beginning of his Italian campaign by an artist who finally committed suicide because he was unable to paint in accordance with his ideals.



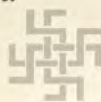
In Genoa and elsewhere Gros had made a particular study of the work of Rubens and Van Dyck, and in his canvases he now endeavoured to emulate the opulent colour of the Flemish School. Consequently his battle-pictures were so informed with knowledge and inspired by feeling and fine colour that they aroused high enthusiasm in Paris. When his picture "Les Pestiférés de Jaffa" was shown in the Salon of 1804, all the young artists of the day combined to hang a wreath on the frame in honour of the life, truth, and colour in the work of Gros.

Already there was a beginning of a reaction in Paris against the ascetic Classicism of David, and while Gros, as an old pupil of that master, still commanded the respect of the classicists, his spirited renderings of contemporary events pleased the younger generation who were later to give birth to the Romanticists. Thus, for a time, Gros pleased both camps in painting, and his position was unimpaired when Napoleon fell and the Bourbons were restored. In 1816 he was made a member of the Institute, he was commissioned to decorate the cupola of the Panthéon, and in 1824, on the completion of this work, he was created a Baron.

Meanwhile David, exiled in Brussels, was uneasy about the style of his former pupil, whom, on leaving Paris, he had left in charge of the Classical Movement. From Brussels he wrote constantly to Gros, begging him to cease painting "these futile subjects and circumstantial pictures" and to devote his talent to "fine historical pictures." By this David meant, not those paintings of the battles of Aboukir, Eylau, the Pyramids, etc., which were fine historical pictures, but paintings depicting some incident in the history of Greece or Rome. These alone, according to David, were the fit themes for a noble art, and he could not accept the rendering of events of his own times as true historical pictures. Unfortunately Gros, in his unbounded veneration for his old master, took David very seriously. He saw with alarm that the younger generation of painters were departing from the classical tradition and heading for Romanticism, and he blamed himself for leading them astray.

In the very year when he was made a Baron, his fellow-pupil, Girodet (1767-1824), died, and at the funeral of this follower of David, Gros lamented the loss of a great classic artist, saying: "For myself, not only have I not enough authority to direct the school, but I must accuse myself of being one of the first who set the bad example others have followed."

Conscience-stricken at falling away from his master's ideals, and particularly so when David died in the following year, Baron Gros now did violence to his own talent by forcing himself to paint subjects of which David would have approved. While the truth of his war pictures had shocked the Classic School, the artificiality of his new classical pictures roused the mocking laughter of the young and increasingly powerful Romantic School.



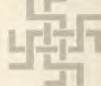
His "Hercules and Diomed" in the Salon of 1835 was openly sneered at; the younger critics treated him as a "dead man," till, wearied out and depressed by the disgrace and shame which he thought he had brought on the school of David, poor Baron Gros, on June 25, 1835, lay down on his face in three feet of water at Meudon, where on the following day two boatmen discovered his body.

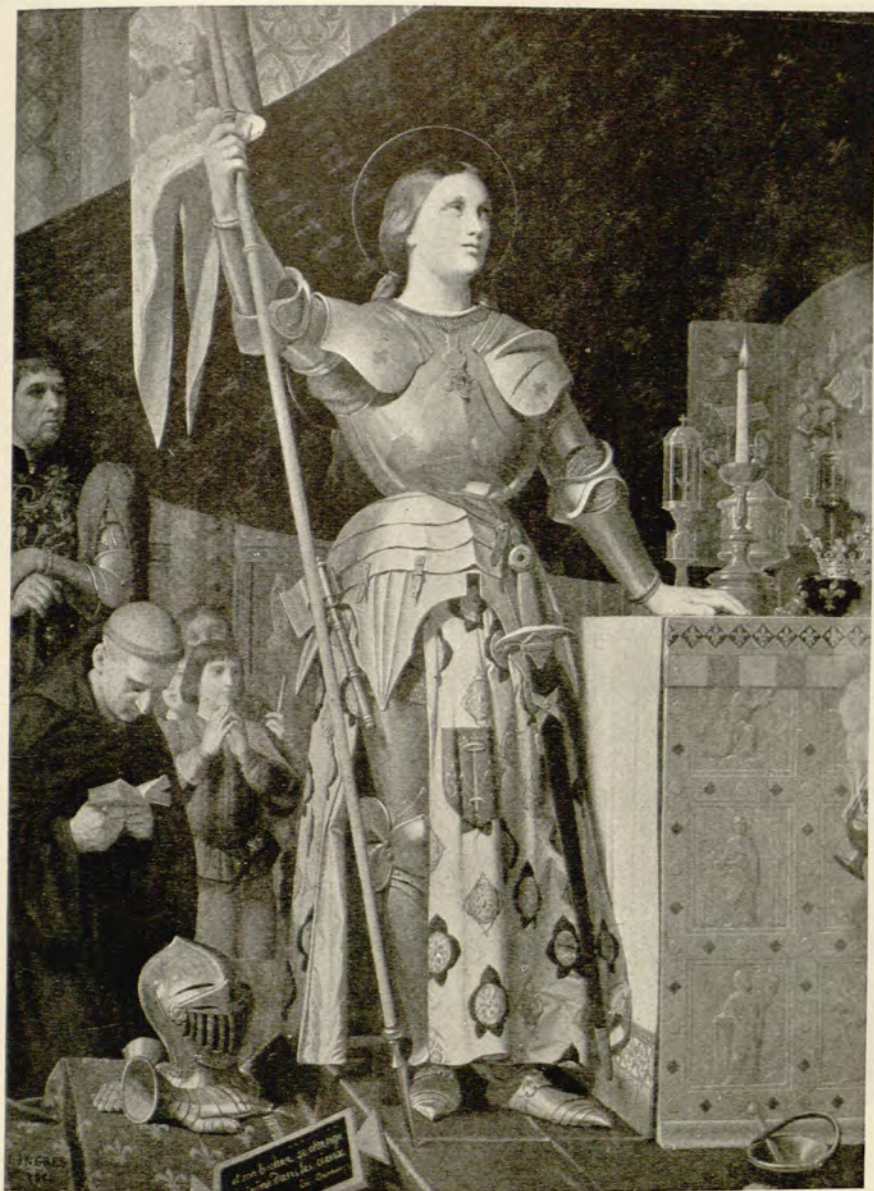
That leadership of the Classic School, for which Baron Gros both by his art and his temperament was utterly unfitted, was eventually assumed with honour and credit by his junior, Jean Dominique Auguste Ingres (1780-1867). A pupil of David and the winner of the Prix de Rome in 1801, Ingres was not at first regarded as a "safe" classic by the purists of that school. To these pedants, who worshipped hardly any art between the antique and Raphael, Ingres was suspicious because of his loudly proclaimed admiration of the Italian Primitives. On his way to Rome, Ingres had stopped at Pisa to study the frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli and his contemporaries in the Campo Santo. "We ought to copy these men on our knees," said the young enthusiast, and his words were repeated to David, who regarded them as ominous.

Though he gained the prize in 1801, Ingres was not sent to Rome till 1806, and then he remained in Italy for nearly eighteen years. These were years of quiet, fruitful labour, during which the artist, in his own words, was "drawing to learn and painting to live," and by living abroad he escaped all that contemporary drama of victories and disasters, of changes of dynasties and changes of opinion, that was going on during this period in his own country. Nevertheless, from Italy he sent pictures now and again to Paris, where they attracted attention in the Salons, though they were criticised by the followers of David. When he exhibited in 1819 his "Paolo and Francesca da Rimini," the work was pronounced to be "Gothic" in tendency, and in this small historical painting we can recognise the influence of the Primitives whom Ingres admired for the purity and precision of their drawing.

When Ingres returned to Paris in 1824 the battle between the Classicists and the Romanticists was in full swing, and with Girodet dead, David in exile and dying, and Gros incompetent, the former were glad to welcome the support of Ingres, and soon made him the chief of their party. Ingres was amazed and enchanted at his sudden popularity and the honours now thrust upon him. He was speedily elected to the Institute, and later was made a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour and a Senator. The full story of the war between the Classicists and Romanticists must be reserved for a later chapter, but it may be said at once that Ingres threw himself heart and soul into the championship of the classics by precept and example.

But where Ingres differed from his predecessor David was that with him it was the treatment rather than the subject which was all-important. A





W. F. Mansell.

"JOAN OF ARC AT REIMS," BY INGRES (1780-1867)

The Louvre, Paris

The faultless drawing in this picture admirably illustrates the point of view of the artist, who said
 "A thing well drawn is always well enough painted."



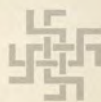


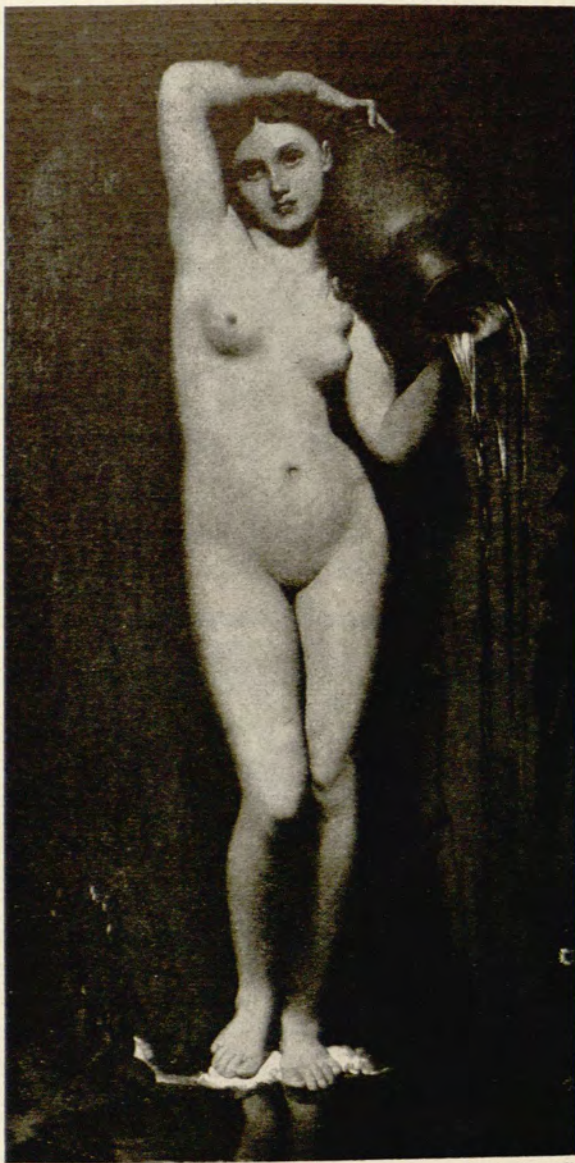
W. F. Mansell.

"PAOLO AND FRANCESCA DA RIMINI," BY INGRES

Chantilly

An early example of the painting of this master, showing the delicacy and precision of his line and the extent to which he was first influenced by the work of the Italian primitives. While Paolo is embracing Francesca, her husband, Malatesta, is seen in the background drawing his sword to slay his brother Paolo.



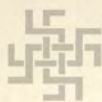


W. F. Mansell.

"LA SOURCE," BY INGRES

The Louvre, Paris

Begun as a study in 1824, this exquisite work, the painter's masterpiece, was taken up again in 1856 and completed when Ingres was seventy-six. It is unrivalled as a happy blending of truth to Nature with ideal beauty.



fanatic for drawing from the first, he held strong and peculiar views on colour. "A thing well drawn is always well enough painted," he said; and his own use of colour was merely to emphasise the drawing in his pictures. "Rubens and Van Dyck," he argued, "may please the eye, but they deceive it—they belong to a bad school of Colour, the School of Falsehood." From his early Roman days Ingres had shown himself to be a faultless draughtsman of the human figure, and his drawings and paintings of nudes are the works on which his fame most surely rests to-day. The most celebrated and perhaps the most beautiful of his works, "La Source," has an interesting history, for, though begun as a study in 1824, it was not till 1856, when the artist was seventy-six, that he turned it into a picture. One of the most precious gems of painting in the Louvre, this picture preserves the freshness of a young man's fancy, while it is executed with the knowledge of a lifetime. "It is a fragment of Nature, and it is a vision," is the comment of a great French critic on this picture.

If Ingres was the greatest artist the classical movement produced in France, yet he belongs too much to the nineteenth century to be considered a true product of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period. Indeed, the greatest Continental artist of that period was not a Frenchman, and it is to Spain that we must turn to find a man of outstanding genius whose protean art fully expresses the surging thoughts and feelings of this time of changes.

§ 4

The life-story of Goya is as full of storm and stress as that of his unhappy country, which between 1788 and 1815 saw more misery and more changes of government than any other country in battle-scarred Europe. Under the rule of Charles IV and his depraved consort, Queen Maria Louisa, Spain was in a miserable condition; its Court was a frivolous, shallow imitation of Versailles, and its monarchy and government were even more rotten and more corrupt than those of France under Louis XVI. A young lieutenant of the Guards, Manuel Godoy, was made Prime Minister because he was the Queen's favourite lover, and the King was a puppet in the hands of this Spanish Messalina. Public offices were openly sold to the highest bidder, and eighteen thousand priests drained the purse of the people and stifled their intellects. Art seemed dead and past the hope of revival till Goya came to Madrid.

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was born on March 30, 1746, that is to say, twelve years after Romney, and ten years before Raeburn. He was the son of a peasant in a village in Aragon, and legend relates that, like Giotto, he was found drawing sheep by an amateur who recognised the boy's talent and sent him in his fourteenth year as pupil to a painter in

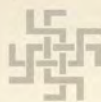


W. F. Mansell.

"DONA ISABEL CORBO DE PORCEL," BY GOYA (1746-1828)

National Gallery, London

Unrivalled as a satirist when painting people he disliked, Goya could also render marvellously, as we see here, the ethereal charm of a Spanish beauty of aristocratic lineage. At a time when all artistic Europe was in raptures over the "antique," Goya anchored his art to Nature and became the greatest painter of his age.



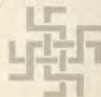
Saragossa. There the boy grew up strong, handsome, wild, and passionate, continually involved in love affairs and quarrels. In one of the last three men were left wounded and bleeding, and as a result of this midnight affray Goya had to leave the city hurriedly.

In 1766 he was in Madrid, and there his adventurous disposition soon got him into trouble. He was wounded in some love quarrel, placed under police supervision, and chafing at this restraint he escaped from the city with a band of bull-fighters and sailed to Italy. At the end of the 'sixties he was in Rome, where he appears to have been much more interested in the teeming life of the people than in the antiquities of the city. Here again his amorousness got him into trouble, for it is said that one night he made his way into a nunnery, was nearly captured, and only escaped the gallows by a headlong flight from the city.

In 1771 he returned to Saragossa and found shelter in a monastery, where he seems to have reformed his manner of living, for four years later this scapegrace adventurer, the hero of a hundred fights, reappeared in Madrid as a respectable citizen, married to the sister of Bayen, a painter of good standing. Through his brother-in-law he got to know people of a better class, and he was finally introduced to the Court and permitted to paint the portrait of Charles III.

Goya's pictures of this period reflect the manners of the Spanish Court, for pictures like "The Swing" and "Blind Man's Bluff" at Madrid are obviously imitations of Watteau and his school, as the Spanish Court imitated the artificiality of Versailles, only Goya, a cynic from his youth, does not give his figures the daintiness of the Frenchmen. With almost brutal realism he depicts the rouge on the women's cheeks and the pencilling of their eyebrows, and seems to take a delight in unmasking their falseness and dissipation. While he was intelligent enough to perceive the rottenness of Spanish society, Goya was no moralist himself and lived the life of his time. Countless stories are told of his relations with women of high society, and Goya is said to have been the terror of all their husbands. In this connection one inevitably thinks of his famous double picture at Madrid, "The Maja Nude" and "The Maja Clothed," the latter being an almost exact reproduction of the former with the garments added, and these are so filmy, so expressive of the limbs underneath, that the second picture has justly been said to reveal a woman "naked in spite of her dress." The story runs that the lady was the Duchess of Alva, and that when the Duke desired to see Goya's work, the painter hurriedly produced the clothed portrait and concealed the other.

When Charles IV came to the throne Goya became still more firmly established in Court favour, though he produced the most impudent portraits of royalty that have ever been painted. Nowhere can we find a more pitiless



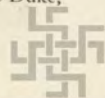


"THE MAJA NUDE," BY GOYA

The Prado, Madrid

Anderson.

This unconventional portrait of a Duchess, said to have had a weakness for the artist, is one of the most famous paintings of the nude. A companion picture exists in which the Duchess is shown in the same attitude, only clothed, and the story goes that this second picture was painted for the Duke, and the one illustrated for the artist's own pleasure.



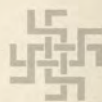


"CHARLES IV ON HORSEBACK," BY GOYA

The Prado, Madrid

Rischgiltz.

Uncompromisingly truthful even in the portrayal of Royalty, Goya shows the King of Spain, who was a puppet in the hands of his dissolute wife, as "a monument of serene and complacent stupidity."

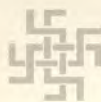


exposure of serene stupidity than his "Charles IV on Horseback." "He sits there, asthmatic and fat, upon his fat asthmatic horse . . . like a Moloch," says Muther, "an evil god who has battered upon the life-blood of his people." When he painted the Queen Maria Louisa, Goya portrayed her as the brazen old courtesan she was; he shows up the Crown Prince as a sly, spiteful, hypocritical meddler, and the favourite minister Godoy as a nin-compoop and a panderer. When the French novelist Gautier first saw Goya's large portrait group of the Spanish Royal Family and its favourites, his comment was, "A grocer's family who have won the big lottery prize"; and that is exactly the impression the picture gives us, a collection of stupid, ill-bred people who owe their fine clothes and position to no talent or merit of their own but to sheer luck. It is amazing that this daring satirist of royalty should have gone unpunished and unreprieved, but the King and his family circle were themselves too stupid to realise that the artist was holding them all up to the ridicule of the world.

As, while outwardly a courtier, he insidiously undermined the pretences of the Spanish monarchy, so while appearing to respect the observances of Catholicism, Goya surreptitiously attacked the Church which was blinding the eyes of the people. In 1797 he began to produce a series of engravings which, under the title of "Caprices," pretended to be nothing more than flights of fancy, but which were in reality biting satires on the social, political, and ecclesiastical conditions of his age. He drew devout women with rolling eyes worshipping a scarecrow, priests drawling out the Litany with obvious indifference, and in one fantastic plate—which he had the audacity to dedicate to the King!—he showed a corpse rising from the grave and writing with its dead finger the word *Nada*, i.e. "Nothingness." It was tantamount to saying that the hope of immortality held out to the people was only a blind to make them endure want and misery without murmuring, while kings and priests grew fat at their expense. If the Court and high ecclesiastics were too stupid to comprehend Goya's message, the people understood, for the revolutionary era was at hand.

A more subtle example of Goya's anti-clerical tendency is the little picture in the National Gallery, "The Bewitched," in which, while professing to do no more than paint a stage scene from a popular comedy of the time, the artist shows us a priest frightened by demons in forms of a goat and jackasses.

Like most of the intellectual men in Spain, Goya had at first welcomed the coming of Napoleon, for anything seemed to promise a hope of better things than the old regime. But, later, the piteous spectacle of his country in the throes of warfare seemed to rouse the patriot in him, and he began to champion its rights in a series of the most moving paintings and engravings. In 1810 he began to execute a series of engravings entitled



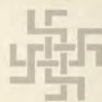


"THE BEWITCHED," BY GOYA

National Gallery, London

W. F. Mansell.

A priest, frightened by demons in the form of jackasses, hurriedly pours oil into a lamp held by a goat. In this painting of a scene from a comic play, the artist satirises the Spanish clergy of his time and hints his opinion of the value of the "light" they profess to throw on the unknown.

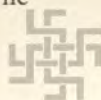


"The Disasters of War," which were absolutely a new thing in art. Hitherto artists, with few exceptions, had shown only the imposing side of war, its panoply and splendour, its daring and heroism. Goya was the first artist to make a deliberate and systematic impeachment of Militarism. Not only did he refuse to glorify the old adage that "it is sweet and decorous to die for one's country," but he persistently showed all the blood and misery with which military glory was bought. In his engravings of the war he shows the unchaining of the "human beast," and his prints of the torturing of prisoners and the shooting of deserters are ghastly in their revelation of raging madness and the distortions of death agonies.

In his paintings also Goya told the terrible story of the tragedies which ensued when the Spanish volunteers took up arms against Napoleon's soldiery. There is no more awful war picture in the world than Goya's painting of an incident in 1808, in which we see the gleam of the gun-barrels, and poor wretches who have been condemned by court-martial falling forward prone before the musket-fire of the troops. The despair of the condemned, and the cold-blooded energy of the executioners are appalling.

Yet while he lamented the sufferings of the patriots during the Peninsular War, Goya could not rejoice at the restoration of the Bourbons after the fall of Napoleon. For when King Ferdinand returned to Madrid in 1814, Goya saw that all hope of liberalism and freedom of thought had vanished, and that the powers of darkness, which for the time had been scared away, again settled on the land and obscured truth, progress, and enlightenment. The last "disaster of the war" was the resettlement of the Bourbons, who had "learnt nothing and forgotten nothing," on the throne of Spain, and Goya with his old fearlessness expressed his view of the matter in his engraving "The Death of Truth," in which he showed the naked figure of Truth suffering martyrdom at the hands of the priests.

We might expect that this outspoken work would have proved too much even for the most stupid, priest-ridden Court to swallow, but nothing that Goya could do ever brought home to royalty what the artist really thought of them and their government. King Ferdinand confirmed Goya's appointment as Court Painter, and even persuaded him to paint a portrait of him in the purple mantle of empire, but now the artist himself was too old and too sick at heart to play the hypocrite at Court and paint grandees with his tongue in his cheek. Gradually Goya withdrew from public life and established himself in a simple country house on the outskirts of Madrid. His wife and son were both dead; since 1791 he had himself been afflicted with deafness; and in this villa the lonely painter lived out his life in company with his art. His last protest against the tendencies of the time were some small paintings of the interiors of prisons and torture-chambers, in which he



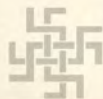


“A MILITARY EXECUTION IN 1808,” BY GOYA

Anderson.

The Prado, Madrid

From this tragic picture of the execution of Spanish volunteers by Napoleon's soldiery, Goya reveals his sympathy with the patriots and his horror at the brutality of warfare. Goya was the first artist to attack Militarism.



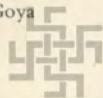


"THE BULL-FIGHT," BY GOYA

Accad. S. Fernando, Madrid

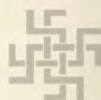
Anderson.

The artist who painted all conceivable aspects of Spanish life, could not ignore this national institution, and in his paintings of bull-fights Goya displays a professional knowledge of the sport which he gained in his youth, when he ran away once with a band of bull-fighters.



reminds us that the Inquisition had again raised its head under King Ferdinand. Among his last works were scenes of bull-fights, of the details of which Goya, in his youth, had acquired a professional knowledge. Greatly as all humanitarians must detest this horrid sport, its colour and movement appeal to the artistic sense, and the decorative aspect of the scene is the dominant note in Goya's renderings of the subject.

After nine years of this lonely life Goya seems to have felt himself no longer very secure in Spain. Perhaps he feared that the clerics would in the end perceive his purpose and have their revenge on him. At all events, in 1824 he sought and obtained leave of absence for six weeks to visit the sulphur springs of Plombières in Lorraine on account of his gout. But this appears to have been merely an excuse to get out of Spain, for he never went to Plombières, but after visiting Paris, settled at Bordeaux, where, on April 16, 1828, he died as the result of a stroke of apoplexy. In his last years he was not only stone deaf but half blind, and consequently his creative work in France was small, but one engraving remains to show that the old cynic never swerved from his faith and still had hope for the future. "Lux ex tenebris" is the pregnant title of this work of his old age, and in it he shows us a shaft of light falling on a dark spot of earth (Spain ?) and scaring away from it owls, ravens—and priests !



THE RISE OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING

THE ART OF CLAUDE, GEORGE MORLAND, J. M. W. TURNER, GIRTIN,
DAVID COX, AND DE WINT

§ I

THE greatest difference between the art of the nineteenth and that of the preceding centuries is the increasing importance attached to natural scenery. The Old Masters were not altogether inattentive to inanimate Nature, but it did not occur to them that scenery alone could be a sufficient subject for a picture. In the East, as we shall see in a later chapter, Nature had always preoccupied the minds of the finest artists, and in China landscape was regarded as the highest branch of art ; but in Europe men thought otherwise, and it was only slowly that landscape crept forward from the background and gradually occupied the whole of the picture.

The artist who is usually considered to have been the father of modern landscape painting was a Frenchman, or rather a Lorrainer, Claude Gellée (1600-82), born near Mirecourt on the Moselle, who at an early age went to Rome, where he remained practically for the rest of his life. Claude's interest was entirely in Nature, and particularly in the illumination of Nature. He was the first artist who "set the sun in the heavens," and he devoted his whole attention to portraying the beauty of light ; but though his aerial effects are unequalled to this day, and though his pictures were approved and collected in his own day by the King of Spain, Pope Urban VIII, and by many influential Cardinals, yet the appreciation of pure landscape was so limited then that Claude rarely dared to leave figures out of his pictures, and was obliged to choose subjects which were not simply landscapes but ostensibly story pictures which gave him an excuse for painting landscapes.

Nobody to-day pays very much attention to the little figures in Claude's "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca" at the National Gallery. We are not disposed to ask which is Isaac and which Rebecca, or to try to discover what all these figures are doing, because to us the beauty of the landscape is an all-sufficient reason for the picture's existence. Our whole attention is given to the beautiful painting of the trees and the lovely view that lies between them, to the golden glow of the sky, to the flat surface of the water





"THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBECCA," BY CLAUDE (1600-82)

National Gallery, London

W. F. Mansell.

When this picture was painted in 1648, the beauties of natural scenery were so slightly appreciated that it was politic for an artist to put in figures and pretend he was illustrating a story from the Bible even when, as here, his whole interest was in a lovely landscape.



with its reflected light, and to the exquisite gradations of the tones by which the master has conveyed to us the atmosphere of the scene and the vastness of the distance he depicts.

Similarly, in his "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba," we are at once conscious that the glorious rendering of the sun in the sky and of its rays on the rippled surface of the sea constitute the principal interest of the picture; this was what primarily interested the painter, and his buildings, shipping, and people are only so many accessories with which he frames and presents to us his noble vision of light. But to Claude's contemporaries these titles and the figures which justified them had far more importance than they have to us, and it was by professing to paint subjects which the taste of his day deemed elevating and ennobling that Claude was able to enjoy prosperity and paint the landscapes which are truly noble.

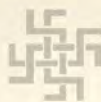
Another Frenchman, also a contemporary of Claude, Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), must be regarded as a pioneer of landscape painting, though he was also a figure painter of great ability who upheld the classic style of the antique in his Biblical and pagan figure subjects.

For the first years of his life he struggled on as a painter in Paris, but his eyes were fixed on Italy, and at the age of thirty he went to Rome and established himself on the Pincian Hill where already Claude was living.

His reputation as a painter of classical subjects spread rapidly, and in 1640 he was invited to return to Paris to decorate the great palace of the Louvre for Louis XIII. But he hated the Court life and intrigue, and although ostensibly he was a figure painter and thought of himself as such it was in reality the lovely Italian landscape which lured him back to Rome.

This second Roman period lasted for more than twenty years, and in it Poussin painted his greatest pictures. They were over-intellectual, for he was steeped in classical thought, and at first the classical and scriptural figures took the stage, large-scale against a background of golden scenery. Gradually, however, those backgrounds became the important thing, and the classical landscape style evolved as the now small-scale figures took a minor place in surroundings of compelling and placid beauty. The "Diogenes" of the Louvre with its Tiber landscape, or "The Deluge" with its dramatic harmony between man and nature stand out among these.

In the National Gallery we have his "Nativity" which yields some idea of his powers as a landscape artist. He himself did not believe in pure landscape for he stated: "Without action drawing and colour fail to influence the mind." Nevertheless we turn away from his highly organised classical figure subjects finding them cold and unfeeling. Rather we look at the wonderful construction of the landscapes of the Campagna or of the mountains of Alba behind his dramatically posed figures. It was the



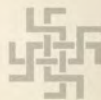


"NATIVITY," BY NICHOLAS POUSSIN (1594-1665)

National Gallery.

National Gallery, London

The immediate claim of any picture by Nicholas Poussin lies in its majestic composition. His classic style (which causes him here to lay the scene of the Nativity not in a manger but amid classical architecture) finds expression in the noble scale of the figures and the highly conscious rhythms and balance of the picture.



solidity of their construction which caused Cézanne to say that the modern landscape artist should aim at " Poussin painted from nature " ; for Cézanne, turning away from the insubstantiality of the Impressionists of his own day, found in the old Franco-Roman painter, with his brown trees and his sense of the gravity of the solid earth, a model for his ideals.

Poussin, having no son, adopted his wife's younger brother, Gaspar Dughet (1613-75) who took the name of Gaspar Poussin and continued to explore the avenue which his benefactor and master had opened. He became an excellent landscape painter as his work " Abraham and Isaac " in the National Gallery testifies. He saw nature with a fresher vision than did Nicholas, saw trees as green, and noted the changing clouds. With Claude he brought to something like perfection this balanced designing of landscape, framing far vistas in foreground trees. He, too, believed he was concerned with human incident, but actually landscape was playing an even greater part than it did with the elder Poussin.

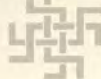
This group of artists rightfully find their place at the beginning of this chapter upon the rise of landscape art in Britain because in the eighteenth century when that art emerged their painting was held to be the correct method by connoisseurs and artists alike. Their serene golden Italian skies, the balanced foreground trees, the carefully arranged distance of river and mountains, the ancient classical buildings, the small-scale figures : these things constituted an ideal landscape—and a saleable one.

We have already seen how Richard Wilson endeavoured to popularise landscape-painting in England, and it will have been noted that so long as he also pretended to paint classical subjects, as in his " Niobe," he had a moderate measure of success ; but when he painted pure landscape, as in " The Thames near Twickenham," the taste of his day could not follow him, and his finest work was ignored and went begging.

§ 2

According to a great historian, Dr. S. R. Gardiner, much of the best literature of the early nineteenth century was inspired by the " better side " of the French Revolution, " its preference of the natural to the artificial, and of the humble to the exalted." This same preference is clearly visible in the art of George Morland (1763-1804).

Morland, who was born in London on June 26, 1763, was the son and the grandson of artists. His father, Henry Robert Morland (1730-97), discovered his son's talent at an early age, and proceeded to force it with unparalleled avarice and tyranny, so that his unfortunate son had no life at all outside the garret in which he was kept earning money for the needy household. George Morland began drawing when he was three ; at the age



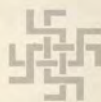


W. F. Mansell.

"THE ALEHOUSE DOOR," BY GEORGE MORLAND (1763-1804)

National Gallery, London

A pioneer of democratic art, Morland painted the every-day life around him ; his boon companions were frequently his models. His rustic scenes, happy in their simple truth and fresh harmonious colour, have the charm and interest of authentic human documents.

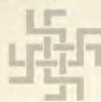


of ten he was exhibiting in the Royal Academy ; but while his hand and his eyes were trained to accomplish remarkable feats of painting, the rest of his education was absolutely neglected, so that he grew up empty-headed, with a great longing to escape the paternal tyranny and be able to enjoy himself.

Inevitably, when he did at last break away from his father, he plunged into dissipation, and divided his time between drinking and painting. In 1786 he married and pulled himself together for a time, but he was so fond of his liberty that he refused an offer from Romney of £300 a year for three years to be his assistant, and preferred to ramble about the country painting rustic scenes and spending too much time and money in alehouses.

For a little while, before his health was ruined by drink, he was in easy circumstances, for his paintings of domestic scenes and farm life were exceedingly popular, and he was better known to the people than any of his august contemporaries. All his principal works were engraved, and these coloured prints after Morland's pictures found their way into many humble homes. It is probable that his well-known painting at the National Gallery, "The Interior of a Stable," was painted about 1791, which would nearly coincide with the period of Morland's greatest prosperity. The stable is said to be that of the White Lion Inn at Paddington, where Morland once had as many as eight horses, but partly owing to his drinking habits and partly owing to his unbusinesslike methods his prosperity soon dwindled.

Notwithstanding his dissipation—and a day rarely passed in which he was not drunk—he was not idle, for Morland was the author of four thousand pictures and of a still greater number of drawings. But his intemperance and his dependence on dealers gradually impoverished his art, and the man who had a genuine love and understanding of country life, and ought to have been one of the world's greatest rustic painters, sank into "pot-boiling," painting what the dealers wanted instead of what he wanted to do himself. His terms were four guineas a day—and his drink ! Morland had got into the state when he "didn't care," though in his sober moments he must have seen the irony and impropriety of a man of his character painting Hogarthian moralities like "The Fruits of Early Industry," "The Effects of Extravagance and Idleness," and so forth. Indeed, these in his own day were Morland's most popular works, and though some of them show the degeneration of his drawing, and his carelessness in their "woolly" rendering of form, even to the end a little painting more carefully handled and jewel-like in colour will now and again show what a great painter he might have been. His last miserable years, 1800-4, were spent in a debtor's prison, yet even here, with a brandy-bottle always handy, he was still industrious, and for one dealer alone during this period he painted one hundred and



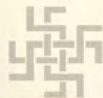


"INTERIOR OF A STABLE," BY GEORGE MORLAND

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

But for drink, which wrecked his career and brought about his death at the age of 41, Morland might have been one of the greatest of English painters. He was the author of 4000 pictures, but owing to his intemperance most of them are mere "pot-boilers," and few approach the excellence of this work, which shows what the artist might have done had he been industrious and sober.



ninety-two pictures. At the early age of forty-one George Morland died, completely wrecked, the victim of his own want of education and of roguish employers.

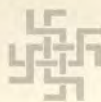
§ 3

The establishment of landscape in the popular estimation as a branch of art, equal to the highest achievements of portraiture or historical painting, was finally achieved by Turner, the greatest glory of British art. Joseph Mallord William Turner was born, appropriately enough, on Shakespeare's birthday, April 23, 1775 ; appropriately, because he was destined to become the Shakespeare of English painting. He was the son of a London hairdresser in humble circumstances, who lived and had his shop at 26 Maiden Lane, Covent Garden. As a boy he showed ability as a draughtsman and colourist, and his father exhibited some of the lad's drawings in his shop, where now and again they found a purchaser. One or two artists who went to the elder Turner to be shaved noticed his son's drawings, and urged the father to give his son a proper artistic training. So at the age of eleven young Turner was sent to the Soho Academy and had lessons from Thomas Malton, who grounded him well in perspective, and also from Edward Dayes ; and in 1789, when he was fourteen, he was admitted to the school of the Royal Academy.

Meanwhile he was managing to support himself by selling a few sketches now and then, by putting in backgrounds for architects who wanted nice drawings to show their clients, and by colouring prints for engravers. While tinting prints for John Raphael Smith (1752-1812), the mezzotinter, who made a fortune by engraving the work of Morland, Turner met the brilliant water-colourist, Girtin, with whom he made friends, and Girtin introduced him to the friendly house of Dr. Thomas Monro, at 8 Adelphi Terrace. Here the two young men and other students were welcome every evening, for Monro was an enthusiastic connoisseur who had a studio fitted up for his protégés to work in ; he gave them oyster suppers, a few shillings for pocket-money when they had nothing of their own, and free medical attendance if they became ill.

In 1797 Turner exhibited his first oil picture, a study of moonlight, at the Royal Academy, but most of the views he painted at this time were in water-colour. In 1792 he was commissioned to make a series of topographical drawings for a magazine, and this enabled him to make the first of those sketching tours which ever afterwards were a feature of his artistic life and to which we owe his enormous range of subject. In the following year he opened his own studio in Hand Court, Maiden Lane, where he exhibited and sold the drawings he had made on his tours.

Turner never had any difficulty in making a living, and we may account



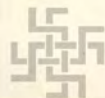


W. F. Mansell.

"CALAIS PIER," BY J. M. W. TURNER, (1775-1851)

National Gallery, London

This picture, painted in 1803, shows the English Packet arriving off Calais while French fishermen are preparing for sea. It is considered to be the first masterpiece of Turner's early style, and reveals the artist's power of painting *weather* when he was still in his twenties.



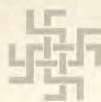
for his success where so many other landscape artists had failed by the fact that he established his reputation in water-colour before he proceeded to oils. From the time of Richard Wilson there had always been a demand for topographical drawings in water-colours, and Wilson's contemporary, Paul Sandby, R.A. (1725-1809), the "father of water-colour art," was one of the first to popularise landscape by going about the country and sketching gentlemen's mansions and parks. Landowners were pleased to purchase his and other artists' water-colours of views on their estates, and their pride in their own property was gradually converted by these artists into a real appreciation of the beauties of Nature.

At Dr. Monro's house Turner met John Robert Cozens (1752-99), a most poetic painter in water-colours and the son of a water-colour artist, Alexander Cozens, who died in 1786; and while Turner owed most to his diligent study of Nature, he always owned his obligation to Cozens, who was indeed his immediate predecessor in water-colour and the first to produce those atmospheric effects which Turner rivalled and excelled.

In 1799, at the age of twenty-four, Turner was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and henceforward, surer of himself and his public, he eschewed the merely topographical imitation of landscape for a nobler art. He looked beyond the mere details to a larger treatment of Nature, seizing all the poetry of sunshine, and the mists of morn and eve, with the grandeur of storm and the glow of sunset. In feeling his way to this period of his first style Turner looked not only to Nature but also to the example of his great predecessors, Claude, Richard Wilson, and the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century. The influence of the Dutch School, and particularly of Van de Velde, is apparent in many of these early works, even in "Calais Pier," which, painted in 1803, was held by Ruskin to be "the first which bears the sign manual and sign mental of Turner's colossal power." Already, however, Turner had improved on Van de Velde, who was never able to interpret weather so truly and vigorously as it is painted in the rolling sea and windy sky of this stimulating sea-piece.

The year before this picture was painted, Turner was elected R.A. (1802), and during the succeeding years he spent much time in travelling, visiting France, Switzerland, Italy, and the Rhine, and producing innumerable water-colours, as well as some of his finest oil-paintings.

That splendour of the sky, which was to be the peculiar glory of Turner, is first indicated in his "Sun rising through Vapour," painted in 1807, and it was possibly because this was the first picture in which he was able to obtain the effect after which he strove most earnestly that he was so attached to this picture. He sold it, but twenty years later, at the De Tabley sale of 1827, he bought it back for £514 10s. in order that he might bequeath this to the nation, together with his "Dido Building Carthage" on condition





W. F. Mansell.

“THE EMBARKATION OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA,” BY CLAUDE

National Gallery, London

One of the earliest and one of the grandest endeavours to paint the actual source of light, this picture has for two centuries been an inspiration to landscape painters by the beauty of its sky and the sunlight shining on the water.



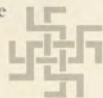


"DIDO BUILDING CARTHAGE," BY J. M. W. TURNER

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

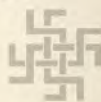
The artist loved this picture (painted in 1815) so much that he once declared his wish to have it wrapped round his dead body and buried with him. He changed his mind, however, and bequeathed it to the nation, directing that it should always be hung beside Claude's masterpiece (see opposite page) as a perpetual challenge.



they should be hung in perpetuity beside Claude's "Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca" and "Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba." Conscious of his own powers and confident in the verdict of posterity, Turner was jealous of other painters' fame, and he was enraged at the way in which English connoisseurs extolled the pictures of Claude while they neglected his own works.

The pictures already mentioned, together with the lovely "Crossing the Brook," a view near Weir Head, Tamar, looking towards Plymouth and Mount Edgcumbe, also painted in 1815, may be regarded as the chief masterpieces in oils of Turner's first period. After 1820 a great change was manifest in his manner of painting. In the early paintings dark predominated, with a very limited portion of light, and he painted solidly throughout with a vigorous and full brush; but his later works are based on a light ground with a small proportion of dark, and using opaque touches of the purest orange, blue, purple, and other powerful colours, Turner obtained infinitely delicate gradations which produced a splendid and harmonious effect. This new manner is first seen in his "Bay of Baia," painted in 1823, and six years later, in 1829, it is revealed in all its glory in one of Turner's most beautiful and poetical works, "Ulysses Deriding Polyphemus," in which, as Redgrave has said, "while in no way gaudy, it seems impossible to surpass the power of colour which he has attained, or the terrible beauty in which he has clothed his poetic conception." In this glorious picture, "a work almost without a parallel in art," the nominal subject has little more power over us to-day than it had in Claude's works. Turner's painting attracts us primarily, not as an illustration to a familiar story from Homer, but as a glowing piece of colour, a magnificently decorative transcription of a flaming sunrise. And with all this the picture is a "magic casement" through which our imagination looks out on a world of romance, for in this colour is all the intoxication of triumph, of final victory after perils escaped; and though Turner himself probably did not know it, and few who look upon his masterpiece are conscious of the fact, this picture subconsciously expresses the elation, the pride, and even the touch of insolence, that all England felt after her victorious issue from the Napoleonic wars.

As Turner altered his style of oil-painting, so also he revolutionised his practice in water-colour. Originally, in common with the older members of the Early English Water-colour School, Turner began a drawing by laying in the gradations of light and shade with grey or some other neutral tint, and afterwards represented the hue of each object by tinting it with colour; but this he found resulted in a certain heaviness of aspect. Accordingly, in his later water-colours he proceeded to treat the whole surface of his drawing as colour, using at once the pigments by which the scene might most properly be represented. By delicate hatchings he achieved wonderful qualities of



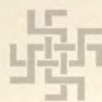


W. F. Mansell

"CROSSING THE BROOK," BY J. M. W. TURNER

National Gallery, London

Painted in 1815, this beautiful picture illustrates the second manner of Turner, and in its classical arrangement shows how he was influenced by Richard Wilson. The river seen in the middle distance is the Tamar, which divides Devonshire from Cornwall, and looking towards Plymouth and Mount Edgcumbe we see Calstock Church beyond Poulston Bridge. Thus, though idealised by the painter's imagination, the scene is founded on fact.



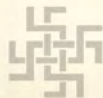


W. F. Mansell.

"THE FIGHTING *TÉMÉRAIRE* TOWED TO HER LAST BERTH," BY J. M. W. TURNER

National Gallery, London

The *Téméraire* fought at Trafalgar in 1805, and was broken up in 1838. With poetic imagination Turner visualises her last voyage, the old man-of-war looking almost ghostly in the silvery light of the moon, while the sun is setting on the tug that tows her home.

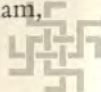


broken hues, air tints, and atmosphere, so that the view when finished glowed and sparkled with the brilliance of Nature's own colours. This method of putting on the colour direct, without any under-painting of the subject in light and shade, has been to a great extent the foundation of modern painting.

Determined to outshine his fellows, Turner had a habit, dreaded by other artists, of coming to the Academy on Varnishing Day armed with his paint-box, and putting a brilliant touch or two on his own canvas when necessary to heighten its effect if its brilliance happened to be in any way challenged by that of a neighbouring picture. The brightness of the yellows and reds in his "Fighting *Téméraire* being Towed to her Last Berth" is said to be due to after-touches put on to "kill" a highly coloured painting by Geddes which hung near it in the Academy of 1839. Towards another landscape painter Turner was merciless, but he had respect and kindly feeling for Sir Thomas Lawrence, and on one occasion he darkened a landscape of his with lamp-black because it injured the effect of pictures by Lawrence on either side.

As he grew older, and particularly after his visit to Venice in 1832, Turner became more and more ambitious of realising to the uttermost the fugitive radiances of dawn and sunset. Light, or rather the colour of light, became the objective of his painting, to the exclusion of almost everything else, and few of his contemporaries could follow him as he devoted his brush more and more to depicting the pageant of the heavens. His work when exhibited was severely criticised and held up to ridicule and mirth by Thackeray and other wits; he was regarded as a madman and accused, as other artists after him have been, of "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Even "The Fighting *Téméraire*," which seems to us so poetic to-day in its contrast of moonlight with sunlight, to match the contrast between the sailing-ship that was passing away and the steamer that heralded the future, even this work was deemed to be exaggerated and extravagant, and to most of the admirers of his earlier pictures paintings like "The Approach to Venice" were utterly incomprehensible.

Fortunately, Turner was now independent of patrons and could paint as he liked. During the earlier part of his career he had amassed a considerable fortune, a great part of which was derived from the engravings of his works, for he was a good business man, able to drive a close bargain with publishers, and clever enough to retain an interest in his works. He had commenced in 1808 the series of etchings known as the "*Liber Studiorum*," and the excellence of these plates—now of great rarity and value—had led to his employment as an illustrator, and his fame was greatly increased and extended by the beautiful work he did for books like Rogers' *Italy*, and *Poems, The Rivers of France, Southern Coast Scenery*, etc. He had a fine studio at what is now 23 Queen Anne Street, and he also owned a house at Twickenham.

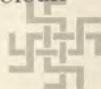


where he lived with his father, who had retired from business and made his home with his son from about 1807 till his death in 1829. Here, with his father and an old housekeeper, Turner led a retired life; but though habitually taciturn and reserved, he could be jovial at a convivial gathering of artists which he now and then attended.

In 1840, when Turner was sixty-five, he met a young man of twenty-one, fresh from Oxford, who, from the time he first saw the illustrations to Rogers' *Italy*, had worshipped the genius of Turner, and was destined to become his persistent and most eloquent champion. This was John Ruskin, who, in 1843—the year in which Turner painted “The Approach to Venice”—published the first volume of his *Modern Painters*, an epoch-making book, the real subject of which was the superiority of Turner to all painters past and present. Henceforward, however others might laugh at and ridicule his magical colour visions, Turner had an enthusiastic defender whose opinion yearly became more authoritative and more widely respected. It is no exaggeration to say that to the constant eulogy of Ruskin is due in no small measure the universal esteem in which Turner is held to-day.

Though he never married, Turner had a natural liking for a quiet domestic existence, and after his father's death he began to lead a double life. Under the assumed name of Booth he formed a connection with a woman who kept a house at 119 Cheyne Walk, where he had been accustomed occasionally to lodge, and “Puggy” or “Admiral” Booth became a well-known character in Chelsea, where he was reputed to be a retired mariner of eccentric disposition, fond of his glass, and never tired of watching the sun. On the roof of the house in Cheyne Walk there was a gallery, and here “Mr. Booth” would sit for hours at dawn and sunset. The secret of his double existence was not discovered till the day before his death, for he had been accustomed to absent himself from Queen Anne Street for long intervals and therefore was not missed. Suddenly those who knew him as Turner learnt that the great artist was lying dead in a little house at Chelsea, where his last illness had seized him, and where he died on December 19, 1851. The body was removed to the house in Queen Anne Street, and afterwards buried in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Turner left a fortune of £140,000, and after making a number of small annuities left the bulk of it for the benefit of art and artists; but his will, drawn by himself, was so vague and unskilfully framed that, after four years' litigation, a compromise was arranged on the advice of the Lord Chancellor. The Royal Academy received £20,000, which it set aside as the Turner Fund for the relief of poor artists not members of their body, and the National Gallery acquired the magnificent gift of 362 oil-paintings, 135 finished water-colours, 1757 studies in colour, and thousands of drawings and sketches. The task of sifting, arranging, and cataloguing the water-colours



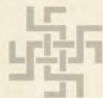


W. F. Mansell.

"ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS," BY J. M. W. TURNER

National Gallery, London

Never in the history of art had the flaming splendour of a sunrise been so gloriously depicted in vivid colours as when Turner painted this picture in 1829.





“RAIN, HAIL, AND STEAM,” BY J. M. W. TURNER

Copyright.

National Gallery, London

Turner's final period was one in which he was concerned only with colour and light. He found a subject in this early railway train rushing across a bridge in bad weather. The forms were lost in the wild rush of the elements and the steam from the engine. How far is such treatment removed from the topographical art of his first period, but how linked it is with the work of the French Impressionists who were to follow.



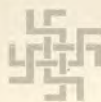
and sketches which Turner bequeathed to the nation was rightly placed in the sympathetic hands of his great advocate, John Ruskin.

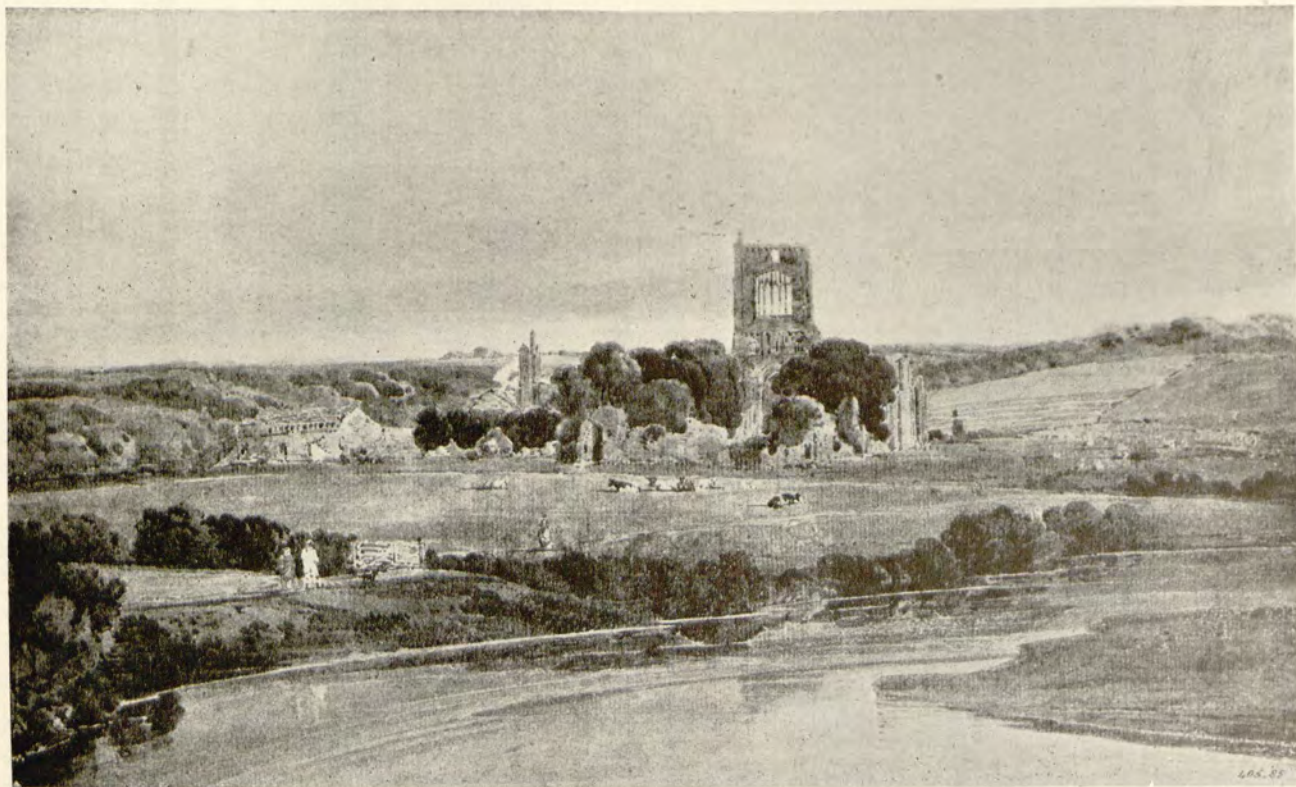
The life of Turner, as we have seen, was full of strangeness and contradictions, and it is possible he may have inherited some of his eccentricities from his mother, a woman of fierce temper, who eventually became insane. There was little correspondence between his art and his life, for, as E. V. Lucas has justly said: "Turner's works are marvels of loveliness and grandeur; Turner was grubby, miserly, jealous, and squalid in his tastes. He saw visions and glorified even what was already glorious; and he deliberately chose to live in houses thick with grime, and often to consort with inferior persons." The evidence before us compels us to believe that he was really happier as "Puggy Booth" with a few cronies in a Chelsea bar-parlour than as "the famous Mr. Turner" in the company of his patron, Lord Egremont, or in the hospitable mansion of Mr. Fawkes of Farnley Hall.

§ 4

Jealous as he was of other painters, there was one of his contemporaries for whose art Turner had nothing but admiration. "Had Girtin lived," he once said, "I should have starved," and he roundly admitted that painter's "White House in Chelsea" to be better than anything of his own up to that time. Thomas Girtin was born in 1773 at Southwark, where his father was a rope manufacturer, and, like Turner, he was for a time the pupil of Dayes. But for his short life—for he died in 1802 at the early age of twenty-seven—he would probably have rivalled Turner as a painter in oils, and though his career was cut short he lived long enough to make himself one of the greatest of our painters in water-colours. In this medium his style was bold and vigorous, and by suppressing irrelevant detail he gave a sense of grandeur to the scenes he depicted. His chief sketching-ground was the northern counties, and particularly their cathedral cities, and his favourite subjects were the ruins of our old abbeys and castles, and the hilly scenery of the north. The water-colour at South Kensington of "Kirkstall Abbey" is a fine example of his power to present his subject with truth and majesty.

A younger fellow-student with Turner and Girtin in the hospitable house of Dr. Monro was another artist who achieved fame chiefly as a painter in water-colours. This was Peter De Wint, born at Stone in Staffordshire in 1784. His father was a Dutch physician belonging to an old and respected Amsterdam family who settled in England. Peter, his fourth son, was originally intended for the medical profession, but was allowed to follow art, and placed with the engraver, John Raphael Smith, in 1802. Five years later he was admitted to the Royal Academy School, and the same year (1807) he exhibited at the Academy for the first time, sending three



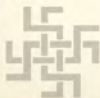


"KIRKSTALL ABBEY," BY GIRTIN (1773-1803)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

W. F. Mansell.

A masterly example of the water-colour art of this short-lived painter of whom Turner said, "Had Girtin lived, I should have starved."



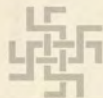


"THE TRENT, NEAR BURTON," BY DE WINT (1784-1849)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

W. F. Mansell.

Dutch by descent, though born in England, De Wint was at his best in painting flat stretches of river scenery under a placid luminous sky. This water-colour of a hayfield with a hay-barge on the river is a happy example of his rural idylls.



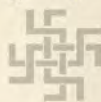
landscapes, and thereafter he exhibited there occasionally till 1828. But his reputation was principally made by the drawings he contributed to the Water-colour Society, of which he was elected as Associate in 1810 and was long one of the chief ornaments.

De Wint loved to paint direct from Nature, and was never so happy as when in the fields. His subjects are principally chosen in the eastern and northern counties, and though often tempted to extend his studies to the Continent, the love of England and English scenery was so strong that, except for one visit to Normandy, he never left these shores. He formed a style of his own, notable for the simplicity and breadth of his light and shade, and the fresh limpidity of his colour. He was a great purist in technique and objected to the use of Chinese white and body colour, which he thought tended to give a heavy effect to a drawing. He excelled in river scenes, and "The Trent near Burton" in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, is a beautiful example of his tender and faithful rendering of a typical English scene.

While De Wint excelled in painting the placid aspects of landscapes, his contemporary, David Cox, was at his best on a windy day or in stormy weather. Cox was the son of a blacksmith and was born at Deritend, a suburb of Birmingham, on April 29, 1783. During his school-days he had an accident and broke his leg, and this misfortune proved to be his good fortune, for having been given a box of colours with which to amuse himself while he was laid up, young David made such good use of the paints that his parents perceived the bent of his genius, and when he was well again apprenticed him to a painter. David Cox received his first tuition from an artist who painted miniatures for locketts, but when his master committed suicide young Cox went to the other extreme of painting, and at the age of seventeen he became an assistant scene-painter at the Birmingham Theatre. It is said that he even took a small part now and then at this theatre, which was then managed by the father of Macready.

From Birmingham David Cox went to London to paint scenery—at four shillings a square yard!—in the Surrey Theatre, varying this work with sepia drawings, which he sold to a dealer at two guineas a dozen for school copies. Meanwhile he made every endeavour to improve his art and took lessons from John Varley (1778–1842), an artist of refined accomplishment, who was one of the founders of the Water-colour Society in 1804. Varley, who had had his own struggles before he made a position for himself as one of the best water-colourists of his time, liked Cox so much and thought so highly of his talent that he would not allow the young man to pay him for his lessons.

Under Varley's tuition Cox rapidly improved his art and his circumstances; he was able to quit the theatre and earn money in his turn by giving



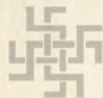


"A WINDY DAY," BY DAVID COX (1783-1859)

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

Among all the remarkable landscape artists of his day, David Cox was notable for the freedom of his handling and his vigorous rendering of weather. In this picture we can almost feel the wind that is blowing across the common in the face of the woman with her dog.

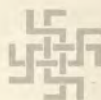


lessons, and in 1805 he made his first visit to Wales, where he discovered Bettws-y-Coed, ever after to be his Mecca. On his return he exhibited his Welsh water-colours, which attracted some attention, and in 1808 he married and settled down in a little house on Dulwich Common. Here he gave lessons to pupils and polished his own art by the diligent study of the surrounding scenery, learning to render the varied effects of Nature and the aspects of morning, noon, and twilight. In 1813 he was elected a member of the Water-colour Society and became one of the principal contributors to its exhibitions.

In 1829 he made a tour on the Continent, choosing his subjects on the coasts and in the market-places of Antwerp and Brussels, and the crowded bridges of Paris, but he liked best the scenery of his own country, particularly the mountainous country of Wales and Scotland, whose gloomy passes he painted with great effect and grandeur. He also painted many views of the Thames and of the country round London, but till he was past fifty he worked exclusively in water-colours.

In 1839, however, when he was fifty-six, Cox became acquainted with a young Bristol painter, William James Müller (1812-45), who had just returned from a long journey through Greece and Egypt. Müller was himself a very brilliant colourist and a skilful painter in oils; the man and his work made a deep impression on Cox, who studied Müller and watched him at work, and henceforward devoted himself more to oils than to water-colours. About 1841 Cox left London and settled at Greenfield House, Harborne, near Birmingham, and there, with an annual excursion of some weeks to his beloved Bettws-y-Coed, he lived till the day of his death on June 7, 1859. During these later years Cox gave himself chiefly to oil-painting; his best pictures were seldom seen in London during his own lifetime, and when shown were not generally appreciated. It was only after his death that his merit as an oil-painter became widely recognised.

Whether in oil or in water-colour the work of David Cox is distinguished by its light, its vigour, and its spaciousness. His picture "A Windy Day," also known as "Crossing the Common," is a happy example of the scene and weather he excelled in rendering.



NATURAL LANDSCAPE

THE ART OF CONSTABLE, BONINGTON, CROME, AND COTMAN

§ I

UNQUESTIONABLY the two greatest English painters of landscape, and probably the two greatest English painters of any kind, were Turner and Constable, who were born within a year of one another. Turner, as we saw in the last chapter, amassed a large fortune ; Constable, on the other hand, could hardly earn a bare living, and not until 1814, when the artist was thirty-eight, did he sell a picture to any but his own personal friends.

How was it that, from a worldly point of view, Constable failed where Turner succeeded ? The explanation is to be found in the totally different character of the landscapes painted by these two artists. Turner, as Claude had done before him, made frequent use of nominal subjects as an excuse for his pictures of Nature ; there was a dramatic element in his art which appealed to the popular imagination, and even when, as in many of his later works, people found difficulty in apprehending the elements of his style, they were insensibly affected by the splendour of his colour and brought to admit that these pictures, if difficult to understand, were paintings in the " grand style."

Constable never made use of fictitious subjects and titles as an excuse for painting landscapes. His works were wholly free from any dramatic or foreign interest, and following the example of the Dutch landscape painters of the seventeenth century, he whole-heartedly devoted himself to painting the simple, homely beauty of the scenery in his native land. He modestly confessed that he thought there was room for a " natural painter," and by this he meant a painter who would devote himself to painting as truly as he could the beauty of Nature without importing into his pictures any extraneous reference to Homeric legend or to events in the past or present.

His landscapes were long unappreciated because they appealed to a pure love of Nature which was not fully awake in the artist's lifetime. " My art," said Constable a little bitterly in his middle years, " flatters nobody by imitation, it courts nobody by smoothness, tickles nobody by petiteness, it



is without either fal-de-lal or fiddle-de-dee ; how can I then hope to be popular ? ”

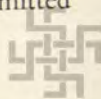
John Constable was born on June 11, 1776, nearly fourteen months, to be precise, after the birth of Turner. He was the son of a miller who owned watermills at Flatford and Dedham and two windmills at East Bergholt in Suffolk. It was at the mill house in East Bergholt that John Constable was born, and here he passed the greater part of his youth. His father wished him to enter the Church, but Constable had no inclination in this direction, and after he had finished his education in the local school, at the age of eighteen he assisted his father in the mill at East Bergholt which figures in so many of his landscapes.

Meanwhile his love of Nature and art was encouraged by a great amateur who happened to have his seat in the neighbouring county of Essex and was quick to recognise the talent of young Constable. Sir George Beaumont (1753-1827) was something of a painter himself, he had been a pupil of Richard Wilson ; and he was an enthusiastic patron of art and artists. He had peculiar ideas about colour, and his well-known saying that “ a good picture, like a good fiddle, should be brown,” was not helpful to a painter like Constable, who saw the lovely greens in Nature and painted them as he saw them ; but at this time Constable was a beginner, and the friendly encouragement and advice of Beaumont decided Constable’s career.

One of the best things about Sir George Beaumont, to whose zeal and generosity we owe in large measure the establishment of the National Gallery, was his unrelenting efforts to make England appreciate the genius of her own artists. As a young man he had waggishly shown up the ignorance of the public and its ridiculous passion for foreign artists by advertising in the newspapers that a wonderful German had arrived in Bond Street who could take likenesses by a new method of heating the mirror in which the sitter looked, and for ever fixing and preserving the reflection ! On the next day a crowd of fashionable folk flocked to Bond Street, only to be laughed at by the practical joker and his friends.

Sir George Beaumont not only encouraged young Constable to go on with his sketching, but lent him works which might serve as models for his practice. Among these were two water-colours by Thomas Girtin, which Constable always maintained set his feet firmly in the right road, and also Claude’s “ Landscape with the Angel appearing to Hagar,” a work Beaumont so loved that he took it about with him wherever he travelled. In 1826 he gave this with fifteen other pictures to the nation, but finding he could not live without it he asked for it back till his death, which occurred in the following year. This Claude is now in the National Gallery.

The opinion of this artist-baronet naturally carried weight with Constable’s father, and as a result of his influence John Constable was permitted



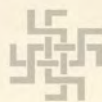


W. F. Mansell.

"BOAT-BUILDING NEAR FLATFORD MILL," BY JOHN CONSTABLE (1776-1837)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This peaceful scene, painted in 1815, is a perfect example of Constable's early style before he had acquired the vigour and freedom which distinguish his later works.

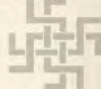


to go to London in 1795 to study art. Here he was encouraged by Joseph Farington, R.A. (1747-1821), who communicated to him some of the precepts he had himself derived from his master Richard Wilson, and in 1799 Constable, through Farington's influence, was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools. Although the first painting Constable exhibited at the Academy was a landscape, shown in 1802, he began his professional career as a portrait painter, which was then the only profitable branch of art. But after painting some portraits and altar-pieces for Brantham in 1804 and for Nayland in 1809, he came to devote himself more or less exclusively to landscape, which was the true bent of his genius. He felt he could paint his own places best, he delighted in the flats of Dedham, with its trees and slow river "escaping from milldams, over willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork"; and so he finally settled down as the painter of the rural scenery among which he had been born. In 1803 he had written, "I feel now, more than ever, a decided conviction that I shall some time or other make some good pictures; pictures that shall be valuable to posterity, if I do not reap the benefit of them."

These words were prophetic, and for some years almost the only patrons the young artist had were a kindly uncle and his friend Archdeacon Fisher, the nephew and chaplain of the Bishop of Salisbury. Had Constable been content to be a merely topographical artist as Farington and most of the older water-colourists were, he would probably have found it easier to sell his works and make a respectable income; but from the first it was his desire not merely to paint "portraits of places," but to give a true and full impression of Nature, to paint light, dews, breezes, bloom, and freshness. The multitude of his sketches—of which a fine collection may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington—show how earnestly and assiduously he studied Nature in all her aspects to attain this end, and though a love of Nature and of truth is discernible even in his earliest works, it was only gradually that Constable acquired the breadth and freedom which distinguish his later works.

If we compare even so beautiful an example of his early style as "Boat-building near Flatford Mill," painted in 1815, with "The Hay Wain," painted in 1821, we at once perceive the tremendous advance made by the artist in the intervening six years. It is not altogether without significance to note that the greatest strides forward in his art were made during the early years of his married life, and it may not unreasonably be surmised that the happiness of his private life and domestic contentment compensated Constable for public neglect and helped to give him increased confidence in his own powers.

It was in 1816 that he married Maria Bicknell, with whom he had been in love since 1811, and the correspondence between the two during these



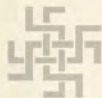


"THE HAY WAIN," BY JOHN CONSTABLE

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

Almost unnoticed when shown at the Academy in 1821, this picture created a sensation when it was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1824. Constable was awarded a Gold Medal, and his example led French artists to adopt a new and truer style of landscape painting.



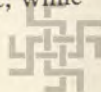
five years—several letters of which still exist—shows the simple nature of the writers and the complete trust each had in the other. The marriage was delayed owing to the long opposition of Constable's father, and eventually it took place against his wishes, but there was no serious breach between father and son, and neither Constable senior nor Mr. Bicknell, who was also very comfortably off, allowed the young couple to be in actual want. Two years before his marriage Constable had for the first time sold two landscapes to total strangers, but as yet he had no real success, and the young couple set up house modestly at 76 Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square.

In 1819, when Constable was forty-three, he exhibited at the Academy a large landscape, "View on the River Stour," which was keenly appreciated by his brother artists and resulted in his being elected an Associate, and in the following year his love of Nature led him to take a house at Hampstead.

When "The Hay Wain" was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1821 it attracted comparatively little attention, but three years later it was sold to a French collector, who sent it to the Paris Salon of 1824, where it created a veritable sensation. Constable was awarded a gold medal, and his picture had an immediate and lasting effect on French art. His pure and brilliant colour was a revelation and an inspiration to French painters, and under the glamour of "The Hay Wain" Delacroix, the leader of the French Romanticists, obtained leave to retouch his "Massacre of Scio" in the same exhibition. In a fortnight he repainted it throughout, using the strongest, purest, and most vivid colours he could find, and henceforward not only were Delacroix's ideas of colour and landscape revolutionised by Constable's masterpiece, but a whole school of French landscape painters arose, as we shall see in a later chapter, whose art was to a great extent based on the example and practice of Constable.

It was in France, then, that Constable had his first real success, and Frenchmen were the first in large numbers fully to appreciate his genius. It is a piece of great good luck that "The Hay Wain" ever came back to England, but fortunately it was recovered by a British collector, George Young, and at his sale in 1866 it was purchased by the late Henry Vaughan, who gave it to the National Gallery.

In 1825 Constable, now possessing a European reputation though still neglected in his own country, sent to the Academy his famous picture "The Leaping Horse," which is generally considered to be his central masterpiece, though many shrewd judges consider that the essence of his fresh, naturalistic art is still more brilliantly displayed in the big preparatory six-foot sketch of the same subject, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It was Constable's habit to make these large preparatory sketches for pictures of special importance, and the great difference between the sketch and the picture is that the former was done in the open, directly from Nature, while



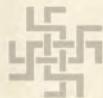


"STUDY FOR THE LEAPING HORSE," BY JOHN CONSTABLE

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

W. F. Mansell.

This magnificent six-foot sketch, painted direct from Nature in 1825, gives the essence of Constable's fresh, naturalistic art. Compare this study with the colour reproduction (Plate X); in completing the picture the artist made important alterations.



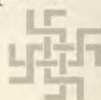
the latter was worked up in the studio. Consequently the sketch always contains a freshness and vigour, something of which is lost in the picture, though this last may have refinements of design not to be found in the sketch.

For example, in the "Sketch for the Leaping Horse," the bent willow is to the right of the horse and its rider, as it doubtless was in the scene that Constable actually beheld; but in the picture of "The Leaping Horse" in the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy, the tree is shifted to the other side of the horse and rider, more to our left, in order to improve the design and emphasise the rhythm of the diagonal accents from the big tree on our left to the water-weeds in the opposite lower corner. This transposition of the willow-tree is exceedingly instructive, for it proves that Constable did not, as some have maintained, simply paint "snapshots" of Nature; he understood the science of picture-making as well as any artist, and while desirous above all of presenting the *general* truth of the scene before him, he did not scruple to alter the position of one particular tree or other object if thereby he thought he could improve the composition of his picture.

Constable was now fifty, but still he was only an A.R.A. Neither "The Leaping Horse" nor "The Cornfield" which he exhibited in 1826, moved his brother artists to make him an Academician, and though "The Cornfield" attracted a good deal of attention and was one of the first pictures to make Constable talked about in London, it did not sell, but remained in his possession to the day of his death. There would seem to be no denying that to the end a number of Academicians were unable to appreciate the genius of Constable, and after the death of Joseph Farington in 1821 he had no keen admirer with influence within their ranks. The story is told that one year, after he had at last been elected R.A. in 1829, Constable submitted one of his works labelled with another name to the Academy jury. When the majority had voted for its rejection, Constable admitted his authorship and quietly remarked, "There, gentlemen, I always thought you did not like my style of painting."

When official recognition came it was "too late," as Constable sadly said. Fortunately he was not in want, for in 1828 his wife's father had died and left Constable the sum of £20,000. "This," wrote Constable, "I will settle on my wife and children, and I shall then be able to stand before a six-foot canvas with a mind at ease, thank God!" From this exclamation it would certainly appear as if the painter himself took more pleasure in his six-foot sketch than in painting a picture from it for the market.

Any pleasure he might have experienced in his election to the Academy as a full member in 1829 was counteracted by his grief at the loss of his wife, who had just previously died. It was the thought of this faithful companion





"THE CORNFIELD," BY JOHN CONSTABLE

National Gallery, London

W. F. Mansell.

Though much admired by the discerning when it was first exhibited at the Academy in 1826, this brilliant example of Constable's genius remained unsold till after the artist's death, when a number of his admirers clubbed together to buy the picture from his executors and presented it to the nation. The church in the distance is Stratford St. Mary, Suffolk.





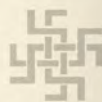
"FLATFORD MILL," BY JOHN CONSTABLE

W. F. Mansell.

National Gallery, London

At a time when fashionable opinion held that "a good picture, like a good fiddle, should be brown," Constable dared to paint Nature truly in her own colours and became the pioneer of "natural" landscape painting.

Flatford Mill belonged to the artist's father, and it was while assisting his father as a boy that Constable acquired his knowledge and love of Nature.



and helper that prompted Constable to say his election as R.A. was "too late."

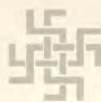
Though it would be a gross exaggeration to say that Constable ever obtained anything like popularity in his own lifetime, his landscapes after 1831 began to be known to a wider public by virtue of the mezzotints of some of his best paintings by David Lucas (1802-81). Lucas was an engraver of genius, who brilliantly translated into black-and-white the beauties of Constable's light and shadow, but when he first approached the artist for permission to engrave his work Constable was dismally despondent about the project. "The painter himself is totally unpopular," he said, "and will be so on this side of the grave. The subjects are nothing but art, and the buyers are wholly ignorant of that." Nevertheless Lucas persisted with his mezzotints, which did much to spread the fame of Constable, and these engravings are now eagerly sought for at high prices by collectors.

Though never becoming actually despondent or embittered, Constable naturally craved for the appreciation which he felt he deserved, and in the endeavour to court notice he even went so far as to advertise in the newspapers :

"Mr. Constable's Gallery of Landscapes, by his own hand, is to be seen *gratis* daily, by an application at his residence."

But few except other artists applied, and as he grew older his house became fuller and fuller of unsold pictures. After his sixtieth birthday, in 1836, his health became uncertain, and on March 30, 1837, he died suddenly in his house at 76 Charlotte Street. Almost immediately after his death the world awoke to his genius, and in the same year a number of gentlemen who admired his work clubbed together and bought from the executors his picture "The Cornfield," which they presented to the nation. Strangely enough this artist, who was so little known during his own lifetime, has since his death become a familiar personality, thanks to the pious solicitude of his friend, the genre-painter C. R. Leslie (1794-1859), whose *Memoirs of John Constable, R.A.* is one of the best biographies of a painter ever written. It is a classic which, for the intimate insight it gives us into the character of the man, may be compared with Boswell's *Johnson*. All who met Constable were attracted by his simple, kindly, affectionate nature, and perhaps the most touching tribute to his memory was paid by a London cab-driver who, when he heard that he would never drive Constable again, told Leslie he was "as sorry as if he had been my own father—he was as nice a man as that, sir."

Leslie had always been a firm believer in the genius of Constable, and wrote of his works : "I cannot but think that they will attain for him, when his merits are fully acknowledged, the praise of having been the most genuine painter of English landscape that has yet lived." Subsequent generations



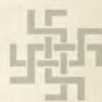


"SALISBURY CATHEDRAL," BY JOHN CONSTABLE

W. F. Mansell.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

One of Constable's earliest patrons and most constant friends was the Rev. John Fisher, nephew and chaplain to the Bishop of Salisbury. Owing to this friendship the artist painted several pictures of the Cathedral, among which this painting is notable for the brilliance and beauty of its lighting.



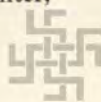
have corroborated Leslie's opinion, and another genre-painter, Sir J. D. Linton, who was born three years after Constable's death, has testified to the genius of Constable and to the effect of his painting. "His art," wrote Linton, "has had the widest and most lasting influence both at home and abroad. . . . Although Turner is accepted as the greatest master of landscape painting, and his work has not been without very great influence, Constable's robust and massive manner has affected the modern schools more universally."

While we admire Turner we love Constable the more dearly, perhaps because his art is so essentially English. Never did a landscape painter travel less than Constable in search of a subject. While Turner toured all over Europe, Constable opened his door and found beauty waiting to be painted. With exceptions so few that they do not bulk largely in his work, all Constable's landscapes are drawn either from his birthplace, that is to say the borders of Essex and Suffolk about the Stour, now known as "the Constable country," or at Hampstead, where his house yet stands. The hill with a clump of firs on it, close to the Spaniard's, is to this day spoken of as "Constable's Knoll." His only other sketching ground of real importance was Salisbury, whither he was doubtless drawn by his friendship with the Rev. John Fisher. Of his many paintings of Salisbury Cathedral, one of the most beautiful is the painting in the South Kensington Museum, from which we see that had his bent been that way Constable could have painted architectural subjects as truly and beautifully as he did landscapes.

It was the supreme distinction of Constable to destroy Beaumont's fallacy that a "brown" landscape was a "good" landscape, and to paint all the greenness in Nature. He loved to paint the glitter of light on trees after rain, and the little touches of white paint with which he achieved the effect of their sparkle were jocularly alluded to as "Constable's snow." No painter before him had painted with so much truth the actual colour of Nature's lighting, and since Constable the true colour of Nature in light and shadow has increasingly become the preoccupation of the "natural" landscape painter.

§ 2

Constable was not the first nor was he the last English painter whose art was appreciated in France long before his talent was duly recognised in his own country, and it may be argued that his triumph at Paris in 1824 was to some extent anticipated by the warm welcome which the Parisians had already given to his young compatriot Richard Parkes Bonington. The father of Bonington was an extraordinary man who had originally succeeded his father as governor of the Nottingham county gaol, but he lost this appointment through his irregularities and then set up as a portrait painter,



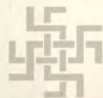


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"COAST OF PICARDY," BY R. P. BONINGTON (1802-28)

Wallace Collection, London

Bonington's brilliant open-air work was one of the pronounced influences upon the French art of his time. Although he was so young, and died after only seven years of painting, his assured genius made itself felt. Light and air are everywhere in these delicate shore scenes which he painted in France.



while his wife kept a school which was the real mainstay of the family. His son Richard was born at Arnold, a village near Nottingham, on October 25, 1801, and at an early age showed a talent for drawing which made him another infant prodigy, like Lawrence.

Meanwhile his father's love of low company, intemperate habits, and violent political opinions had broken up his wife's school, and about the time of the fall of Napoleon the family fled to France, first to Calais and then to Paris. Henceforward Richard Parkes Bonington, though still a boy, was the chief breadwinner for the family. In 1816 he obtained permission to copy pictures at the Louvre, where he was said to be the youngest student on record, and he also worked in the studio of Baron Gros, where his improvement was so rapid that his master soon told him he had nothing more to learn in that studio, and advised him to go out into the world and paint from Nature on his own account. This advice Bonington took, travelling extensively in France and also visiting Italy in 1822. His oil-paintings and water-colours, which were exceedingly rich in colour and full of vitality, were quickly appreciated and the reputation of Bonington rapidly increased in Paris. In 1824, when Constable received his gold medal, another gold medal was also awarded to Bonington for the two coast scenes which he had sent to the Salon.

Though he had visited England now and again, Bonington was quite unknown here till 1826, when he exhibited at the British Institution two views on the French coast which surprised the English painters and at once gave him a name among his own countrymen. In the following year he exhibited another marine subject at the Academy, and in 1828—though still residing in Paris—he sent to the Academy a view on the Grand Canal, Venice, and a small historical painting of "Henri III of France." Though but twenty-six years of age, Bonington for some time had been greatly esteemed in France, and now commissions flowed upon him from England also. Anxious to fulfil them, the artist worked feverishly during the hot summer, and after a long day sketching under a scorching sun in Paris he was attacked by brain fever, followed by a severe illness. When his health had slightly improved he came over to London for medical advice, but it was too late. He had fallen into galloping consumption, and the brilliant promise of his career was cut short by his death on September 23, 1828. He was buried in the vaults of St. James's Church, Pentonville.

The early deaths of Girtin and Bonington were the two greatest blows British art had received, and had they lived it seems probable that Bonington might have gone even further than Girtin. His range for his years was remarkably wide, and he was as skilful in painting figures as he was in landscapes and marine subjects. His art was picturesque, romantic, and often dramatic, while he had an opulent sense of colour and was able to imbue his

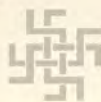


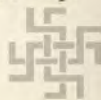
figure paintings with a wonderful sense of life. In the Louvre, Paris, where the artist studied as a boy, the examples of Bonington's art are more numerous and important than those at the National Gallery, London, which possesses two only, a Normandy landscape, bequeathed by Mr. George Salting, and "The Column of St. Mark, Venice." Happily Bonington's work is well represented in the Wallace Collection, where there are ten of his paintings and twenty-four water-colours, among the former being the picture of "Henri IV and the Spanish Ambassador," which so long ago as 1870 fetched the considerable price of £3,320 in a sale at Paris.

§ 3

Another great landscape painter who during his lifetime never took the place in the world that his genius warranted was John Crome, frequently called "Old Crome," to distinguish him from his son, who also became a painter. Crome, who was born at Norwich on December 21, 1768, was the son of a poor weaver and began life as an errand-boy, carrying bottles of medicine for a doctor, but when he was about fourteen or fifteen his love of art led him to apprentice himself to a house and sign painter. While following his trade during his apprenticeship, Crome took every opportunity of sketching the picturesque scenery which surrounds his native city. He was very, very poor, but he persevered and his perseverance gained him friends.

Chief among these friends was Mr. Thomas Harvey, of Catton in Norfolk, who possessed a fine picture gallery and encouraged Crome to study and make copies of the pictures he had collected. Mr. Harvey's collection included landscapes by Richard Wilson—by whom Crome was greatly influenced—Gainsborough's "Cottage Door," and many fine examples of the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, notably Hobbema, for whose art Crome then conceived a passionate admiration which lasted all his life. Mr. Harvey not only introduced Crome to other Norwich amateurs, but also obtained him some pupils to whom he taught drawing, though at this time the artist was only an awkward, uninformed country lad, whose deficiencies of education were to some extent compensated for by his great gifts and his natural shrewdness.

Meanwhile Crome had formed an intimate friendship with a lad of his own class, Robert Ladbroke (1770-1842), then a printer's apprentice, but also ambitious to become an artist. After living together for some two years, Crome and Ladbroke married sisters, and abandoning their original trades they established themselves in partnership as artists, Ladbroke painting portraits at five shillings apiece, and Crome selling his landscapes for what they would fetch—which was not always as much as five shillings! But for Crome's practice as a drawing-master he could hardly have kept





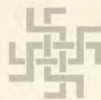
W. F. Mansell.

"THE COLUMN OF ST. MARK'S, VENICE," BY R. P. BONINGTON

National Gallery, London

Though he died when he was only twenty-six, this artist greatly influenced his contemporaries by his rich colour and romantic feeling. Had he lived he would undoubtedly have been one of the greatest artists of his time.

The view shown is of the Piazzetta at Venice, with the column supporting the winged lion of St. Mark and the companion column, on the right, which is crowned by a statue of St. Theodore, the first patron saint of Venice.



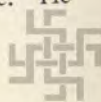
himself, let alone a family, in these early years, but gradually he acquired a local reputation and his landscapes found occasional purchasers, though at pitifully low prices.

In February, 1803, Crome gathered round him the artists of his native city for their mutual improvement, and from this beginning arose the Norwich Society of Artists, founded in 1805. The Society held annual exhibitions to which Crome was a large contributor, for he rarely sent his pictures to London for exhibition and consequently was little known there. Crome's pupils and associates, among whom the most distinguished were John Sell Cotman, James Stark (1794-1859), George Vincent, and his eldest son, John Bernay Crome, formed what is known as the "Norwich School." The inspiration of this school was derived chiefly from Crome, but also from the Dutch painters by whom he was influenced.

The Norwich School prospered exceedingly, more so than any other body of provincial artists has ever done in England, and their success was due not only to the excellence of their own work but also to the fact that they laboured in a field well prepared to receive art. It will have been observed how many of the great English landscape painters belonged to the Eastern Counties—Gainsborough and Constable were both Suffolk men—and the extent to which the art of all of them was influenced by the art of Holland. The explanation is to be found in the intimate trade relations which had existed for centuries between East Anglia and the Netherlands. Owing to this commercial intercourse numbers of Dutch and Flemish pictures found their way into East Anglian homes, and while London during the eighteenth century worshipped Italian art almost to the exclusion of all other, well-to-do people in Norfolk and Suffolk took a keener delight in the homelier art of the Dutch and Flemish Schools. Thus at the very time that Constable was being neglected in London, John Crome was enjoying esteem and wide popularity in Norfolk.

It is true that Crome never made a fortune ; to the end his lessons brought him in more money than his paintings, for any of which fifty pounds was a large and rarely attained price ; but Crome did sell his pictures and in time became quite comfortably off. In 1801 he moved into a big house in Gildengate Street, he kept two horses, and managed before his death to acquire many good pictures and to form a library. Norwich was proud of her distinguished painter, and a special seat was always reserved for him in the parlour of the old inn in the market-place, where in his later years he was treated as an oracle, revered by all.

Under these circumstances we can understand why Crome continued to reside in his native Norwich and was never tempted to settle in London. In 1806 he exhibited for the first time at the Royal Academy, but between then and 1818 he sent only thirteen pictures in all to be exhibited there. He



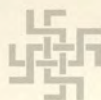


W. F. Mansell.

"A WINDMILL ON MOUSEHOLD HEATH," BY JOHN CROME (1768-1821)

National Gallery, London

Founder of the Norwich School, Crome devoted his life to painting the beauties of the country round his birthplace, and never attempted to establish himself in London. His feeling for light, air, and space are splendidly revealed in this noble landscape.



visited London occasionally, twice he went to Cumberland (in 1802 and 1806), once to Weymouth, and in 1814 he made a tour in France and Belgium, but his chief subjects were almost exclusively local. He was perfectly satisfied with the lanes, heaths, and river-banks surrounding Norwich, without wishing to journey further afield. In his great tree picture, "The Poringland Oak," he rivalled his own idol Hobbema; in "Moon Rise on the Yare," he surpassed the moonlight paintings of Van der Neer, by whom it was inspired; while his masterpiece, "Mousehold Heath," at the National Gallery, will always rank Crome amongst the grandest of landscape painters. Asked by his son why he had painted this last subject, Crome made the memorable reply: "For air and space."

In addition to his oil-paintings Crome executed a few water-colours and also a number of etchings. In 1834 a series of thirty-one of his etchings was published under the title of "Norfolk Picturesque Scenery."

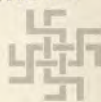
While out sketching in his fifty-third year he caught a chill, and after a few days' illness died on April 22, 1821. On the day before he died he addressed to his son the words so often quoted: "John, my boy, paint, but paint only for fame; and if your subject is only a pigsty, dignify it." The art of Old Crome is indeed a perpetual reminder that a masterpiece of painting is due far more to the treatment than to the subject, and nobody knew better than the Norwich master how to give dignity to the humblest subject by its stately presentation in a well-balanced composition.

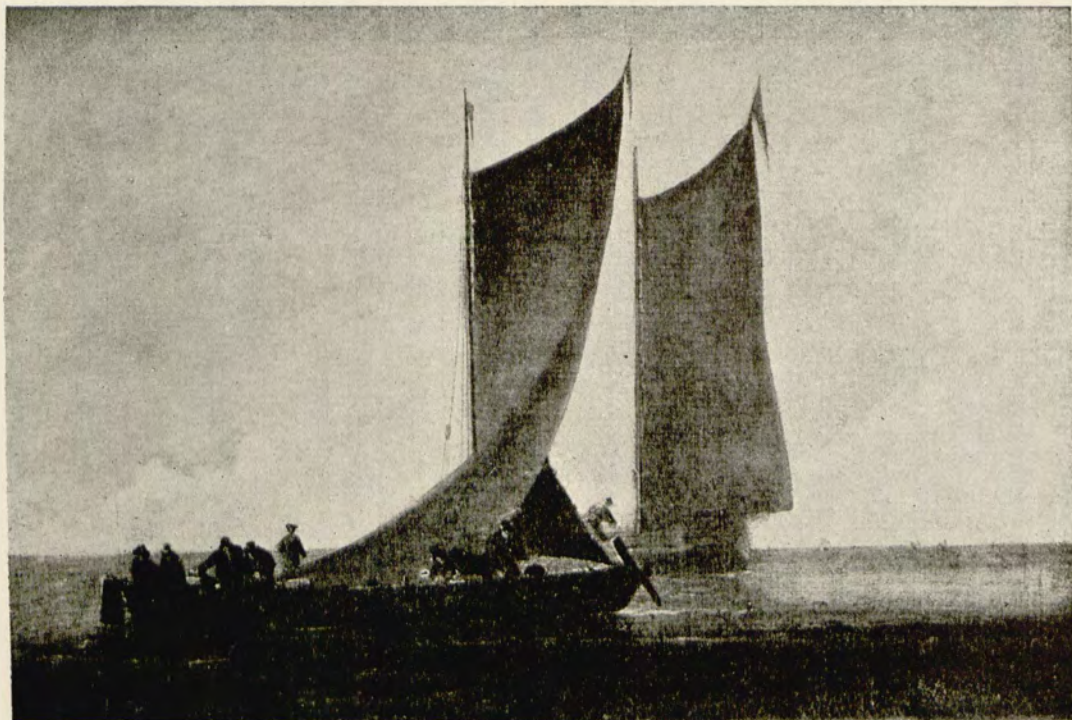
Though his landscape art is limited in comparison with that of Turner and Constable, within his own self-imposed limits Crome is second to none. He did not set out, like Turner, to mirror the blazing glories of dawn and sunset, nor did he, like Constable, hold himself ready to paint Nature and weather in every aspect: Crome waited for the quieter moods of Nature in his own homeland, and he painted these to perfection.

§ 4

The Norwich School owes its fame to two stars of the first magnitude, Crome and Cotman, and to a host of lesser luminaries. John Sell Cotman was fourteen years younger than Crome, and though also born at Norwich, on June 11, 1782, he did not, like Crome, acquire his art education in his native city. Cotman from the first was in a very different position. He was the son of a well-to-do draper, received a good education at the Norwich Grammar School, and was intended to enter his father's shop; but when his bent for art clearly declared itself his father was sensible enough to allow his son to make it his vocation and sent him to London.

Cotman remained in London from 1800 to 1806, and probably the most fruitful part of the education he received there was his association with the



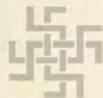


W. F. Mansell.

"WHERRIES ON THE YARE," BY JOHN SELL COTMAN (1782-1842)

National Gallery, London

So little was the genius of Cotman appreciated in his own day that this beautiful painting was sold at Norwich in 1834 for eighteen shillings !

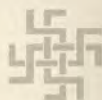


group of artists who frequented the house of Dr. Thomas Monro, who has already been mentioned in this OUTLINE as the friend of Turner and Girtin. In Dr. Monro's house at 8 Adelphi Terrace, Cotman made the acquaintance of and worked with all the most brilliant young artists of the day, and in addition to the studies he made there under these stimulating circumstances he joined a sketching club which Girtin had founded.

To Girtin, who was not only an inspiring genius but also a most generous and affectionate friend, Cotman probably owed most at this stage of his career, and it must have been a great shock to him when Girtin died at the early age of twenty-seven. After Girtin's death in November, 1802, London was not the same place to Cotman, and though as a young struggling artist he could hardly complain of want of success—for he had exhibited no fewer than thirty paintings at the Royal Academy between 1800 and 1806—he made up his mind to return to his native city.

In London Cotman had applied himself especially to architectural subjects, and it is possible that even in these early days he was influenced in this direction by the gifted West Country artist, Samuel Prout (1783–1852), who excelled in water-colours of these subjects, and was living in London from 1802 to 1804; but when he returned to Norwich in 1806 or 1807, Cotman at first set himself up as a portrait painter. Gradually, however, under the influence of Crome—who was thirty-nine when Cotman was twenty-five—he devoted himself more and more to landscape. He became a member of the Norwich Society of Artists and was for a time its secretary.

Cotman was a prolific worker at this time, and to the Society's exhibition in 1808 he contributed no fewer than sixty-seven works. In 1809 he married, and soon afterwards removed to Yarmouth, where he added to his means by teaching drawing as well as painting in oils and water-colours, and also etching. In 1811 he commenced a publication by subscription of his "Architectural Etchings," and having made a number of topographical tours throughout the country, he published in 1816 his "Specimens of Norman and Gothic Architecture, Norfolk Churches," etc. He formed a useful association with Dawson Turner, the Norfolk antiquary, for whose antiquarian publications Cotman drew and etched the illustrations, and during the next three years (1817–19) he made annual expeditions into Normandy with this writer, whose *Architectural Antiquities of Normandy*, illustrated by Cotman, was published in 1822. All the time that he was engaged on drawings for these and other publications Cotman was exhibiting oil-paintings and water-colours both in Norwich and in London, but though several of these found purchasers the prices were so low that, notwithstanding his immense industry, Cotman could not have supported his wife and family if, in addition to all his other activities, he had not continued to give drawing lessons.



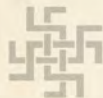


"GRETA BRIDGE, BY JOHN SELL COTMAN

British Museum, London

The artist's masterpiece in water-colour, majestic in design, splendidly strong and massive in its drawing, and rich and harmonious in colour.

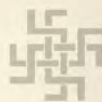
W. F. Mansell.



In 1825, when he was again living in Norwich, Cotman was elected an Associate of the Water-colour Society in London, and from that year was a constant contributor to the Society's exhibitions ; but though his work was known and respected both in London and Norwich, the genius of Cotman was never recognised in his lifetime nor indeed for many years after his death. The struggle to make a living began to tell on his nerves and health, and it was in the hope of giving him some ease by assuring him a regular income that his steadfast friend Dawson Turner, the antiquary, succeeded in getting Cotman appointed in 1834 as drawing-master at King's College School, then in the Strand. Removing to London in view of this appointment, Cotman settled himself at 42 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, but the change seemed to do him more harm than good. His health gradually declined, and the nervous depression to which he was a victim became more and more severe till in the end his mind became slightly unhinged. His eldest son, Miles Edward Cotman (1811-58), a water-colourist of moderate ability, succeeded him as drawing-master at King's College School, and on July 28, 1842, John Sell Cotman died and was quietly buried in the churchyard of St. John's Wood Chapel. How little Cotman was appreciated then was made painfully evident when his remaining oil-paintings and water-colours were sold at Christie's in the following year. Works for which collectors would now gladly pay hundreds of pounds hardly realised as many shillings in 1843, and the highest price then obtained for a painting by him was £8 15s. ; the highest price given for a Cotman water-colour was £6.

To discover exactly why an artist, afterwards recognised to be a genius, is not appreciated in his own lifetime, is never an easy task, but it is certain that many of his contemporaries considered Cotman's work to be " unfinished " because it had that vigorous breadth which now wins our admiration. Whether we look at an oil-painting like his " Wherries on the Yare," or a masterly water-colour like the " Greta Bridge " at the British Museum, we cannot fail to be impressed by the grandeur which the artist has given to his rendering of the scene by his subordination of detail and suppression of all that is irrelevant.

Cotman took a big view of Nature, and the breadth and simplicity of his masses materially help to give his pictures, whether in oil or water-colour, a monumental majesty unsurpassed even by his great contemporaries.



THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

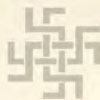
THE ART OF FORD MADOX BROWN, ROSSETTI, HOLMAN HUNT, MILLAIS,
AND BURNE-JONES

§ 1

AMONG the pupils of John Sell Cotman when he was a drawing-master at King's College School was a strange, foreign-looking boy, the son of an Italian poet and patriot living in exile in London. This boy was Dante Gabriel Rossetti, who afterwards combined with Millais and Holman Hunt to found the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Innumerable books have been written in which it has been sought to show that first one and then another of these three young men was the real motive-power in the founding of a new style of painting ; but the fact remains that it was not till all three came together in 1848 that any revolution was effected, and it was the peculiar and diverse gifts which each brought to the common stock which made their union so formidable and enabled them eventually to triumph over opposition and hostile criticism.

Rossetti, according to Ruskin, was " the chief intellectual force " in the association ; his fire, enthusiasm, and poetic feeling were valuable assets, but technically he was the least accomplished of the three. He had ideas, but at first he was weak in translating them into drawing and painting, and he shirked the drudgery of the discipline necessary to perfect his powers of expression. Millais, on the other hand, was not remarkable for original ideas, but he had brilliant powers of eye and hand ; he was a precocious genius in technique to whom the problems of drawing and painting presented no difficulty. Holman Hunt had neither the facility of Millais nor the impatience of Rossetti, but he had a high seriousness of purpose and a determined perseverance which held the others steadily together and chained their endeavours to lofty ideals.

Before considering what " Pre-Raphaelitism " was, and what it ultimately became, it will be helpful to glance briefly at the origin of its three founders. William Holman Hunt, the eldest of the trio, was born in Wood Street, Cheapside, on April 2, 1827. His father, the manager of a city warehouse, opposed his wish to be an artist and placed him at the age of twelve

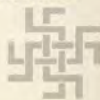


in the office of an estate agent. His employer encouraged young Hunt's artistic leanings, and the father reluctantly allowed the boy to spend his salary on lessons from a portrait painter. In 1843 Hunt was at last allowed to devote himself to art, but entirely at his own risk, and the sixteen-year-old boy bravely struggled along, studying half the week at the British Museum and supporting himself by painting portraits on the other three days. Eventually he was admitted as a probationer to the Academy Schools, where he soon made friends with his junior, Millais, and while studying still managed to earn a bare living.

The youngest of the three was John Everett Millais, who was born at Southampton in 1829. He came from a Norman family settled in Jersey, and his early childhood was spent in that island, at Le Quaihouse, near St. Heliers. His father was a popular, gifted man with some artistic talent, who delighted in and encouraged the precocious ability his son soon showed in drawing. In 1837 his parents came to live in Gower Street, London, and on the advice of the Irish artist Sir Martin Archer Shee (1769-1850), who was then President of the Royal Academy, young Millais was sent to Henry Sass's art school in Bloomsbury. Here his progress was so phenomenal that when he was only nine years old he won the silver medal of the Society of Arts. Two years later he was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools as the youngest student who ever worked there, and "The Child," as he was then called, was already considered to be a marvel of precocity whose achievements rivalled those of the youthful Lawrence.

When he was twelve years old he painted his first picture in oils, and in 1845, when he was sixteen, he was able to earn £100 a year by painting in backgrounds for a dealer and selling him some of his sketches. In the following year he exhibited "Pizarro seizing the Inca of Peru," a large painting of remarkable maturity, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington; and in the next year, 1847, he was awarded a gold medal for his "Young Men of the Tribe of Benjamin seizing their Brides." In neither of these pictures do we perceive any tendency of the artist to revolutionise the style of painting then in vogue; both of them are more or less in the manner of William Etty (1787-1849), whose art, like that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, was chiefly based on the Venetian masters and whose colour was rich, but heavy and dark. At the Academy Schools Millais had already made the acquaintance of Holman Hunt, but though the two young students may have been discontented with the pictorial ideals of the time, and may have discussed aims and methods in private, they did not show any signs of a new faith in their works till after they had made the acquaintance of Rossetti.

After leaving King's College School, Rossetti studied art at Cary's Academy in Bloomsbury, and though he was not able to gain admittance



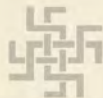


W. F. Mansell.

"OPHELIA," BY MILLAIS (1829-96)

Tate Gallery, London

Painted on the Ewell, near Kingston, this picture is famous for the precise study of Nature shown in the foreground and background. The figure was painted in his studio from Miss Siddal, who had to lie in a bath of water; one day Millais forgot to fill the lamps which kept the water warm, with the result that this beautiful and gifted woman, afterwards Mrs. Rossetti, contracted a serious illness which eventually shortened her life.





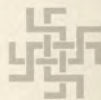
Reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Birmingham.

W. F. Mansell.

"THE LAST OF ENGLAND," BY FORD MADOX BROWN (1821-1893)

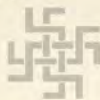
Birmingham Art Gallery

Though an older artist, Madox Brown was influenced by the "Brotherhood," and the picture—which shows emigrants taking their last look at the "old country"—is "Pre-Raphaelite" in its exact rendering of details and in its serious thoughtfulness of expression.



into the life-class, he worked in the Antique School of the Royal Academy in 1845 and 1846. Born in London in 1828, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a year younger than Holman Hunt, and a year older than Millais, but though so near their own age, he was from an art-master's point of view far below them, so that he was kept drawing from casts of antique statues when they were already drawing and painting from living models. This was dull work for Rossetti, who was passionately interested in life, and he looked around to see where he might obtain more congenial tuition. He had been greatly attracted by a picture he had seen in an exhibition, "Our Lady of Saturday Night," and he went to the painter, Ford Madox Brown, and besought him to accept him as a pupil. After some demur Brown consented, but when Rossetti, though allowed brushes and colours, found that his new master's method of tuition consisted in setting him to paint studies of still life, his impatience at discipline soon overcame him, and declaring that he was tired of painting "pots and pans," when his head was full of exciting pictures of romantic women and knightly men, he broke away from Brown after an apprenticeship that only lasted some four months.

Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) was never a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but he was so much in sympathy with their aims and his art was so nearly related to their own, that some brief account of him must be included in any review of this phase of English painting. Madox Brown was six years the senior of Holman Hunt. He was born in Calais at a time when David and the Classicists had imposed a new artistic ideal on France, and when he began to paint about 1835 this classical ideal was being attacked by a new romantic movement to which Madox Brown was attracted. He was from his childhood, therefore, conversant with Continental art movements—as the majority of English painters were not—and after studying at Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp, where he was the pupil of the Belgian historical and romantic painter, Baron Wappers, he worked for three years in Paris. His desire then was to become a painter of large historical pictures, and in 1844 he came to England in order to enter a competition for the commission to paint decorations for Westminster Hall. In this he was unsuccessful, and in the following year he went to Rome, where he became acquainted with two curious German painters named Cornelius and Overbeck. These artists were leading semi-monastic lives, and in so far as they deliberately cultivated the devotional frame of mind of the Italian masters who preceded Raphael, they were the first "Pre-Raphaelites." Cornelius and Overbeck, who were both devout Catholics, worked in cells, and like the mediæval monastic painters, they prepared themselves for their work by scourging, vigil, and fasting. In order that their work might be free from all taint of "fleshliness," they avoided the use of human models. It is not likely that their dry and rather affected painting influenced Madox Brown



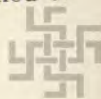
to any great extent, but they doubtlessly opened his eyes to the excellencies of the earlier Italian painters, and showed him that there was more than one way of looking at Nature.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that for the connoisseurs of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the "Old Masters" began where in the opinion of to-day they end. We look upon Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Leonardo da Vinci as the *end* of a great school of painters; but our forefathers were inclined to regard them as the *beginning* of a great school. Their successors, men like Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), Domenichino (1581-1641), and Carlo Maratti (1625-1713), were at one time esteemed as Masters, though to-day we recognise that their art was decadent and debased. Cornelius and Overbeck were perfectly right in preferring the painters before Raphael to those who followed him, but they made the deadly error of merely imitating the pictures of the Italian Primitives, instead of going, as they had done, direct to Nature. Thus the German painters made exactly the same mistake as the late Italian painters had done, and their art was sterile also for the same reason, because it was "soup of the soup" art based wholly on preceding art.

The effect of the early Christian painters on Ford Madox Brown was to cause him, not to imitate their work slavishly, but to look at Nature for himself, as they did. When he did look he perceived that Nature was far brighter than it appeared to be in the pictures of his British contemporaries. Since the time of Reynolds, Sir George Beaumont's dictum that a good picture must be a brown picture had been the general opinion, and though certain landscape painters rebelled against this doctrine as we have seen, no English figure painters made any serious stand against it till Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites began to exhibit.

How had this cult in brown pictures arisen? The explanation is very simple. Painters had observed that the pictures by the recognised great masters, Rembrandt, Titian, Tintoretto, etc., were usually brown in tone, but this brownness was often due, not only to the pigments originally used by the masters, but also to the grime of centuries, to the "tone of time." Seeking to be praised as "Old Masters" in their own lifetime, painters used artificial means to make their pictures look brown, and were in the habit of painting on a brown bituminous ground in order to give to their pictures a fictitious quality of golden-brown light and "Rembrandtesque" shadow. Ford Madox Brown reversed the general practice of his day by painting his pictures on a white ground, and immediately his colour became brighter and truer to Nature.

By the time he was back in England in 1846, Madox Brown had come independently to very much the same conclusions that Hunt and Millais were now whispering to one another, and he had begun to adopt a method of





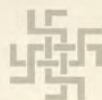
W. F. Mansell.

"THE ORDER OF RELEASE, 1746," BY MILLAIS

Tate Gallery, London

This brilliant and pathetic painting of a Highlander, wounded in the '45 Rebellion and unexpectedly delivered from prison, his wife having brought an order for his release, won for the artist his A.R.A. in 1853.

The woman is a portrait of Mrs. John Ruskin, who afterwards became Lady Millais.



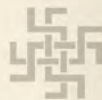


W. F. Mansell.

"GIRLHOOD OF MARY VIRGIN," BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-82)

Lady Jekyll's Collection

The first picture ever painted by Rossetti, who under the guidance of Holman Hunt here shows an exactitude in the painting of details which he never surpassed later. The artist's mother sat for St. Anne and his sister Christina for the Virgin.



painting very similar to that subsequently practised by the Brotherhood, to whom we must now return.

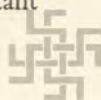
§ 2

Unknown to one another, Rossetti and Holman Hunt both had a passion for the poetry of Keats, and it was this that first really brought them together. It was in 1848 that Rossetti persuaded Madox Brown to have him as a pupil, and to the Academy of that year Hunt had sent a painting, inspired by a poem of Keats. In the memoirs which he wrote in his old age, Hunt gave an account of how he met the younger artist in a picture gallery and what ensued :

Rossetti came up to me [he wrote] loudly declaring that my picture of "The Eve of St. Agnes" was the best in the collection. . . . Rossetti frankly proposed to me to come and see him. Before this I had been only on nodding terms with him in the schools, to which he came but rarely and irregularly. He had always attracted there a following of clamorous students who, like Millais's throng, were rewarded with original sketches. Rossetti's subjects were of a different class from Millais, not of newly culled facts, but of knights rescuing ladies. A few days more and Rossetti was in my studio.

The upshot of these meetings was that Rossetti left Madox Brown and shared a studio with Holman Hunt, under whose guidance he began painting his first picture, "The Girlhood of Mary Virgin." Intimacy with Hunt naturally led to intimacy with his friend Millais, and it is said that the immediate occasion of the founding of the Brotherhood was an evening spent by the three friends in the house of Millais's parents looking at engravings of the early Italian wall-paintings in the Campo Santo at Pisa. According to Hunt, it was Rossetti who insisted that their union should be a close one, and that it should be styled a "Brotherhood." The term "Pre-Raphaelite" originated as a nickname, somebody exclaiming when they had expressed a preference for the painters before Raphael to those who succeeded him, "Why, then you must be pre-Raphaelites." The title was adopted as an official label which fitly conveyed their aims. These aims were to paint Nature with minute fidelity and to regain the intense sincerity of the early Italian painters, but undoubtedly Rossetti held that the latter also implied intense poetic expression.

Thus the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was established, and in addition to the three founders, membership was extended to Dante Gabriel's brother, W. M. Rossetti, and to three of their friends, Woolner, a sculptor, James Collinson, and F. G. Stephens. James Collinson was probably elected on the strength of his picture, "The Charity Boy's Debut," in the Academy of 1847, and would doubtless have been a more important figure had he not ceased exhibiting after 1870 and retired to a monastery. His most important

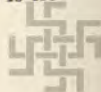


picture, "St. Elizabeth of Hungary," painted in 1851, is now in the Johannesburg Gallery, William Rossetti and Stephens soon abandoned painting; both became art critics, and their eloquent and enthusiastic articles did much to convert the public to an appreciation of the work of the other Brothers.

It is no unusual thing for art students or young artists to form themselves into clubs and societies, to hold regular meetings, and to discuss their aims, methods, and ideals; but so often the talk leads to nothing. In the case of Millais and Hunt it led to a revolution of their painting; in the case of Rossetti it led to something approaching a masterpiece at the first effort. In 1848 Millais had exhibited "Cymon and Iphigenia," another painting in the style of Etty; in 1849 he exhibited "Lorenzo and Isabella," now at Liverpool, and but for the conclaves of the brethren and the stimulating encouragement of comradeship he could never in one year have leapt the gulf which separates the two pictures. Holman Hunt's "Rienzi" was an equally sensational advance on his "St. Agnes's Eve," but in many respects the most remarkable achievement of all was Rossetti's "Girlhood of Mary Virgin." Finely painted as "Lorenzo and Isabella" is, it has not the touching simplicity of Rossetti's first painting; it is more imitative, a skilful exercise in the manner of the early Italian masters. It was immensely clever, but it was not quite what the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood set out to do.

Rossetti's maiden effort may appear childish in places when compared with the accomplishment of the Millais, but it is a much better example of true Pre-Raphaelitism in its absolutely honest and unconventional attempt to render what the painter saw. Hunt has told us that every detail in this picture was painted directly from life under his supervision, and it says much for his patient influence that in the first year of the Brotherhood its most romantic member should have painted the most naturalistic picture.

The trouble with Rossetti, owing to his teeming, poetic imagination, had been that he had always wanted to paint things "out of his head" at a time when his hand and eye needed to be educated by an endeavour to paint truly what was before him. With infinite tact Holman Hunt let him set to work on a romantic subject, the choice of his heart, but he took care that every detail in this imaginative scene should be painted truly and carefully from facts. In Madox Brown's studio Rossetti had rebelled at painting so prosaic an object as a pot; Holman Hunt led him to paint the same object with delight because it held the symbolical lily needed by his subject. For the first time in his life Rossetti became passionately interested in *things*, because he had been made to see that they helped him to express his ideas. He borrowed big books from his father, and window curtains from his parents' house in Charlotte Street. His sister Christina sat for the Virgin, and his mother for St. Anne. He borrowed a child's nightgown and painted that on a small lay-figure, which probably explains why the figure of the little angel is not



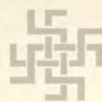


W. F. Mansell.

"THE BELOVED," BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Tate Gallery, London

"My beloved is mine and I am his." This poetical conception of the Bride in the Song of Solomon was commissioned by Mr. George Rae in 1863 and painted by Rossetti in 1865.



so convincing as the head ; but when we remember that Rossetti was painting every object in the picture for the very first time we are compelled to stop fault-finding to marvel at the wonder of his achievement.

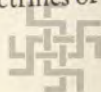
" Rienzi " and " Lorenzo and Isabella " were exhibited in the Academy of 1849 ; " The Girlhood of Mary Virgin " in the Hyde Park Gallery known as the " Free Exhibition " ; but somewhat to the disappointment of their authors they attracted very little public attention. Even the " P.R.B. " after Rossetti's signature on his picture appears to have escaped comment. Undismayed, if a trifle disappointed, the young revolutionaries set about more vigorous propaganda by means of new pictures, and a periodical, *The Germ*, in which they could ventilate their opinions and doctrines.

It was with the idea of writing a journal for this magazine that during the summer Hunt and Rossetti made a tour in France and Belgium, and this journal was duly written, though later it was considered too personal to be published in *The Germ*. In their judgments of the pictures they saw abroad the young artists were terribly severe. Van Eyck and the early Flemings they admired intensely, but the works of the later painters from Rembrandt to Rubens were dismissed in two words as " filthy slosh. "

After what they had seen abroad they held more firmly than ever before that it was not enough for a picture to be correctly drawn and well painted, it must also enshrine a worthy idea. In accordance with this doctrine, now added to the rules of the Brotherhood, Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti all chose serious subjects for the pictures they intended to exhibit in 1850. Hunt painted " An Early Christian Missionary escaping from Druids, " Millais his famous " Christ in the House of His Parents, " and Rossetti " The Annunciation, " or " Ecce Ancilla Domini " as it was originally called. Curiously enough Rossetti, who in the previous year had been the most, was now the least Pre-Raphaelite of the three. His strangely beautiful work is not a vision of things seen, but a reverie, the romantic rendering of a mood. Again his sister Christina sat for the Virgin, and Thomas Woolner posed for the head of the Archangel.

Millais, on the other hand, had now thoroughly grasped the principle of Pre-Raphaelitism, and no longer giving a clever imitation of an Italian Primitive, he outdid Hunt himself in the thoroughness with which each detail in his picture was studied from Nature. In order to get absolute truth, Millais took his canvas to a carpenter's shop to paint the details ; he painted the figure of Joseph from the carpenter because that was, he said, " the only way to get the development of the muscles right. " He was not able to get sheep, but he purchased two sheep's heads from a butcher and painted the flock from them ; and it will be observed that the sheep in the picture only show their heads, the bodies being tactfully concealed by wickerwork.

By the time the Academy of 1850 opened, the existence and doctrines of





W. F. Mansell.

"THE ANNUNCIATION," BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Tate Gallery, London

In this, his second attempt to paint a picture, the poetic nature of the artist finds exquisite expression in his haunting conception of wistful, meditative maidenhood. His sister, Christina Rossetti, the poetess, posed for the figure of the Virgin.



the Brotherhood had become more widely known, and this year there was no opportunity to complain of any want of public attention. The three pictures aroused a storm of criticism which fell with particular fury on the head of Millais. The true meaning of "Pre-Raphaelite" was not very well understood, and the popular view was that a group of young painters had set themselves up to be "better than Raphael" and deserved to be trounced for their vanity and impudence. And trounced they were. "Their ambition," wrote one newspaper critic, "is an unhealthy thirst which seeks notoriety by means of mere conceit. Abruptness, singularity, uncouthness, are the counters by which they play the game."

The title "The Carpenter's Shop," by which Millais's picture is now generally known, was contemptuously applied to it by enemies of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. The artist originally exhibited it at the Academy with no other title than an extract from Zachariah (xiii. 6) :

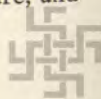
And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands ? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends.

The very humanity which endears the picture to us to-day and makes it irresistibly winning was at that time a cause of offence. Millais was accused of dragging down the Saviour to "the lowest of human levels, to the level of craving human pity and assistance." The picture was described as "a pictorial blasphemy" from which right-minded people would "recoil with disgust and loathing." Even Charles Dickens took part in the general attack, and denounced the picture in *Household Words* as follows :

In the foreground of the carpenter's shop is a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering red-haired boy in a nightgown, who appears to have received a poke in the hand from the stick of another boy with whom he had been playing in an adjacent gutter, and to be holding it up for the contemplation of a kneeling woman so horrible in her ugliness that (supposing it were possible for a human creature to exist for a moment with that dislocated throat) she would stand out from the rest of the company as a monster in the vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin-shop in England.

Since the famous novelist's abuse was directed far more at the persons than the painting, it is interesting to recall that the "blubbering boy" was little Noel Humphreys, the son of an architect, while the "monster horrible in ugliness" was Mrs. Henry Hodgkinson. Not one of the people in the picture was painted from a professional model, and though the body of St. Joseph is that of the carpenter the head is a portrait of the father of Millais.

This shower of vituperation affected the fortunes of the brethren, and Woolner, who had unsuccessfully competed for a commission to execute a Wordsworth Memorial, abandoned sculpture for a time and set sail for the gold-diggings in Australia. There eventually he returned to sculpture, and



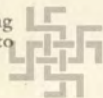


W. F. Mansell.

“CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF HIS PARENTS,” BY MILLAIS

Tate Gallery, London

Dreadfully abused as “mean, odious, revolting, and repulsive” when it was first shown at the Academy in 1850—Charles Dickens joining in the attack—this picture is now generally considered to be the painter’s noblest masterpiece. John Ruskin was the first great writer to praise it, and his eulogy turned the tide of public opinion.

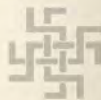


in later years he had a modest success in Australia and England with his portrait busts. Holman Hunt, who could not lean on his parents, as Millais and Rossetti could, had a desperate struggle with poverty, and was compelled to take on the job of washing and restoring the wall paintings by Rigaud (1659-1743) at Trinity House. Stephens was employed with Hunt on this work, and William Rossetti got a place in the Inland Revenue Office. Millais, though the most abused, was the best off of the band, for a dealer named Farrer had the courage to pay him £150 for his picture and showed his faith in the artist by pasting all the adverse criticisms on the back of the canvas. Late in the year a purchaser was found also for the picture by Hunt, who then abandoned his restoration, and set to work on his splendid picture "Two Gentlemen of Verona," now in the Birmingham Art Gallery. Millais at the same time began painting his "Woodman's Daughter," and in these pictures the artists obtained a greater brilliancy of colour than they had yet secured by painting upon a *wet* white ground. They prided themselves on having rediscovered one of the secrets of the early Italian masters, and later on Hunt communicated the "secret" to Madox Brown, whose pictures certainly gained much in luminosity and brightness of colour immediately after 1851.

Rossetti had begun an oil-painting of a subject from one of Browning's poems, but he did not get it finished, so that Millais and Hunt alone had to sustain the renewed attack which was made when their pictures were exhibited in the Academy of 1851. In addition to "The Woodman's Daughter," Millais exhibited "Mariana of the Moated Grange" and "The Return of the Dove to the Ark," and again he and Hunt were told that their paintings were "offensive and absurd productions," displaying nothing but "puerility" "uppishness," and "morbid infatuation." This year, however, they were not without defenders. William Rossetti had begun his career as an art critic and upheld Pre-Raphaelite aims and ideals in the columns of the *Spectator*. Still more important were two letters of chivalrous and whole-hearted appreciation which appeared in *The Times*, signed by "An Oxford Graduate," and everybody knew that the writer was the great John Ruskin. In the same year appeared a new volume of *Modern Painters*, in which Ruskin wrote of Millais and Holman Hunt :

Their works are, in finish of drawing and splendour of colour, the best work in the Royal Academy, and I have great hope that they may become the foundation of a more earnest and able school of art than we have seen for centuries.

It is difficult to exaggerate the revulsion of feeling produced by Ruskin's pronouncements, for at that time he was almost a dictator of taste in England. Slowly the tide began to turn in favour of the brethren, but it was very nearly too late for Hunt. His picture returned to him unsold from the





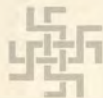
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W. F. Mansell.

"THE TRIUMPH OF THE INNOCENTS," BY W. HOLMAN HUNT (1827-1910)

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

Rigidly faithful all his life to Pre-Raphaelite principles, Holman Hunt visited Palestine twice in order that he might be able to paint sacred subjects with literal truth to Syrian landscape. With poetic imagination the artist depicts the flight into Egypt as a royal progress in which "only the Child's eyes are open to see the children whose wakening souls are His retinue."

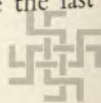


Academy, he was absolutely penniless and had nothing to tide him over until better times ; indeed, he was on the point of abandoning painting and seeking his fortune as a sheep-farmer in Australia when Millais and his parents came to the rescue. Millais had made a little money, and with his parents' consent he gave it to his comrade in order that he might make one more attempt. This generous help bound the two "Brothers" still more closely together, and they spent the late summer and early autumn in the country near Surbiton, searching the backwaters of the Thames to find just the right background for the picture of "Ophelia," which Millais had decided to paint, and studying the meadows for the scene of Hunt's crucial picture "The Hireling Shepherd." But Hunt did not have to wait till this, perhaps his most perfect picture, was finished and exhibited before learning that the tide was turning ; for while he and Millais were painting in the fields a letter was brought them announcing that the Liverpool Academy had awarded a prize of £50 to the painter of "Two Gentlemen of Verona."

"The Hireling Shepherd" embodies the essence of Pre-Raphaelitism and indicates its high-water mark. In the heedless shepherd, who dallies with a coquettish beauty while a wolf is worrying his sheep, a worthy moral lesson is inculcated ; while its bright, jewel-like colour reveals the minute fidelity with which Nature has been painted. When it was shown in the Academy of 1852 the battle was nearly over, for though there was still considerable opposition, the Pre-Raphaelite picture had now become an accepted type of painting, and other Academy exhibitors were beginning to change their practice and paint in a similar style.

The battle was won, but the Brotherhood was beginning to break up ; Woolner was in Australia, Collinson thinking about retiring to a monastery, William Rossetti and Stephens had definitely become writers, and worse still, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was beginning to drift away. From 1850 to 1853 Rossetti produced no large picture. He was steeping himself in Dantesque literature and his mind was more occupied with poetry ; now and again he produced some lovely little water-colours—Ruskin, who had become his principal patron, encouraging him in this direction with his purse as well as his praise. In 1853—the year in which he painted "The Order of Release"—Millais was elected A.R.A., and in the following year Holman Hunt, who had just painted and sold for £400 "The Light of the World," set sail for Palestine in order that he might be able to paint incidents from the life of Christ with literal truth to the nature of the country in which He lived. To the end Holman Hunt remained the most consistent of all to the principles of Pre-Raphaelitism.

For a little while after his departure the influence of Holman Hunt lingered in England. "Autumn Leaves" and "The Blind Girl," both painted in 1855, are true Pre-Raphaelite pictures, and they were the last





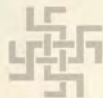
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W. F. Mansell.

"THE HIRELING SHEPHERD," BY W. HOLMAN HUNT

Manchester Art Gallery

One of the three founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Holman Hunt was throughout his life the most faithful adherent to that accurate observation of Nature which was its early ideal.

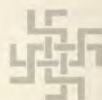


paintings by Millais that Ruskin blessed. For gradually, as he went on his way alone, Millais deteriorated, and though his work rapidly won public favour so that his career henceforward was, from a wordly point of view, one of uninterrupted success, his pictures ceased to be inspired by the noble seriousness of Holman Hunt or by the poetry of Rossetti. What had been sentiment degenerated into sentimentality, and as his subject-matter became commoner in quality, so an increasing laxity crept into his style of painting. "Bubbles," the child picture so extensively popularised as an advertisement by a firm of soap-makers, is the best known example of his later style, but the achievements which come nearest to the distinction of his early work are some of his portraits, notably that of John Charles Montague, an ex-sergeant of the 16th Lancers, whom Millais painted in the uniform of "The Yeoman of the Guard." This picture was painted in 1876, and thirteen years earlier Millais had been elected R.A. In 1885 he was created a baronet, and in 1896, after the death of Lord Leighton, he was made President of the Royal Academy; but already his health was failing, and shortly after his election he died, on August 13 of the same year, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral by the side of his mighty predecessor, Sir Joshua Reynolds.

§ 3

Meanwhile Rossetti had been treading another path, forsaking the naturalism of Holman Hunt, but avoiding the anecdotal triviality that tempted Millais; his pictures became more and more dream-like in their imaginative aloofness from life. The popularity that Millais courted was shunned by Rossetti, who, relying on the patronage of Ruskin and other admirers, ceased to exhibit his pictures except in his own studio.

In 1857 Rossetti went to Oxford with the intention of executing wall-paintings in the Debating Hall of the Union Society, and there he gathered round him a brilliant band of pupils, chief among whom were two undergraduates from Exeter College, William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98). Unfortunately the English climate is fatal to true fresco painting, but though the Oxford decorations rapidly perished, and to-day are hardly visible, they remain historic as marking the starting-point of a new phase of Pre-Raphaelitism, in which the naturalist element was lost and its place taken by a more deliberately decorative and romantic mediævalism. Of this new school Rossetti was as definitely the leader and inspirer as Holman Hunt had been of the original Brotherhood, and though for many years the pictures produced by Rossetti and his followers continued to be commonly described as "Pre-Raphaelite," it is now clear that their productions really had little to do with the original Pre-Raphaelitism, but formed part of what became known later as the "Æsthetic Movement."





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W. F. Mansell.

"THE BLIND GIRL," BY MILLAIS

Birmingham Art Gallery

One of the last paintings in which Millais strictly adhered to the principles of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, this picture moves us equally by the pathetic tenderness of its subject and by the beautiful precision of its rendering of Nature.



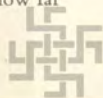


W. F. Mansell.

"THE MILL," BY BURNE-JONES (1833-98)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

This vision of an imaginary world remote from actual life shows how Burne-Jones's idea of womanhood differs from that of Rossetti, and how far removed are his pictorial ideals from the naturalism of Millais and Holman Hunt.



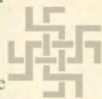


Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright.

"VENICE," BY J. M. W. TURNER

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Turner, concerned with the effects of light and the reflection of light, found in Venice his ideal painting ground, and canvas after canvas showed the insubstantial beauty of the city set on the waters, its buildings and shipping poised between the light of the sky and their own image in the lagoons. This painting of his middle period has not yet dissolved the forms in radiance as he later did.



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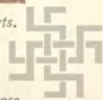


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"THE LEAPING HORSE," BY CONSTABLE

Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy, London

In 1824 Constable attained a European reputation with "The Hay Wain," and the next year he painted "The Leaping Horse." Happily we possess both the finished picture and the large sketch for it (see p. 457), and so we are able to see the important alterations which the artist made for the sake of composition, whilst he retained his feeling of spontaneity, open air and the unspoiled freshness of Nature under open sky.



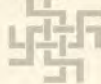
Gandhi National
Centre for the Arts

In 1862 Eleanor Siddal, who for ten years had been Rossetti's model and constant inspiration, died, and at first the bereaved husband was so prostrated with grief that he was totally unfitted for work. But two years later he recommenced painting in oils, and reached the highest point in his "Lady Lilith" of 1864, and "The Beloved" painted in 1865-66. Though nominally a subject from the Song of Solomon, this voluptuous presentation of feminine beauty, which for sheer loveliness rivals a Botticelli, is far removed from the simple and comparatively stern Biblical paintings of the artist's youth. The subject is clothed in the garb of mediævalism, enveloped in the romance of a fairy-tale, and heightened by a brilliance of colour unsurpassed in the painter's work.

Rossetti's pictorial work may be divided into three periods, each of which is dominated by an ideal of womanhood derived from a living woman; in the first period she is his sister Christina, in the second his wife Eleanor Siddal, and the inspiration of the third was Mrs. William Morris. Of the many pictures she inspired one of the most beautiful is "The Day-dream" in the Ionides Collection at South Kensington, but though he painted her in many characters, he never painted Mrs. Morris as Dante's Beatrice. That character was sacred to his wife, and it was in memory of her that he began to paint in 1863—though it was not finished till much later—the "Beata Beatrix," now in the Tate Gallery. The picture, according to Rossetti, "is not intended at all to represent death, but to render it under the semblance of a trance, in which Beatrice, seated at a balcony overlooking the city [Florence], is suddenly rapt from earth to heaven."

Rossetti died at Birchington in 1882, but his ideals were faithfully carried on by the most celebrated of his pupils, Edward Burne-Jones, who had been intended for the Church, but after meeting Rossetti at Oxford felt he must be a painter. One great difference between their pictures lay in their different ideals of womanhood, for while the women of Rossetti were full-blooded and passionate, those of Burne-Jones were of so refined a spirituality that to many people they appear anæmic. Otherwise the paintings of Burne-Jones are as remote from naturalism as the later works of Rossetti; he also gives us dream pictures of an imaginary mediævalism; and while Rossetti, as became his Italian descent, found his ideal in the Florence of Dante's time, the Welshman Burne-Jones fittingly found his in the legendary court of King Arthur. Both, however, were inspired by the same feeling for chivalry and romance, and the distance that had been travelled from Holman Hunt's naturalism may be traced in the famous confession of Burne-Jones that he longed to paint "the light that never was on sea or land."

In 1884 he exhibited one of his best known and most popular works, "King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid" at the Grosvenor Gallery, and two years later, at the age of fifty-three, he was tardily elected A.R.A., but





W. F. Mansell.

"THE DAY-DREAM," BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

A beautiful example of Rossetti's third and last phase, during which his model and inspiration was the beautiful wife of his disciple, William Morris.





W. F. Mansell.

"KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR-MAID," BY BURNE-JONES

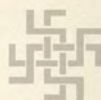
In this dreamlike picture of the King about to lay his jewelled crown at the feet of the beggar-maid, we may trace the mediæval romanticism of Rossetti refined by the spirituality of a Celtic mystic.



he was never much in sympathy with the Academy, seldom exhibited there, and in 1893, five years before he died, he resigned his Associateship.

In addition to his pictures and water-colours, Burne-Jones designed a number of tapestries and stained-glass windows for his lifelong friend William Morris, whose unbounded artistic energy found more congenial occupation in reviving crafts than in practising painting. In Morris the mediævalism of Rossetti found a furiously eager and thoroughgoing exponent, and though many of his ideas were unpractical, his inauguration of the Arts and Crafts Society was one of the most fruitful art movements of the Victorian era, and to him more than to any other man we owe not only the revival of tapestry and stained glass but a great improvement on fine printing, in furniture, pottery, wall-papers, and interior decoration generally.

Holman Hunt, the eldest of the Pre-Raphaelites, survived them all, and after painting a series of sacred pictures unique in English art for their religious fervour and geographical exactitude, he died in September, 1910, at the great age of eighty-three.



XXVII

THE VICTORIAN AGE

THE ART OF LANDSEER, LEIGHTON, POYNTER, ALFRED STEVENS,
ALBERT MOORE, ORCHARDSON, AND G. F. WATTS

§ I

SEVERAL of the artists already mentioned in this OUTLINE—among them being Turner, Cotman, and David Cox—were alive and working when Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, but we are not in the habit of thinking of any of these as typical artists of the Victorian era. Even the Pre-Raphaelites, whose art, as described in the previous chapter, shed so much lustre on the Queen's long reign, were a group apart from the general trend of the times, and none of these painters—with the one exception of Millais in his later years—showed in his art those peculiar characteristics which we are now inclined to label broadly as "Victorian."

Just as in politics the reign of Victoria was distinguished, before all things, by the growth of Democracy, so painting during this reign approached more closely than it had ever done before to popular ideals. Under Queen Victoria English painting became a homely, easily understandable art, appealing to the people by clear representation of simple themes often founded on everyday life, and almost always tinged by a sentiment perceptible and congenial to the humblest intelligence. Subject was of paramount importance, every picture told a story, and the story was usually of a simple nature that required no erudition for its comprehension, one that all who can read could read.

Of a host of pictures of this description only a few can be mentioned here. The quintessence of Victorianism may be found in the paintings of William Powell Frith (1819-1909), whose "Derby Day," now in the Tate Gallery, created a sensation in 1858, and whose "Railway Station," painted four years later, is a still more dramatic assemblage of the "all sorts and conditions of men" who go to make the world. No knowledge of the Old Masters or of the technique of painting is needed to enjoy Frith's "Railway Station"; everybody can recognise the bridal couple being "seen off" by their friends, the boy who is going to school, the new recruit taking leave of his parents, and the criminal who is being arrested at the moment when he thought to escape. This picture is not only full of the incidents which may

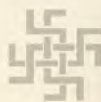


be seen at any railway station ; it is full of the simple human emotions which all have experienced and all can understand.

Very much the same qualities—though the subjects are entirely different—can be found in the works of Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A. (1802–1873), who was reputed to have been Queen Victoria's favourite painter, and was certainly one of the most popular and most successful painters of his day. Edwin Henry Landseer was born in London and was one of a family of artists. He was the third son of John Landseer, A.R.A., a painter and engraver ; his brother Charles Landseer (1799–1879) also became a successful painter of historical and animal pictures ; and his eldest brother, Thomas Landseer, became an expert engraver, whose prints after his brother's pictures materially contributed to the wide-spread fame and popularity which Edwin Landseer enjoyed. Animals specially appealed to the young artist, and some of his earliest studies were made in a menagerie at Exeter Exchange, where the Strand Palace Hotel now stands. The first distinction he received was a premium from the Society of Arts for his drawing of "A Horse for Hunting," and at the age of fourteen he was admitted as a student to the schools of the Royal Academy, where he had already made his debut as an exhibitor with a painting of "The Heads of a Poynter and Puppy."

Up to about 1820 his subjects had chiefly been dogs and horses, but he soon added other animals to his repertory. Among his father's friends was the historical painter Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846), and on the advice of this artist Landseer, while still an Academy student, learnt to dissect and make anatomical studies of animals. Taking advantage of the death of a lion in one of the menageries, he diligently studied its anatomy, and the knowledge thus gained gave him a power in the drawing of that animal notable in his future works. The first fruits of these studies were his pictures "A Prowling Lion" in the Academy of 1821 and "A Lion Disturbed" in the following year. In 1824 he exhibited "The Cat's Paw," a picture of a monkey seizing a cat's paw to take roasting chestnuts from a fire, this being one of the first of his animal paintings in which an obvious moral was happily combined with humour.

In this year, when Landseer was twenty-two, he accompanied his friend and fellow-student C. R. Leslie (1794–1859) on a visit to Scotland, where the two young artists had the honour of staying with Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford. Landseer drew the dogs of the author of *Waverley*, and was introduced by the novelist to the deer forests of Scotland. Henceforward the "monarch of the glen" became one of Landseer's favourite subjects, and deer-stalking was the sport which he loved beyond all others ; but it is said that the sportsman was often vanquished by the artist, and that when a particularly noble animal came in sight, Landseer was apt to fling down his rifle and pick up instead his sketch-book and pencil.





W. F. Mansell.

"DIGNITY AND IMPUDENCE," BY LANDSEER, (1802-73)

Tate Gallery, London

Landseer, who was Queen Victoria's favourite painter, is the most famous interpreter in art of canine intelligence and fidelity. In this, the most popular of his pictures, the artist humorously contrasts the stateliness of the bloodhound with the "cheekiness" of a little Scotch terrier.

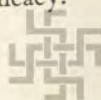


In 1826 he was elected A.R.A., and his prosperity being now assured he left his father's house and established himself at 1 St. John's Wood Road, where he lived unmarried till the day of his death. Landseer now widened the field of his art, and painted pictures of various subjects, among them being several portraits. One of the most successful of the last was "Lord Cosmo Russell," a picture of a little boy on a rough pony scampering over the heather; but while he never lacked patrons even for portraiture, his fame and popularity depended chiefly on his animal pictures, and particularly on his paintings of dogs. A witty canon of St. Paul's, who was advised to have his portrait painted by Landseer, laughingly declined with the remark, "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

In 1834 he exhibited at the Royal Academy "Bolton Abbey in the Olden Time," one of the best known and most popular of all his works, which has been made familiar throughout Great Britain not only by engravings but also by innumerable copies in needlework. In 1837 he increased his already great reputation by his picture of a faithful dog watching beside a coffin, entitled "The Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner," a work of intense pathos, and in the following year he painted a noble Newfoundland dog as "A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society." No painter ever surpassed Landseer in rendering all the varied aspects of canine character, and while in some of his pictures he attained a sublimity of pathos so that some captious critics accused him of making his dogs "too human," in others he showed a subtle humour which is irresistible. Probably no English picture has ever enjoyed a wider popularity than "Dignity and Impudence," in which Landseer amusingly contrasts an old bloodhound of the Duke of Grafton breed with a little Scotch terrier called "Scratch." Landseer loved dogs and kept a troop of them in his home at St. John's Wood.

From 1839 onwards the artist enjoyed a considerable intimacy with the Royal Family. He taught both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort to etch and painted many pictures for them, one of his largest being "The Drive, Shooting Deer on the Pass." He had been elected R.A. in 1831 and in 1850 he was knighted. He was a sculptor as well as a painter, and in 1859 he was commissioned to execute the lions for the base of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. On this work the artist was engaged, off and on, for some half a dozen years, and his lions were finally uncovered at Trafalgar Square in 1869. Two of the studies which Landseer made at the Zoo for these lions are now in the National Gallery (Nos. 1349 and 1350).

Three years earlier, on the death of Sir Charles Eastlake (1793-1865), Landseer had been offered the Presidency of the Royal Academy, but he declined the honour, for though a general favourite, popular alike at Court, in society, and with the public, he was subject to fits of depression brought about by an almost morbid sensitiveness and a certain constitutional delicacy.



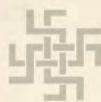


Rischgilt.

"SYMPATHY," BY BRITON RIVIÈRE (1840-1920)

Tate Gallery, London

This favourite picture of a little girl in disgrace and her canine comforter never fails to appeal to all who love children and dogs and have remarked the unspoken sympathy which exists between them.

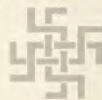


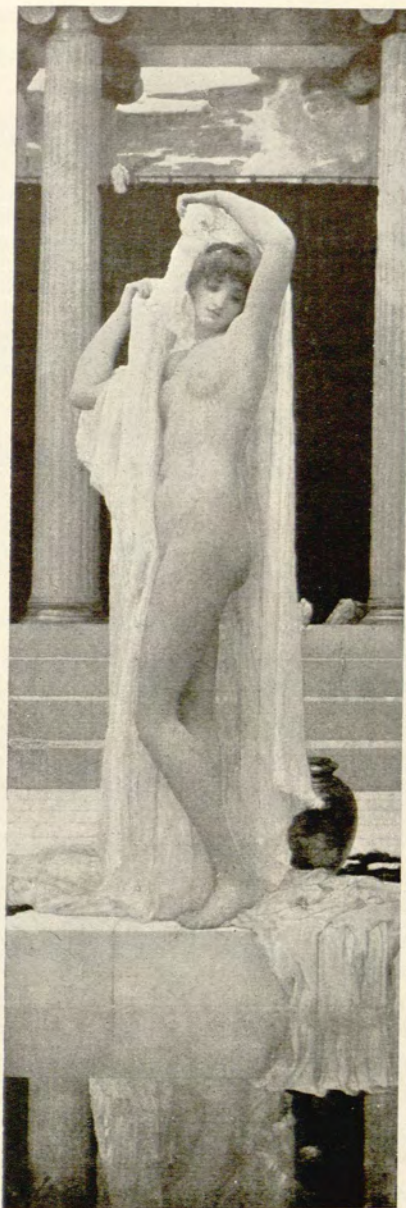
Towards the end of his life he suffered continually from nerves, and his general state of health was sadly impaired by a railway accident in November 1868. This accident not only left a scar on his forehead but affected his memory, so that his last years were much clouded. He died in his house in St. John's Wood on October 1, 1873, and was buried in state at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The tradition of painting animals with affectionate insight, founded by Landseer, has been followed with success by many other British artists, prominent among them being Briton Rivière (1840-1920), who, after being influenced at first by the pictures of the Pre-Raphaelites and by Tennyson's poetry, soon turned his attention to the painting of pictures in which animals played an important part. His well-known "Sympathy," in the Tate Gallery, is a characteristic Victorian picture in the Landseer tradition, but in gayer and more agreeable colours. It tells its own story clearly, and can never fail to appeal to all who love children and dogs and have noted the unspoken sympathy which exists between them.

§ 2

Victorian painting was essentially a story-telling art, but the stories were not limited to one country or to one century. The classical revival, the delight in pictures representing the life of ancient Greece and Rome, which marked, as we have seen, the art of France during the Revolutionary Period, did not show itself in England till nearly half a century later. The man who introduced this style of picture into England was Frederick Leighton, who, though born at Scarborough in 1830, spent the greater part of his early life abroad. Leighton was the son of a physician and spent his boyhood in Italy. When he was only ten years old he studied drawing at Rome, and afterwards lived in Florence, where he was taught by several Italian artists. When he was eighteen he visited Brussels, and in the following year he continued his art studies in Paris, where he attended a life-school and copied pictures by Titian and Correggio in the Louvre. In 1850 he went to Germany, visiting Dresden and Berlin, but staying longest at Frankfort, where he worked for two years under a painter named Steinle, and was to some extent influenced by the painters Cornelius and Overbeck, who were mentioned in the last chapter. From Germany he returned to Paris, where he had a studio in the Rue Pigalle. At this time he was much enamoured of the earliest Italian artists, and his first oil-painting, executed at Frankfort, represented "Giotto found by Cimabue among the Sheep." It was from Paris that Leighton sent to the Academy of 1855 his picture of "Cimabue's Madonna carried in Procession through the Streets of Florence." This picture, with its precise drawing, elaborate design, and fresh, clear colour, created a tremendous





W. F. Mansell

"THE BATH OF PSYCHE," BY LORD LEIGHTON, (1830-96)

Tate Gallery, London



sensation in London, and when it was bought by Queen Victoria the reputation of the painter was immediately made. It was not till five years later, however, that Leighton left Paris and settled in London.

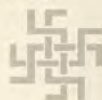
Leighton was now thirty years old, and he was an accomplished, much-travelled man of the world. He had charming, courtly manners, and his prestige in the arts was equalled by his social success. He executed a number of illustrations for the Brothers Dalziel, but he had no lack of other patrons, and received numerous commissions for decorative paintings and subject pictures. He gave himself largely to the illustration of Greek history and legend, two of his most famous pictures in this style being "Daphnephoria" and "The Return of Persephone," now in the Leeds Art Gallery. He was generally considered to have recaptured the spirit of Greek art better than any artist since Raphael, and "The Bath of Psyche" is a famous example of the almost waxen perfection of his figures, and of his manner of idealising the nude.

The graceful sense of form noticeable in his paintings was also displayed in Leighton's works of sculpture, of which the best known are "The Sluggard" and "Athlete with Python," both in the Tate Gallery. From the moment he set foot in England, Leighton's career was a series of unbroken successes. He was elected A.R.A. in 1864, R.A. in 1868, and ten years later, after the death of Sir Francis Grant in 1878, he was elected President of the Royal Academy and received a knighthood. He was created a baronet in 1886, and on January 1, 1896, a few months before his death, he was made Baron Leighton of Stretton, being the first British painter elevated to the peerage.

Leighton never married. He built himself a handsome house, with an Arab Hall, from his own design, at No. 2 Holland Park Road, and his home, now known as Leighton House, is preserved as a memorial of his art.

Looking backward, we may surmise that the wide popularity enjoyed by Leighton and his followers was not altogether unrelated to the revival of interest in antiquity and archæology which, beginning in the reign of Queen Victoria, has continued undiminished to this day. At a time when the mind of the public was roused by reports in the newspapers of the discoveries made by excavators in Greece, Egypt, and elsewhere, it is not surprising that visitors to the Academy should have made favourites of those pictures which sought to portray life as it was in Greece or Egypt in the olden days.

Among a number of scholarly artists who were influenced by the example of Leighton, one of the most distinguished was his eventual successor in the presidency of the Royal Academy, Sir Edward John Poynter (1836-1919). This artist was born in Paris and was the son of an architect, Ambrose Poynter, who was himself a skilful painter in water-colours and had been an intimate friend of R. P. Bonington. E. J. Poynter studied art first in the





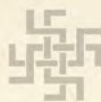
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W. F. Mansell.

"FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH," BY POYNTER (1836-1919)

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

This inspiring picture of a Roman sentinel, steadfastly remaining at his post amid the scenes of terror which accompanied the destruction of Pompeii by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius is generally regarded as the masterpiece of one of the most eminent of the Victorian classical painters.

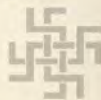


Academy schools and afterwards in Paris, where one of his most intimate friends and fellow-students was the illustrator George du Maurier, author of *Trilby*. Poynter first exhibited at the Academy in 1861, and during the earlier part of his life he designed a number of decorative works, among them being mosaics for the Houses of Parliament and for St. Paul's Cathedral. He also, like Leighton, executed illustrations—some of which appeared in *Once-a-Week*—and painted portraits as well as landscapes; but though his activities were many and various, he was best known by his paintings of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian subjects. His first great popular success, and probably the most moving picture he ever conceived, was painted in 1865; "Faithful unto Death," now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, shows a Roman soldier standing unmoved at his post while Pompeii is being destroyed by volcanic eruption, and in this picture the artist not only shows exactitude in archæological detail, but also expresses a nobility of purpose which every human being can understand and admire. In 1867 he painted "Israel in Egypt," but in later years he seldom approached the high seriousness of these early pictures, and though he maintained his popularity with scholarly and agreeable renderings of classical scenes, like "A Visit to Æsculapius" in the Tate Gallery, the subjects of these pictures tended to become lighter and sometimes trivial.

In addition to his work as a painter Sir E. J. Poynter was overwhelmed by official duties. He was elected A.R.A. in 1869 and two years later he was appointed the first Slade Professor at University College, London, a post which he held till 1875, when he became Director of the Royal College of Art at South Kensington, over which he presided for seven years. Meanwhile he had in 1876 been elected R.A., and henceforward his influence in the Academy council steadily increased. In 1894 he was appointed Director of the National Gallery, London, and he held this post till 1905, although in 1896 he had been appointed President of the Royal Academy, in succession to Millais. He was knighted in 1896 and made a baronet in 1902.

The wealth of Victorian England not only fostered native art, but naturally drew to these shores a number of foreign artists. Among them was one of the most famous of our modern classical painters, Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema. This artist was born in Holland in 1836, and after studying art in Antwerp gave his attention to historical painting. He began with early French and Egyptian subjects, but commenced his series of Greek subjects about 1865. In 1869 he sent his painting "The Pyrrhic Dance" to the Academy in London, where it was so well received that the painter decided to settle in England and became naturalised in 1873.

In the hands of Alma-Tadema the classical picture became historical in detail but playful and fanciful in subject. The Victorian anecdote reappeared in a Greek or Roman dress, as in his picture "A Silent Greeting" at the Tate

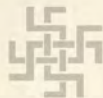




"LOVE IN IDLENESS," BY ALMA-TADEMA (1836-1912)

Rischgitz.

Among the classical painters of his time, Alma-Tadema, who was born in Holland, won wide popularity by illustrating the lighter side of life in ancient Greece and Rome. This dream-like picture of wistful maidenhood is a characteristic example of his art, and exhibits the scrupulously painted marble accessories which this artist delighted to introduce into his pictures.



Gallery, in which a Roman warrior places a bunch of roses in the lap of a sleeping lady. "Love in Idleness" is a characteristic example of his art and shows the wonderfully painted marble accessories which he was so fond of introducing into his pictures. Though full himself of antiquarian knowledge, and often called upon by Irving and other theatrical producers to assist in giving verisimilitude to the costumes and scenery for historical plays, Alma-Tadema never wearied the public with his learning, and his pictures were in the nature of agreeable dreams which made no serious demands upon the intellect or high emotions of the spectator. In the course of a long and successful career Alma-Tadema was elected A.R.A. in 1876, R.A. in 1879, knighted in 1899, and received the Order of Merit in 1905. He died while staying at Wiesbaden in 1912.

While all these artists enjoyed fame and fortune in their lifetime, other artists of equal or superior gifts were less appreciated by their contemporaries, though in several cases their fame is higher to-day than that of the popular favourites of their day. If we number Albert Moore (1841-93) among the Victorian classical painters, we must be careful to draw a distinction between his art and that of Leighton, Poynter, and Alma-Tadema. For, whereas these three artists emphasised the illustrative element in painting, Albert Moore laid more stress on its decorative element. Moore was not anecdotal, and for this reason his decorative compositions did not make so easy and obvious an appeal to his contemporaries; but he was filled with the Greek spirit of beauty, and his painting "Blossoms" is now one of the most admired of the quasi-classical pictures in the Tate Gallery. Moore was born at York and was the son of an artist, but though he was trained in the Academy schools and began to exhibit at the Academy in the 'sixties, he was not well received there, and subsequently exhibited chiefly at the Grosvenor Gallery and the Old Water-colour Society. He was never elected a member of the Academy, but associated with Whistler and other independent artists. An admirable draughtsman and designer, Albert Moore was also gifted with a refined and delicate sense of colour equalled by few of his contemporaries.

His brother Henry Moore (1831-95), an excellent marine painter, received more official recognition; he was elected A.R.A. in 1886, R.A. in 1893, and in 1885 his "Catspaws off the Land," in the Tate Gallery, was bought for the nation.

§ 3

Apart from all the other artists of his time stands the lonely figure of Alfred Stevens (1817-75), who, though never fully appreciated by his own contemporaries, is now generally recognised to have been probably the greatest and most complete artist that England ever produced. Stevens was

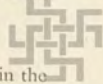


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"THE SCAPEGOAT," BY HOLMAN HUNT

The Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight

With the money earned from the sale of "The Light of the World" Holman Hunt fulfilled his dream of a journey to Palestine to paint Biblical subjects in the Pre-Raphaelite ideal of absolute truth to natural fact. This picture was one of the first results. The detailed landscape beside the Dead Sea is made the setting for a subject of religious significance and symbolism.



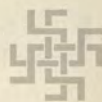
National Centre for the Arts



Reproduced by permission of the Home House Society, Courtauld Institute of Art.
 "LA LOGE," BY RENOIR

National Gallery, London

A picture which shows Renoir working as a semi-portraitist outside the Impressionist manner we usually associate with him. He builds up a brilliant composition with the black and white of the woman's dress and the man's evening clothes, set against the crimson and gold of the theatre decoration.



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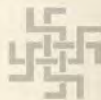
"BLOSSOMS," BY ALBERT MOORE (1841-93)
Tate Gallery, London

cast in a heroic mould and ought to have lived in a heroic age ; painter, sculptor, and architect, he possessed the universality of some giant of the Renaissance ; and no other artist of any country has approached more closely in his work to the temper of Michael Angelo. Yet this great Englishman was never recognised or honoured by the Royal Academy ; throughout his life he had a hard struggle to make a living, and while his Wellington Monument and Prophets for St. Paul's Cathedral prove that he was capable of executing works of the mightiest genius both in sculpture and in painting, for want of more appropriate employment Stevens was condemned to spend a great part of his life in designing stoves, fenders, etc., for commercial firms.

Alfred Stevens was born at Blandford in Dorset in 1817. He was the son of a heraldic painter, whom he assisted from an early age, and while he was still in his teens his rare genius was recognised by some of the better-off residents in the district, who subscribed a purse to enable him to study art in Italy. Thus assisted, Stevens went to Italy in 1833, and stayed there for nearly nine years, studying painting, sculpture, and architecture, chiefly in Florence and Rome. In the latter city he was for two years (1841-42) assistant to the Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen (1770-1844), author of the famous Lion of Lucerne, carved in the solid rock in memory of the Swiss Guards who died in defence of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

When Alfred Stevens returned to England in 1842 he was, according to modern authorities, "the most thoroughly educated artist the country has seen," but his erudition and genius long failed to find suitable employment. In 1844 he competed, unsuccessfully, for a commission to execute decorations in Westminster Hall, and in the following year he accepted an appointment as Master of Architectural Drawing, Perspective, Modelling, and Ornamental Painting to a new School of Design at Somerset House. To Stevens, however, teaching was never more than a stopgap ; he knew that his real business in life was to create works of art, and consequently as soon as he was given an opportunity to do creative work he resigned his appointment and in 1847 he began to decorate Deysbrook, near Liverpool. For the next few years he managed to make a living by working for other architects ; in 1849 and 1854 he worked for Cockerell on St. George's Hall, Liverpool ; he designed the bronze doors for Pennethorn's Geological Museum in Jermyn Street ; he designed the lions for the British Museum railings in 1852 ; but work of this kind was so uncertain that in 1850 he had been glad to accept a position as designer in the firm of Hoole at Sheffield. Thanks to Alfred Stevens, this firm secured first prize for their stoves and fenders in the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Occasionally he received a commission for a painting, and his noble portrait of Mrs. Mary Ann Collmann, at the National Gallery, was painted





W. F. Mansell.

MRS. MARY ANN COLLMANN, BY ALFRED STEVENS (1817-75)

National Gallery, London

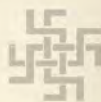
Painter, sculptor, and architect, Alfred Stevens recalled the universality which distinguished the giants of the Renaissance. Towards the end of his life he was entrusted with the execution of the Wellington Monument for St. Paul's Cathedral, but for many years his genius was frittered away by his being compelled to earn his living by designing minor objects for architects and commercial firms. This noble portrait of the wife of an architect who employed him at one time, shows the regal dignity and perfection of his painting.



in 1854, the lady being the wife of an architect, Leonard Collmann, who sometimes employed Stevens.

In 1850 Stevens began the chief work of his life with his competition model for the Wellington Monument. Originally he was placed only sixth in the competition and awarded a prize of £100, but fortunately on further consideration the superior merit and appropriateness of his design was perceived and the commission for the monument was definitely given to Stevens. For the remaining seventeen years of his life the artist was at work on this monument. It was all but completed at his death, with the exception of the crowning equestrian statue of the Duke, which, by a strange caprice, was ruled out by the Dean because he did not like the idea of a horse in a church! Eventually this pedantic objection was overruled, and the equestrian statue, carried out from Stevens' model, was placed in position as recently as 1911, so that the whole monument as conceived by Stevens may now be seen in St. Paul's. Other memorials of the genius of Stevens in St. Paul's are the four mosaics of Prophets in the spandrels under the dome, which he designed in 1862. The original cartoon for the mosaic of "Isaiah" is now in the Tate Gallery, and nothing equal to it can be found nearer than the Sistine Chapel at Rome. Concurrently with these great masterpieces, Stevens worked at the decoration of Dorchester House, Park Lane, where he completed for Mr. Holford two chimney-pieces, a buffet, and other features, and designed a painted ceiling, the whole being a scheme of unequalled splendour in English interior decoration. Worn out by the strain of his monument and his severe battle with life, Alfred Stevens died on May 1, 1875, in the house he had designed and built for himself at 9 Eaton Villas, Haverstock Hill. Apart from the works already mentioned, only a few fragments remain of the art of Alfred Stevens, but while we must always deplore that more opportunities were not given to so great and various an artist, enough exists to prove to all time the measure of his genius.

If Stevens was neglected in his lifetime, we have since grown to appreciate greatly the perfection of his art and realise that in him we had an English master comparable to the noble figures of the Renaissance. His drawings are now much sought after, and a particularly fine collection of more than a hundred of them, as well as other work by him, enriches the Walker Art Gallery at Liverpool. There also can be seen some of his early portraits, some of the work from Dorchester House, and other examples of his art and craft. Because of his connection with St. George's Hall at Liverpool and with Deysbrook House in that locality, it is fitting that the city should thus honour him. In the presence of any such collection of his work we realise that his quality was that of the Renaissance masters, and that this great Victorian was the last artist to remain true to the ideals of Greek culture.





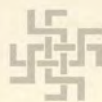
W. F. Mansell.

"HOPE," BY G. F. WATTS (1817-1904)

Tate Gallery, London

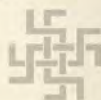
Blindfolded, with lyre in hand, and sitting on the globe in the dim twilight of the world, Hope "strives to get all the music possible out of the last remaining string."

This beautiful allegory is the masterpiece of an artist who sought in all his works to "appeal to the imagination and the heart, and kindle all that is best and noblest in humanity."



Born in the same year as Stevens was another great artist, who, though he certainly gained honours and rewards during his lifetime, nevertheless found himself hampered by the circumstances of his time in carrying out the desires of his art. George Frederick Watts was born in London on February 23, 1817, the son of a Welsh father, who encouraged his artistic bent and permitted him to study at the Academy schools and also under the sculptor William Behnes (1795-1864). When he was twenty-five Watts entered the competition for the best designs for decorating in fresco the new House of Lords, and won the first prize of £300 with his "Caractacus led Captive through the Streets of Rome." This was the competition in which both Alfred Stevens and Ford Madox Brown were unsuccessful. On the strength of this prize Watts in 1843 went to Italy, where he remained for four years, mostly in Florence, and was befriended by Lord Holland. Returning to England, Watts entered another competition in 1847 for decorating the House of Lords, this time in oils, and again won the first prize of £500 with his "Alfred inciting the Saxons to resist the Danes." As a result of these successes Watts was employed for the next ten years on mural decorations, painting "St. George overcoming the Dragon" for the House of Lords and his allegory of "Justice" for the great hall of Lincoln's Inn; but though his desire was to continue painting in this style, further opportunities were denied him. He offered to give his time freely in painting decorations for Euston railway station, but the offer was declined, and balked of his intention to create elevating works of art in public buildings, he began that great series of painted allegories with which his name is most closely associated.

Explaining his own ideals Watts once said: "My intention has not been so much to paint pictures that charm the eye, as to suggest great thoughts that will appeal to the imagination and the heart, and kindle all that is best and noblest in humanity." Successful in his early years and never covetous of great wealth, Watts was able in his middle years to paint exactly as he pleased without thinking of sales and patrons. He painted portraits, but he never portrayed any person he did not respect and admire, and the noble series of pictures of the great men of his time which he gave to the National Portrait Gallery shows how little, even in portraiture, did Watts paint for money. Similarly, the pick of his allegorical paintings, a cycle of the history of humanity, was kept for years in his own gallery at Little Holland House, till in 1897 he generously presented the collection to the Tate Gallery. Watts was essentially a philosophical artist and he has not inaccurately been described as "a preacher in paint," for, in his opinion, it was not enough for an artist to portray noble aspirations, he must also "condemn in the most trenchant manner prevalent vices," and utter



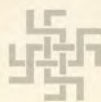


W. F. Mansell.

"MAMMON," BY G. F. WATTS

Tate Gallery, London

A powerful indictment of ruthlessness in the pursuit of wealth. The artist shows us the god of riches, with ass's ears, in gold brocade and crown, seated on a blood-red throne surmounted by skulls, with money-bags in his lap. With heavy hand he crushes the head of Woman, whose green garment (symbolic of hope) has fallen from her, while Man is stripped and prostrate beneath his foot.





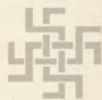
"LOVE AND LIFE," BY G. F. WATTS

W. F. Mansell.

Tate Gallery, London

Love, strong in immortal youth, guides Life upwards over a rocky path, sheltering her with his broad wings from stormy winds. Even in this barren soil violets spring up where Love has trod.

An exquisite allegory by the most thoughtful of Victorian painters.





W. F. Mansell.

"THE TENDER CHORD," BY ORCHARDSON, (1835-1910)

This engaging picture of a Victorian young lady, arrested by some memory evoked by "the tender chord," is a typical example of the domestic art of this distinguished Scottish painter, who retained the respect of his brother artists by his polished powers of painting and design, and won the affection of the public by his power to suggest a story and convey a sentiment.

“ warning in deep tones against lapses from morals and duties.” All aspects of Watts’s art may be seen to advantage in the room devoted to his works at the Tate Gallery, where his beautiful “ Hope ” and his “ Love and Life ” reveal noble aspirations of humanity, while his unforgettable “ Mammon ” and “ The Minotaur ” condemn prevalent vices and warn against lapses from morals.

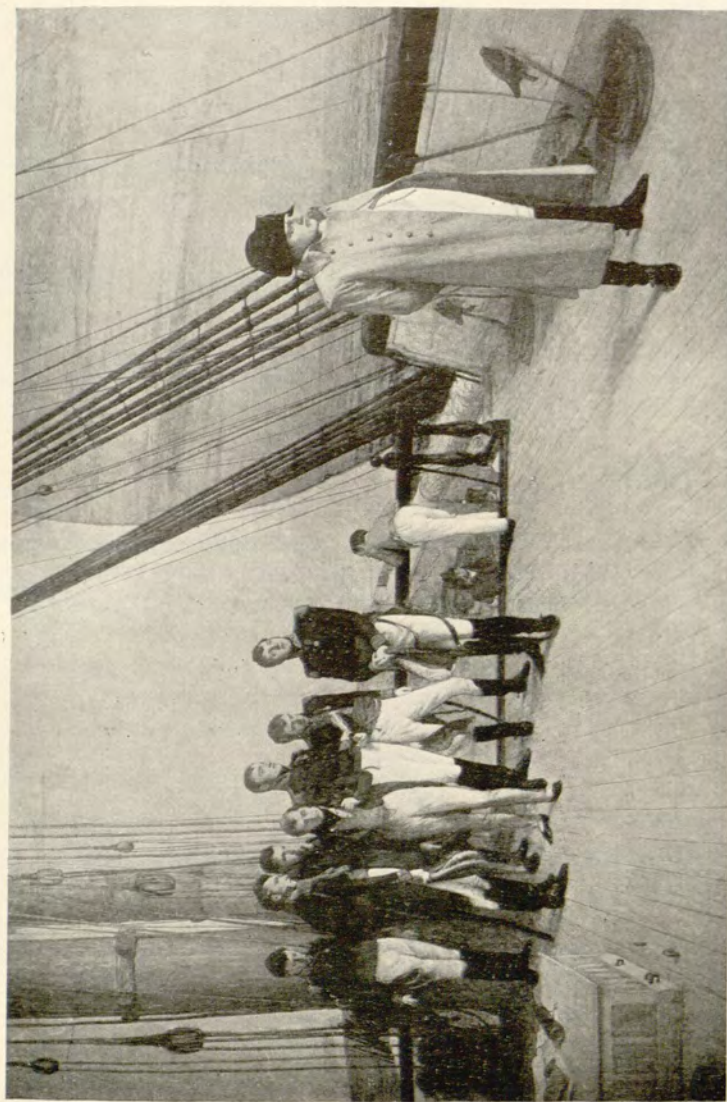
As a sculptor Watts is represented at the Tate Gallery by his bronze bust of “ Clytie,” but his most important work in this medium is his equestrian group “ Physical Energy,” originally designed as a monument to Cecil Rhodes and set up as a memorial to the great Empire builder on the slopes of Table Mountain, Cape Town. A replica of this fine statue has been placed in Kensington Gardens.

The life of Watts was long and full of honours. He was elected A.R.A. and R.A. in the same year, 1867 ; twice he was offered and refused a baronetcy, but two years before his death he accepted the Order of Merit. He died in 1904 at the great age of eighty-seven, his last years having been spent chiefly in his country house at Compton, Surrey, where a large permanent collection of his works is still visible to the public.

§ 5

Watts for nobility of thought and conception and Stevens for grandeur of design and execution will, in all probability, be considered by posterity to have been the two most eminent artists of the Victorian era, but though it may be less easy to find, among the painters, the outstanding giants who mark the same period in literature, the very number of names as distinguished as they are familiar show how active and flourishing the arts were during the Queen’s long reign. Many artists who enjoyed, and still enjoy, a wide popularity must necessarily be omitted from this OUTLINE, but no survey, however hasty, of Victorian painting can ignore the band of Scottish artists who won fame in the south as well as in the north. Among them we may mention the historical and romantic painter John Pettie (1839–93) ; Peter Graham, the cattle painter ; John MacWhirter, the popular painter of the Highlands ; William M’Taggart, unrivalled in his delicate yet vigorous renderings of foaming seas and windy shores ; and Sir W. Q. Orchardson, the leader of this band of Scottish students, and one of the most polished, typical, and popular of all Victorian artists. William Quiller Orchardson (1835–1910) was born in Edinburgh and came to London about 1862, and thereafter maintained and held his position as one of the most popular of Academy exhibitors. He excelled in a variety of subjects ; his “ Sir Walter Gilbey ” and “ Master Baby ”—a group of his wife and child—rank among the great portraits of the nineteenth century ; “ Napoleon on Board the





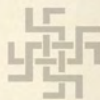
W. F. Mansell.

NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE *BELLEROPHON*, BY ORCHARDSON

Tate Gallery, London

A dramatic, thought-provoking vision of the deposed Emperor on his way to St. Helena. The officers of his staff, from left to right, are Col. Planat, General Montholm, Surgeon Maingaut, Count Las Cases, Generals Savary, Lallemand, and Bertrand. The boy Las Cases leans upon the rail.

Bellerophon " is one of the best known and most admired of modern historical paintings ; but perhaps the best loved of all his works are those paintings of contemporary life, like "The Tender Chord," which, without being positively "anecdotal," yet suggest a story and convey a sentiment. It was the distinction of Orchardson that his story-telling was never crude and obvious, his sentiment was always gentle and refined, his execution was suave and accomplished, so that his pictures, often representing moods of wistful reverie, charmed the eye of the beholder and at the same time conjured up a scene which dwelt in the memory and made its own appeal to the imagination.



XXVIII

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

THE ART OF DELACROIX, GÉRICAULT, COROT, MILLET, AND
THE BARBIZON SCHOOL

§ I

SOME thirty years before the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood began its triumphant fight in England for the free expression of new ideals in art, a similar struggle between old and new schools of artists was waged with extraordinary vehemence in France. We saw in Chapter XXIII how under the Revolution and the Empire a cold Classicism was the dominating tendency in French painting, and how gradually there arose among the younger artists a reaction against this traditional art. The spirit of unrest, which profoundly agitated France after the restoration of the Bourbons and culminated in the revolutionary explosion of 1848, first began to show itself in the art and literature of the younger generation. On one hand were the defenders of tradition, of the "grand style" of Academic painting, defenders of the classic ideal based on the sculpture of ancient Greece and Rome; on the other were ardent young reformers, intoxicated with the colour and movement of life itself, who found their inspiration, not in the classics, but in romantic literature, in Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron, and Scott. Passion, movement, the imaginative expression of life were the aims of this group of artists, who became known as the Romantics.

"Who will deliver us from the Greeks and Romans?" was a catchword among the young enthusiasts who found more beauty in life and Nature than in the masterpieces of ancient sculpture. The deliverer was found in the ranks of the reactionaries, in a young artist who was the pupil of Guérin the classicist. Jean Louis André Théodore Géricault was born at Rouen in 1791 and came to Paris about 1806, studying first with Carle Vernet and afterwards with Guérin. His method of drawing was so different from that approved by the school of David, that it exasperated his "correct" and academic master, who told Géricault he had better give up art because it was evident he would never succeed in it.

One day as Géricault was walking along a road near St. Cloud, a dapple-grey horse in a cart turned restive and plunged about in the sunshine. Géricault whipped out his sketch-book and jotted down notes of the movement



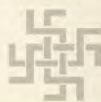
of the animal and the play of light and shade on his dappled coat, and these notes gave him the idea of a great picture. He would paint an equestrian portrait, not the stiff image of a man on a wooden horse, but a vivid presentment of the plunging, sun-illuminated animal he had seen. He persuaded his friend Lieutenant Dieudonné to pose for the rider, and he had a cab-horse brought round each morning that he might freshen his eye with the points of the horse. Working with the highest enthusiasm and energy Géricault, in the space of a fortnight, produced his "Officier des Chasseurs à Cheval," now in the Louvre. This picture created a sensation in the Paris Salon of 1812.

Two years afterwards Géricault repeated his success with a companion picture, "The Wounded Cuirassier," and after a short period of military service—when he had further opportunities of studying his favourite equine models—he went in 1817 to Italy, where he "trembled" before the works of Michael Angelo, who henceforward became his inspiration and idol.

When Géricault returned to France in 1818, he found all Paris talking about nothing but a naval disaster of two years earlier, an account of which had just been published by two of the survivors. The drama of the shipwreck of the *Medusa* seized upon the imagination of the artist, who determined to make it the subject of a picture. He spent months in collecting material for this work. He found the carpenter of the *Medusa* and induced him to make a model of the famous raft by which the survivors were saved. He spent days in hospitals studying the effects of illness and suffering. He persuaded two of the surviving officers of the ship to give him sittings, and painted one leaning against the mast and the other holding out his two arms towards the rescuing ship on the horizon. All his models were taken from life, and it is interesting to note that his friend, the famous artist Eugène Delacroix, posed for the man who lies inert on the left with his head against the edge of the raft.

These methods of painting—though afterwards employed by the Pre-Raphaelites—were then a complete innovation in painting, and the painting was so novel in conception, so contrary to the received ideas of the time, that when it was at length completed and shown in the Salon of 1819 it was at first greeted with nothing but abuse. Nevertheless, this picture marks a turning-point in the history of French painting; it brought strong feeling and pulsating life into the barren and frozen official art, and gave new ideals to the younger generation.

At the time the genius of Géricault was more highly appreciated in England than in France, and after the exhibition of his masterpiece the artist visited London, where his drawings and paintings of horses were intensely admired, and Géricault did signal service to the art of both countries by returning to Paris full of praise for the painting of Bonington and Constable,



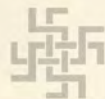


"THE RAFT OF THE *MEDUSA*," BY GÉRICAUT (1791-1824)

Rischgitz.

The Louvre, Paris

Inspired by the heroic endurance of the survivors from a sensational shipwreck in 1816, this picture of a contemporary event, painted with scrupulous fidelity to the facts as obtained from eye-witnesses, marks a turning-point in the history of French painting. It brought back life and feeling into a petrified, official art, and gave new ideals to the younger generation.



whose pictures he introduced to and made known in Paris. Unfortunately for the world this great genius was short-lived. Early in 1823 he was stricken down by a mortal illness, and after eleven months of terrible suffering, borne with fortitude and composure, he died in January 1824 at the early age of thirty-three. His place at the head of the Romantic School was taken by Delacroix, who had been his friend and fellow-student in the studio of Guérin.

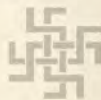
Ferdinand Victor Eugène Delacroix was born at Charenton in 1798, but spent his early years at Marseilles, where he gained that love of vivid colour and bright sunshine which afterwards distinguished his painting. His father, an ex-foreign minister under the Directory and subsequently prefect of Marseilles and Bordeaux, did not take kindly to the idea of his son becoming a painter, but he died before his son came of age, and Eugène Delacroix then found shelter with a married sister in Paris, where he overcame family opposition and was allowed to study art.

His father, however, had left him penniless, and the young artist was so poor that in 1822, after painting his first great picture, "The Barque of Dante," he could not afford to buy a frame, but sent the canvas to the Salon surrounded by four laths which he had coloured with yellow powder. There it was seen by Baron Gros, who generously recognised the great talent of the poor artist, and not only persuaded the administration to give the picture a handsome new frame, but hung it in a place of honour in the Salon Carré.

"The Barque of Dante" made the painter famous at once, and did not offend the Classicists. Gros said the picture was "Rubens reformed," and paternally advised the artist, "Come to us; we will teach you how to draw." Delacroix was grateful to Gros for his kindness, but went his own way, and two years later he shocked the Classicists and delighted the Romantics by his picture "The Massacre of Scio."

It will be remembered that Constable's "Hay Wain" was exhibited in the Paris Salon of 1824, and when Delacroix saw it he was so overwhelmed by its colour that he obtained permission to retouch his own "Massacre of Scio." In a fortnight he completely repainted this picture, using the purest and most vivid colours he could find, with the result that it now became as brilliant in colour as it had already been in action and movement. The turbulent energy in this painting was too much for the Classicists, and Gros, playing on the title, said, "This is the massacre of painting." On the other hand, enthusiastic young critics lauded the picture with extravagant praise, one of them asserting that it showed up "all the horror of despotism" in art as in life.

In this picture, which was the real beginning of his lasting fame, Delacroix proved himself to be one of the world's great colourists, and laid the





Giraudon.

“THE BARRICADE,” OR “LIBERTY GUIDING THE PEOPLE,” BY DELACROIX
(1798–1863)

The Louvre, Paris

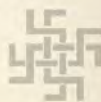
This remarkable picture by the great leader of the Romantic Movement in France is a true rendering of an incident during the street fighting of the revolution in July 1830—when the Parisians deposed the unpopular Charles X and placed his cousin Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, on the throne—and at the same time the heroine of the Barricade may be regarded as an allegorical figure of Liberty guiding the People.

foundations of the new handling of colour which became the greatest pictorial triumph of the nineteenth century. Colour in his hands was no dead thing, it became something alive, scintillating and vibrating; his results were obtained not only by the happy choice of individual tints, but still more by the science with which he knew how to juxtapose one colour against another so as to accentuate the brilliancy of each and secure a glowing harmony.

The art of Delacroix is distinguished by three things—its colour, its poetry, and its decorative qualities. He turned naturally to Dante, Shakespeare, and Byron for subjects, not so much because they provided him with good themes to illustrate, as because in their poetry he found those passionate ideals and aspirations which animated his own mind. When actual events aroused a similar intensity of emotion, he painted them also. Though usually he eschewed political subjects, the Revolution of July 1830 moved him to paint his famous picture "The Barricade," now known as "Liberty Guiding the People," a picture which is at once a fragment of actuality and the embodiment of an ideal. For this is a true historical picture in so far as it does represent with fidelity a typical incident during the street-fighting of the Revolution; and at the same time the heroine of the barricade, with her Phrygian cap, streaming tricolour, and musket, is an allegory of Liberty, liberty for the people and liberty for art. Exhibited in the Salon of 1831 this picture perplexed the authorities, who could neither deny its excellence as a work of art nor altogether approve of its firebrand politics. The Director of Fine Arts temporarily solved the problem by purchasing the picture for the nation, and then turning its face to the wall! To-day the picture is one of the chief treasures of the French School in the Louvre.

In the same year Delacroix made a journey to Morocco which had a considerable effect on his art, for he delighted alike in the brilliant colours and picturesque costumes of this sunny land, and on his return exhibited a number of pictures of Eastern subjects, which were enthusiastically received, and, inspiring other artists to do likewise, he gave birth to a school of artists known as the "Orientalists." Delacroix himself, however, was too big and varied a genius to confine himself to one subject, and having given a lead to the Orientalists he now devoted much of his time to decorative painting.

Though regarded by his great rival Ingres and by the classical painters as a revolutionary, Delacroix was full of respect for tradition, only whereas David and Ingres adhered to the tradition of Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, Géricault and Delacroix upheld the tradition of Michael Angelo, Titian, Veronese, and Rubens. Though his own researches into colour were perhaps his most valuable legacy to the art of France, the intention of Delacroix was not to break with tradition but to bring back the colour



and methods of the old masters into modern painting. The romanticism of Delacroix was a half-way house between the old Classicism and the Realism that was coming, and as he in his youth had challenged the position of Ingres and the Classicists, so in his later years his own romanticism was challenged by Courbet the Realist.

Owing to this long battle between the classics and the romantics, the doors of the Academy were closed against Delacroix for five-and-thirty years, and it was not till he was sixty—and so barred by age from holding a professorship at the *École des Beaux-Arts*—that he was at last admitted as a member of the Institute. The artist did not long enjoy the distinction, for he died at Paris in 1863.

§ 2

While Géricault, Delacroix, and other “Romantics” were liberating the painting of history, poetry, and real life from the trammels of Classicism, another group of French painters was engaged in rescuing landscape-painting from the deadness and artificiality which had overtaken it since the days of Poussin and Claude Lorrain.

Among the earliest of the French artists to paint Nature as she is, and not as the pedantic “classics” thought she ought to be, was Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1796–1875). Born in Paris, the son of a small linen-draper having a shop in the Rue de Bac, Corot was for eight years a commercial traveller in the cloth trade. It was not till he was twenty-six that he was reluctantly allowed by his family to abandon trade and devote himself to painting. His father made him an allowance of sixty pounds a year, and till he was nearing fifty this was practically all Corot had to live upon.

In 1822 he entered the studio of Victor Bertin (1775–1825), a painter of classical landscape so successful in his day that the French Government, attracted by his own work and that of his pupils, created a new Prix de Rome for Landscape Painting. This prize was usually carried off by Bertin’s pupils, who thus came to regard Rome as the finishing school of their artistic education. The turning-point in Corot’s life came in 1826, when he also went to Rome, and there he formed a friendship with another French painter, Aligny (1798–1871), who had some influence on his early efforts. Aligny, though a classical painter, had a much more honest feeling for Nature than most of his kind, and though his pictures are rigid in execution they show unusual carefulness in composition and detail. The early Roman paintings of Corot are distinguished by precise drawing, careful composition, and a deliberate soberness of detail, but they also have a lovely limpidity of colour unequalled in the work of his contemporaries, and a delicate feeling for light and air. Breaking away from the brown convention of his day,



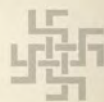


"THE POOL," BY COROT (1796-1875)

The Louvre, Paris

W. F. Mansell.

The most poetic of landscape painters, Corot was long neglected by his contemporaries. Beginning life as a commercial traveller, he exhibited his first painting when he was thirty-one, but he never sold a picture till he had turned sixty.

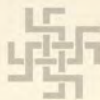




Copyright.

“THE LADY IN BLUE,” BY COROT

Universally admired as a landscape painter, Corot is less known as a figure painter because these subjects are rarer and until recently have been hidden away in private collections. This beautiful work, painted when the artist was a veteran of seventy-eight, is one of his last pictures and reveals his exquisite skill and refinement in portraiture.



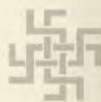
Corot painted southern landscape and architectural subjects in delicate tints of pale blues and greens, light biscuit-colour and pearly greys.

For some seven or eight years Corot remained in Italy, gradually forming a style which was absolutely his own and in which, while remaining true to the actual facts of Nature, he expressed her most poetical aspects. Occasionally he also painted pictures with small figures, and these, with their precision and delicate colour and subtle lighting, were nearer akin to the Dutch style of Vermeer and other seventeenth-century masters than to the accepted styles of Italian figure-painting.

It is strange to think that the paintings of Corot—for which millionaires now eagerly offer thousands of pounds—were for long years utterly neglected by his contemporaries. He exhibited regularly in the Paris Salon from 1827, but his exhibits aroused neither censure nor admiration—they were simply ignored. *For thirty years he never sold a picture.* The first critic to notice his work was the poet Alfred de Musset, who praised his picture in the Salon of 1836; but with the exception of two favourable notices received in 1837 and 1847, he was generally as neglected by the press as by the public. It was not till he was sixty that Corot began to capture the attention of the critics and collectors.

The one great compensation that Corot possessed during these years was the affection of a number of his brother artists, who both admired the artist and loved the man. Corot possessed a sunny, tender, tranquil nature that endeared him to all who came in contact with him. He was never embittered by his want of success, but lived the life of a peasant, happy in his art. "Le Père Corot" became the beloved patriarch of a colony of artists who had settled in the little village of Barbizon in the forest of Fontainebleau, a spot attractive to artists by the richness and variety of its sylvan scenery and at the same time reasonably near to the exhibition centre, Paris. In this district Corot painted the most famous pictures of his later days, e.g. "The Pool" and "Souvenir of Mortefontaine." He particularly delighted in the poetic effects of early morning and approaching eve, "when all Nature sings in tune," and during the glare of the noonday sun he would retire indoors, for effects of brilliant sunshine did not make the same appeal to him. He preferred the minor to the major chords of Nature's colouring, and was the supreme interpreter of her moods of wistfulness, mystery, and reverie.

Though the dreamy poetical beauty of Corot's later landscapes, with their willowy trees and mysterious atmosphere, made an unprecedented appeal to American and British collectors towards the end of the nineteenth century, so that extravagant prices were paid for typical examples—in one year more so-called "Corots" were said to have been imported into the United States than Corot himself could ever have painted—it is only in comparatively

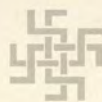




Braun.

“SPRING,” BY COROT

This delightful picture of a young girl gathering flowers shows the power of Corot in interpreting moods of wistfulness and reverie, whether in Nature or human beings.





"SOUVENIR OF MORTEFONTAINE," BY COROT

W. F. Mansell.

The Louvre, Paris

One of Corot's most famous masterpieces, this picture is an example both of his poetic feeling and of his adherence to classic methods of composition. Note how the picture is divided diagonally into two triangles of light and shade, an arrangement which contributes to the feeling of repose which the painting inspires.



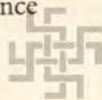
recent years that the supreme excellence of Corot's early works and figure-paintings have become recognised.

More immediately successful than Corot was his friend Jules Dupré (1812-89), whom Corot called "The Beethoven of Landscape." Dupré was the son of a porcelain manufacturer at Nantes and, like several other distinguished artists of the time, began his career by painting on china. He was one of the pioneers of "natural" landscape in France, turning away from the medley of the classical painters to render with fresh observation and expressive detail the characteristic beauties of rural France, her pastures, forests, and villages.

One of the most vigorous and famous of the Barbizon School, Théodore Rousseau (1812-67) was born in the same year as Dupré and, like him, was an enthusiastic admirer of Constable. Rousseau was the son of a Paris tailor and, though town-born, he experienced the fascination of the forest in his early boyhood, when he stayed with an uncle who had sawmills near Besançon. This uncle persuaded his parents to allow Théodore to study art, and accordingly the young man was placed in a Paris studio. From his masters, mediocre painters of classic landscape, Rousseau learnt less than from Nature, and a very early picture, painted in the open air at Montmartre—then almost country—showed a remarkable mastery in rendering air, light, and the details of Nature. In 1831 his first landscape was accepted and hung in the Salon; in 1833 he began his studies in the Forest of Fontainebleau, and again exhibited with credit; and in 1834 his picture of "A Cutting in the Forest of Compiègne" was awarded a medal, and was bought by the young Duke of Orleans. This early success, far from bringing him fortune, proved disastrous, for the older landscape painters, jealous of his growing reputation and his power, cruelly determined henceforward to exclude his work from the Salon. Accordingly in 1836 his magnificent "Descente des Vaches"—a great picture of herds of cattle coming down in autumn from the high pastures of the Jura—was rejected by the Salon. The picture is now one of the chief treasures of the Mesdag Museum in The Hague.

For fourteen years the work of Rousseau was excluded from the Salons; as a result of this attack Rousseau in 1837 left Paris for Barbizon, where he was joined by other independent painters. After the Revolution of 1848 the work of Rousseau began to be known and appreciated, but though his pictures now began to sell and he was awarded a first medal in 1849 and the Legion of Honour in 1852, he made no change in his life and continued at Barbizon till his death in 1867.

Corot, with characteristic modesty, once said: "Rousseau is an eagle; as for me, I am only a lark who utters little cries among the grey clouds." There was indeed a great difference between the two men, for Rousseau did not look at Nature with the dreamy gaze of a poet, but with the fiery glance



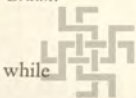


"THE OAKS," BY THÉODORE ROUSSEAU (1812-67)

The Louvre, Paris

The most vigorous of the Barbizon School, Rousseau, as we may see in this picture, delighted in the infinite variety of Nature and while strongly characterising her details, yet contrived to preserve her breadth and majesty.

Braun.

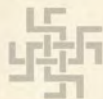




"ON THE BANKS OF THE OISE," BY DAUBIGNY (1817-78)

Braun.

A characteristic example of the peaceful river scenes which this artist painted with tender fidelity and poetic feeling.

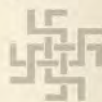


of a scientist who would wrest all her secrets from her. He delighted in the infinite details of Nature, and while preserving her breadth and majesty, he delicately differentiated between plants and weeds, mosses and lichens, brushwood and shrubs. Nothing was too great for his soaring imagination, nothing too small for his earnest attention. His vigorous rendering of form and his searching characterisation of Nature may be seen in "The Oaks."

Friendship and admiration for Rousseau had a great effect on the life of Virgilio Narcisse Diaz de la Pena (1808-76), commonly known as Diaz. This painter was born at Bordeaux, whither his father, a political refugee, had fled from Spain, and after his death, which occurred soon afterwards, Mme. Diaz removed to Sèvres, where she supported her young family by giving lessons in Spanish and Italian. When he was fifteen years old he was apprenticed to learn china painting, but he soon tired of working at the factory, and spent all his spare time in painting romantic Eastern scenes from his imagination. About 1830, while still earning his living by painting on porcelain, Diaz met Rousseau in Paris, and this acquaintance ripened into a lifelong friendship. Taught by Rousseau how to use pure and brilliant colours so that his pictures glowed like jewels, the pictures of Diaz appealed to the public by their subjects and were soon sought after. At first Diaz painted nymphs and bathers, mythological subjects and Oriental scenes, the last so brilliant in colour that it is difficult to believe Diaz never saw the Orient and never travelled farther than a few hundred miles from Paris.

Though he had little to complain about on his own account, Diaz shared the fortunes of his friend Rousseau, and accompanied him to Barbizon in 1837. There he gave his mind almost entirely to landscape, and made a new reputation by his brilliant forest pictures with light glancing on the tree stems.

Like Diaz and Dupré, the famous cattle painter Troyon (1810-65) began as a painter on porcelain. His father, who had been employed at the Sèvres Porcelain Factory, died early, and Troyon and his brother, while quite young boys, earned a living by painting on china at the manufactory, and in their spare time sketched from Nature in the surrounding country. It was not till he was thirty-two that Constant Troyon was able to leave Sèvres and commence his studies in Paris, and for some years his progress was hampered by the somewhat niggling style of painting he had acquired from the habit of decorating porcelain; but devoting himself especially to the painting of animals he gradually acquired strength and breadth, though he was nearly forty before he gained the power that has since made him famous. When he did find himself, however, the success of Troyon was immediate. He was speedily recognised by his contemporaries as the greatest animal painter since Cuyp and Paul Potter, and the demand for his work was so great that Troyon sometimes employed other painters to put in



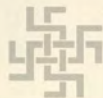


"OXEN GOING TO WORK," BY TROYON (1810-65)

Copyright.

The Louvre, Paris

The masterpiece of the most celebrated painter of cattle in the nineteenth century, this picture is remarkable not only for the lifelike rendering of the beasts but also for its brilliant expression of the full glory of a summer morning.



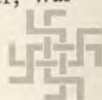
backgrounds and accessories. Troyon excelled in showing living beasts in their natural surroundings, and the landscapes in his cattle pictures are not mere "back-cloths" but genuine studies which interpret with sincerity the weather, the time of day, and the season of the year. His most famous masterpiece is his great painting "Oxen going to Work" in the Louvre, in which the superb rendering of the animals is equalled by the splendour with which the artist has rendered the full glory of the early morning landscape.

Though much influenced by Corot, who regarded him almost as a son, Charles François Daubigny (1817-78) evolved another distinct type of landscape and excelled in his poetic renderings of placid river scenes. His father was a journeyman painter of mediocre ability, and as a boy Daubigny painted decorations on clock-cases, glove-boxes, fans, and other articles of luxury. When he was seventeen he and a friend saved up a little over fifty pounds with which they set out on foot for Italy, and there maintained themselves for nearly a year. Returning to Paris, Daubigny gave himself for a time to figure subjects, but about 1840 he turned definitely to landscape, which he discovered to be his true vocation. His favourite sketching-ground was near Valmondois on the Oise, where he had spent happy days in his childhood. Though his landscapes were exhibited regularly in the Salon from 1841 to 1847, Daubigny had a hard struggle during these years, but in 1848 he received a second medal for his five landscapes in the Salon, and thereafter the State began to buy his pictures for provincial museums and his sales generally improved.

"On the Banks of the Oise" is a beautiful and characteristic example of the art of Daubigny, and reveals that exquisite calm and repose which is a feature of many of his paintings, though occasionally he painted stormy scenes; for Daubigny was not limited in his subjects, but painted various aspects of Nature. He was one of the pioneers in the truer rendering of Nature's own colouring, and his famous saying, "We never paint light enough," became a watchword to the younger generation of artists.

§ 3

The great struggle for liberty and truth in art, begun by the Romantics and landscape painters already mentioned, was carried a stage further by Jean François Millet (1814-75), who was the first to paint the peasant, not as a sort of "stage property" in a landscape, but as he truly lived and moved. Millet came of peasant stock, and during his boyhood worked hard in the fields with his father, whose home was in the hamlet of Gruchy, near Cherbourg. When he was eighteen, his father, recognising the lad's talent, allowed him to study art in Cherbourg, but as the eldest son he returned to manage the farm on his father's death in 1835. His heart, however, was

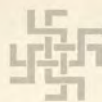




Braun.

"THE SOWER," BY MILLET (1814-75)

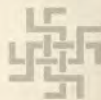
This world-famous figure is a noble expression of Millet's feeling for the dignity of labour, and can also be regarded as a universal symbol of the Present sowing the Future.



still in his art, and seeing this his mother and grandmother heroically determined not to allow him to sacrifice himself, but soon persuaded him to return to Cherbourg. There his talent was recognised by the Municipality, who gave him a grant of forty pounds, and with this he went to Paris in 1836 and entered the studio of the historical painter Paul Delaroche (1797-1856). During the next twelve years, spent partly in Paris and partly in Normandy, Millet experienced nothing but trouble, distress, and discouragement. Though always in poverty, he married in 1841, and his wife died in 1844; at the end of 1845 he married again, and found a devoted and courageous helpmate in his second wife.

At this period of his life Millet chiefly painted portraits and small pictures of classical or mythological subjects, and already his colour—in which he was considerably influenced by Correggio—began to attract attention and the admiration of other artists. He became friendly with Diaz, and through Diaz got to know Rousseau and others. In 1847 his picture "Œdipus taken from the Tree" was favourably noticed in the Salon by Théophile Gautier, who prophesied that the painter would become famous, and in the following year Millet's picture of a peasant woman was given a place of honour in the best room at the Salon. It looked as if the painter was on the point of achieving a popular success, for he had also been finding a ready sale for small pictures of nude figures, which he painted with great skill. But about this time he accidentally overheard somebody speaking of him as "Millet, who paints nothing but naked women," and this chance remark so upset him that he then and there determined never again to paint the nude. Already town life and town manners were distasteful to him; he longed for country air to breathe and the peasant people whom he knew and loved to paint.

In 1849 he decided to change his manner of life, and with his wife and babies he removed to Barbizon, where Rousseau and Diaz were already settled. In this peaceful village Millet made his home, and found his true vocation in chronicling in a series of noble paintings the dignity of peasant labour. To the Salon of 1850 he sent his unforgettable picture of "The Sower," a work of epic grandeur which seems to symbolise the Present preparing the Future in the guise of an agricultural labourer fulfilling his common task. During the next ten years Millet painted some of his greatest pictures, "The Gleaners" in 1857, "The Angelus" in 1859, but all this time Millet was harassed by money difficulties, and with a growing and increasing family he had a hard struggle for mere existence. His new pictures were not popular; not only did they fail to find purchasers, but they were often attacked because many of them were thought to be "socialistic," and "The Gleaners" was particularly abused on its first appearance as a work expressing subversive political principles. Millet and his family might have starved at this time, but for the good deeds stealthily done by his more



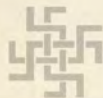


W. F. Mansell.

"THE GLEANERS," BY MILLET

The Louvre, Paris

This master of democratic art painted the common life of the peasant in the field with a depth of feeling, sympathy, and understanding that had never previously been approached. There is epic grandeur in the figures of these three women, whose sturdy forms are contrasted with the still beauty of the sunlit landscape.

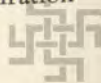


fortunate comrades. In 1855 Rousseau secretly bought one of his pictures for £160, and Troyon also bought several of Millet's works, pretending that he was acting for an American collector who had no real existence. By this tactful generosity Millet was prevented from ever knowing how much he owed to the devotion of his friends.

It was not till the Great Exhibition at Paris in 1867 that Millet came into his own, and his opportunity came then because his friend Théodore Rousseau was President of the Jury. In this exhibition Millet was represented by "The Angelus," "The Gleaners," and seven other important paintings. He was awarded a first-class medal for the collection, and in the following year was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He was now at the height of his fame, but the honours and fortune which followed came too late to be enjoyed. The artist was deeply smitten by the death of Rousseau in December 1867, and his own health began to fail in 1870. During the disastrous Franco-Prussian war he retired to Cherbourg, where his work was interrupted by frequent illnesses. When he returned to Paris, the new Republican Government gave Millet a commission in 1874 to paint a set of decorative panels of "The Four Seasons" for the Panthéon, but though he at once began charcoal sketches for these subjects he was never able to execute the paintings. Throughout the autumn his health declined, and surrounded by his devoted family he died on January 20, 1875.

Closely associated with Millet, whom he accompanied to Barbizon, was Charles Jacque (1813-94), who, though less powerful than Troyon, was one of the best animal painters of his time. He excelled in painting flocks of sheep in the open or on the edge of a forest. The painting of peasant life, inaugurated by Millet, was continued by Bastien Lepage (1848-84) and the still more popular Jules Breton (1827-1906), who, though weaker in drawing and less rich in colour, reaped where Millet had sown. Associated with Diaz, and still more fantastic than this painter in the exotic pictures of his earlier years, was Adolphe Monticelli (1824-86). Born at Marseilles, Monticelli brought the warmth of southern colouring and imagination to Barbizon: he was the most romantic of the romantic landscape painters, and his canvasses, loaded with rich pigment, from which radiant fairy-like figures emerge and seem to quiver with life, are magical masterpieces of jewel-like colour.

Belonging to a slightly later generation, but encouraged in his youth by Corot, Daubigny, and Millet, the exquisite sea painter Eugène Boudin (1825-1898) is a link between the Barbizon School and the Impressionists. Boudin was born at Honfleur, where his father was a sea-captain, and during his early years he assisted Troyon by painting the skies in some of his pictures. This was a department of painting in which Boudin excelled, and his rendering of the clouds and the blue vault of heaven excited the keen admiration



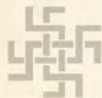


W. F. Mansell.

"THE HARBOUR OF TROUVILLE," BY BOUDIN (1825-98)

National Gallery, London

A link between the Barbizon School and the Impressionists, Boudin excelled in rendering the pearly tints of clear grey days. His marine paintings are pitched in a higher key of colour than that usually employed by the Barbizon painters.



of Corot, who hailed his young contemporary as "the monarch of the sky." Boudin spent the greater part of his life in the neighbourhood of his birth-place, and never tired of painting the shipping, shores, and harbour scenes of this part of the Normandy coast. His paintings are pitched in a slightly higher key of colour than those of Corot and Daubigny, and the prevalence of luminous pearly greys in his work have caused his paintings—together with similar paintings of similar subjects by his slightly older contemporary, the Dutchman Bartholde Jongkind—to be known as *la peinture gris*, i.e. the "grey" school of painting. "The Harbour of Trouville" in the National Gallery is a beautiful example of Boudin's delicate realism and of his sensitive feeling for the wind in the sky and the light on the water.



XXIX

REALISM AND IMPRESSIONISM IN FRANCE

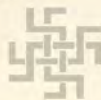
THE ART OF COURBET, MANET, DEGAS, RENOIR, AND MONET

§ 1

THE French Impressionists were the offspring of the Realists, and to trace their artistic pedigree we must return to painting in France in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was shown in Chapter XXVIII how the Romantics had rebelled against a false Classicism, but only the barest hint was given of how the struggle for liberty and truth in art reached a further stage in the 'forties by the development of a new group of artists known as the Realists. The leader of this movement and the man who perhaps did more than any other to change the whole modern outlook on art was Gustave Courbet (1819-77).

Courbet was the son of a wealthy farmer of Ornans in the Doubs. His father intended him for the law, and with this object sent him to Paris. Arrived there, Courbet threw law to the winds and set about learning the one thing that interested him, painting. A rigid republican, both by education and inclination, Courbet was penetrated by a passionate sympathy for the working classes, and he found the subjects for his pictures in the ordinary life of the people. Further, holding tenaciously that painting, "an art of sight," ought to concern itself with things seen, he was as opposed to Romanticism as the Romantics had been, in their day, to Classicism. Intensely earnest and serious by nature, Courbet regarded it as mere frivolity to make pictures out of imaginary incidents in poems and romances when all the pageant and pathos of real life waited to be painted. His point of view is made clear by a reply he once made to a patron who desired that he should execute a painting with angels in it for a church. "Angels!" said Courbet, "but I have never seen angels. What I have not seen I cannot paint."

After the Revolution of 1848 Courbet's new style of democratic painting had a temporary success. In 1849, before the political reaction had begun, he was awarded a medal at the Salon for his picture, "After Dinner at Ornans." This medal placed him *hors concours*, that is to say it gave him the right of showing pictures in future Salons without his works having to obtain the approval of the Selecting Jury. Courbet took



full advantage of this privilege in the following year, and to the Salon of 1850, in addition to two landscapes and four portraits, he sent two large pictures entitled "The Stone-breakers" and "A Funeral at Ornans." The political reaction was in full tide, and the two last pictures raised a storm of fury, because their subjects were supposed to be "dangerously socialistic." It will be remembered that it was in the Salon of the same year that J. F. Millet showed his first great democratic painting, "The Sower."

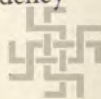
"A Funeral at Ornans" became one of the milestones in the progress of modern painting, for, notwithstanding the abuse showered on Courbet, the sincerity of his work appealed to a younger generation of artists. Here was a man who saw life steadily as a whole, and painted life just as he saw it. Each figure in it, from the clergy to the mourners, from the gravedigger to the dog, is painted simply but with a truth and power that make it a living thing. Courbet was the first of modern painters to break away from the classic traditions of Italy and turn towards the open-air realism of Velazquez and Frans Hals. He not only had much direct influence on Whistler and on Manet, but pointed out to them the road along which they should travel.

In 1855 Courbet painted a picture which summed up his life of the past seven years. He called it "The Studio of the Painter: a Real Allegory." On the right of this large canvas were the types he had been painting, the beggar, the labourer, the tradesman, the priest, the poacher, the gravedigger; on the left was a group of his personal friends, among them Baudelaire and Proudhon; between the groups was Courbet himself painting a landscape of Ornans.

In an introduction to the catalogue of a private exhibition of his works held in the same year, Courbet explained his endeavour to replace the cult of the ideal by a sentiment of the real:

To translate the manners, the ideas, and the aspect of my own times according to my perception, to be not only a painter but still more a man—in a word, to create a living art, that is my aim.

During the reign of Napoleon III Courbet became more and more incensed against all authorities, political or artistic. The former thought him revolutionary because of his subjects, the latter because his style was based on Dutch and Spanish painting instead of on the accepted Italian masters. Nevertheless, his position as leader of the Realist school was such that in 1870 he was nominated Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Courbet wrote a violent letter to the Ministry refusing to accept this decoration, and when the Commune broke out in 1871 he took a prominent part in the Revolution and became President of the Commission of Fine Arts. Courbet has been much blamed because during his brief presidency

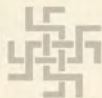




"A FUNERAL AT ORNANS," BY GUSTAVE COURBET (1819-77)

The Louvre, Paris

In this great picture of a country funeral, every figure from the clergy to the mourners, from the kneeling gravedigger to the dog is painted simply and sincerely with a truth and power that gives it life and individuality. Courbet was the founder of modern realistic painting, seeking character rather than formal beauty, and painting real incidents in ordinary life which he had seen with his own eyes.



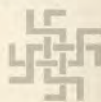
he allowed to be pulled down the Column commemorating Napoleon I in the Place Vendôme. This was part of a scheme to efface from Paris all traces of the Empire, whether First or Third, and though the Column was a historic monument it had no great artistic interest. On the other hand it was Courbet who, during the fury of the Commune, not only preserved intact the art treasures of the Louvre, but with difficulty secured the safety of the Arc de Triomphe. He was full of concern for this monument because of its great artistic qualities, notably the sculpture by Rude with which it was decorated, and he managed to persuade those who urged its demolition that the Arc de Triomphe ought to be spared because it stood not so much for the glory of Napoleon as for the heroism of the revolutionary armies of France.

Still, when the Commune had been suppressed with an iron hand, the good deeds of Courbet during the insurrection were forgotten: the unfortunate artist was arrested in connection with the demolition of the Vendôme Column, condemned to six months' imprisonment and to defray the whole cost—some 400,000 francs—of the reconstruction of the Column. This utterly ruined him, and though Courbet eventually succeeded in crossing the frontier he was broken in health and spirits. He died in exile in 1877.

§ 2

Manet was the heir of Courbet with this difference, that the temper of his art was more aristocratic. He also built up his pictures by the direct application of planes of colour rather than by working up an underpainting based on linear design and light-and-shade; he also used the blonde palette of Velazquez and Hals, and he also chose his subjects from the life around him; but he painted the people and life of the middle-classes, while Courbet had concentrated on the proletariat.

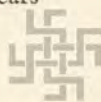
Edouard Manet was born at Paris in 1833. His father was a magistrate and, like Courbet, Manet was originally destined for the bar, but he eventually overcame family opposition, and when he was about eighteen he was permitted to enter the studio of Couture (1815-79). Thomas Couture was an accomplished artist whose rich coloured paintings were a discreet compromise between Romanticism and Classicism, but his orthodox instruction appealed little to Manet, who from the beginning desired to observe Nature closely and reproduce it according to his own feeling. After travelling in Germany, Austria, and Italy to study the Old Masters, Manet finally found in the paintings by Velazquez and Goya at the Louvre the answer to all his questionings and aspirations for light and truth. Influenced by these masters and by the example of Courbet, he gradually evolved a new technique which presented modern aspects by



modern methods. Observing how one colour melted into another in Nature, he declared "There are no lines in Nature," and in his pictures he abandoned the convention of the outline and shaped his forms by a modelling obtained by subtle gradations of tints which fused into one another. The problem of just illumination was to Manet a matter of primary importance. Once when he was asked to point out the principal figure in a group he had painted, he made a reply that has become historic. "The principal person in a picture," said Manet, "is the light."

Manet made his first appearance at the Salon in 1861 with a portrait of himself and his young wife, and another painting, "The Spanish Guitar-player." Over both the cry of "Realism" was raised, and Realism was unpopular at the moment; nevertheless the Jury, inspired by Delacroix, gave Manet an Honourable Mention. But during the next two years the partisans of the classical tradition obtained the upper hand again, and Manet was excluded from the Salon of 1863. As we have recorded, so many artists of admitted talent had their works rejected *en bloc* by the Salon jury this year, that the Emperor Napoleon III, inspired by a praiseworthy liberal thought, insisted that these innovators should at least have the right to exhibit together in a special room. Thus there came into being what was known as the *Salon des Refusés*: among the exhibitors there, in addition to Manet and Whistler, were Alphonse Legros, Fantin Latour (1836-1904), celebrated both as a portraitist and as a painter of flowers, Harpignies, Renoir, Claude Monet, and many others who have since become famous. One of the paintings in this exhibition, a sunset by Claude Monet, entitled "Impressions," excited much laughter among the crowd that came to jeer at the "rejected," and henceforward the custom arose of alluding to the new school of painters as "Impressionists." Originating as a term of derision, the word remained in use, and the painters to whom it was applied adopted it as an official label which would serve, as well as any other, to cover their varied aims.

Prior to the *Salon des Refusés* Edouard Manet had little or no knowledge of Claude Monet, who was seven years his junior, but now the similarity between their names and the abuse showered upon both drew the two men together. Through Monet, Manet came to know Renoir and Sisley, who had been fellow-students with Monet in the studio of Gleyre, Whistler's master; and this group was joined, among others, by two older artists, Camille Pissarro and Degas. As in the case of the Pre-Raphaelites, it was friendship and unjust derision which created the solidarity of the Impressionists, though the individual painters had by no means identical aims. Manet, we now realise, was far more a Realist than an Impressionist, and it is important to remember that he passed as an innovator years before Impressionism existed or was even thought of. It was more than ten years

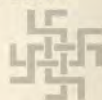


after the *Salon des Refusés* before Manet became influenced by the new ideas of colour evolved by Pissarro, Monet, and Renoir. In his fine portrait "Le Bon Bock," painted in 1873, Manet still reveals himself as the heir, not only of Courbet, but of Velazquez, Hals, and Goya. Nothing could be further from the once popular notion of an "Impressionist" picture as a daub hastily put together, than this careful, if unconventional, portrait of his friend the engraver Belot enjoying a glass of beer. M. Belot gave Manet no less than eighty sittings before this portrait was finished. It is freer than Courbet, with a greater simplifying of planes and values, but it is no revolution, it is a continuation and development of Courbet's realism.

Quite different in style is "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère," painted in 1882. We may say at once that the chief difference between the two pictures is in the colour, for—to borrow a term from the wine-list—the colour in "Le Bon Bock" is "still," while that in the "Bar" picture is "sparkling," sparkling especially in the wonderful painting of the bottles and glasses as we may see even in a photograph. Both pictures are magnificent, both are marvellously lifelike, but in the second there is a more searching pursuit of colour, in shadow as well as in light, and a more vivacious statement of its actuality. In a word, it is a typical "Impressionist" picture: and here we may well pause to inquire what is meant by "Impressionism."

§ 3

If we look at all the bottles in "A Bar at the Folies-Bergère" we shall notice that the treatment of detail here is totally different from the treatment of detail, say, in Millais's "Ophelia" (cf. page 477). In his picture Millais looked at each leaf, flower, and branch separately, and set them down separately on his canvas like a sum in addition. But all the bottles in Manet's picture are seen simultaneously in relation to each other: it is a synthesis, not an addition. Impressionism, then, in the first place, is the result of *simultaneous vision* that sees a scene as a whole as opposed to *consecutive vision* that sees Nature piece by piece. Let us suppose, for a moment, that we are staying at a house on the banks of the Seine opposite the church at Vernon. Let us suppose that, having arrived there in darkness the previous evening, we jump out of bed in the morning, open the window, and put out our head to see the view. Monet's picture "The Church at Vernon" shows us what we should see *at the first glance*; the glance, that is to say, when we see the scene as a whole, before any detail in it has riveted our attention and caused us unconsciously to alter the focus of our eye in order to see that detail more sharply. Another way of putting the matter is to say that in an Impressionist picture there is only one focus

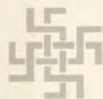




"A BAR AT THE FOLIES-BERGÈRE," BY MANET (1832-83)

Bulloz.

Painted the year before he died, this picture of a bar in a popular Parisian music-hall shows the final style of an artist who said, "The principal person in a picture is the light." Though crowded with glittering details all sparkling with reflected light, the picture is a true impression of a scene viewed "steadily and as a whole."

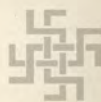




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"THE CHURCH AT VERNON," BY MONET (1840-1927)

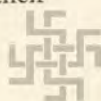
A typical landscape by this famous Impressionist showing his immediate concern with a fugitive effect of light. All details in the landscape are subordinated to the illumination which falls upon them. Even deprived of their magical colour, the reflections in the water show the vibration of light, the sense of movement and life, obtained by Monet's method of painting with broken touches.



throughout, while in a Pre-Raphaelite picture there is a different focus for every detail. These two methods of painting represent different ways of looking at the world, and neither way is wrong, only whereas the Pre-Raphaelite looks *particularly* at a series of objects, the Impressionist looks *generally* at the whole.

This way of viewing a scene broadly, however, is only a part of Impressionism. It was not a new invention, for Velazquez saw and painted figures and groups in a similar way, therefore Impressionists like Whistler and Manet (in his earlier works), who adopted this broad style, were in this respect developing an existing tradition rather than inventing a new one. But a later development of Impressionism, which was a complete innovation, was the new palette they adopted. From the time of Daubigny, who said, "We never paint light enough," the more progressive painters had striven to make the colours in their pictures closer to the actual hues of Nature. Delacroix was one of the pioneers in the analysis of colour. When he was in Morocco he wrote in his Journal about the shadows he had seen on the faces of two peasant boys, remarking that while a sallow, yellow-faced boy had *violet* shadows, a red-faced boy had *green* shadows. Again, in the streets of Paris, Delacroix noticed a black and yellow cab, and observed that, beside the greenish-yellow, the black took on a tinge of the complementary colour, violet. An advertisement issued by a well-known soap firm will have made many readers familiar with the phenomenon of complementary colour. The name of the soap was printed in bright red letters on a white paper, and we were asked, after gazing at this steadfastly for a few moments, to look up at a white ceiling, when we should see the name of the soap in *green* letters. Every colour has its complementary, that is to say, an opposing colour is evoked by the action of the human eye after we have been gazing at the said colour; consequently all colours act and react on one another. Delacroix discovered that to obtain the full brilliance of any given hue it should be flanked and supported by its complementary colour. He did not attain to full knowledge; it was left for a later generation to make nicer distinctions and to recognise that if violet is the right complementary for a greenish-yellow, an orange-yellow requires a turquoise blue, and so on.

The nineteenth was a scientific century during which great additions were made to our knowledge of optics. The French scientist Chevreuil wrote a learned book on colour, which was studied with avidity by the younger painters. It became clear to them that colour was not a simple but a very complex matter. For example, we say that grass is green, and green is the *local colour* of grass, that is to say, the colour of grass at close range, when we look down on it at our feet. But grass-covered hills seen at a great distance do not appear green, but *blue*. The green of their

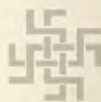


local colour is affected by the veil of atmosphere through which we view it in the distance, and the blue we see is an example of *atmospheric colour*. Again, the local colour of snow is white, but everybody who has been to Switzerland is familiar with the "Alpine glow" when the snow-clad peaks of the mountains appear a bright copper colour owing to the rays of the setting sun. This "Alpine glow" is an example of *illumination colour*, and since the colour of sunlight is changing throughout the day, everything in Nature is affected by the colour of the light which falls upon it.

The landscape painter, then, who wishes to reproduce the actual hues of Nature, has to consider not only "local colour," but also "atmospheric colour" and "illumination colour," and further take into consideration "complementary colours." One of the most important discoveries made by the later Impressionist painters was that *in the shadows there always appears the complementary colour of the light*. We should ponder on all these things if we wish to realise the full significance of Manet's saying, "The principal person in a picture is the light."

This new intensive study of colour brought about a new palette and a new technique. For centuries all painting had been based on three primary colours, red, blue, and yellow; but science now taught the painters that though these might be primary colours in *pigment*, they were not primary colours in *light*. The spectroscope and the new science of spectrum-analysis made them familiar with the fact that white light is composed of all the colours of the rainbow, which is the spectrum of sunlight. They learnt that the primary colours of light were green, orange-red, and blue-violet, and that yellow—though a primary in paint—was a secondary in light, because a yellow light can be produced by blending a green light with an orange-red light. On the other hand green, a secondary in paint because it can be produced by mixing yellow with blue pigment, is a primary in light. These discoveries revolutionised their ideas about colour, and the Impressionist painters concluded they could only hope to paint the true colour of sunlight by employing pigments which matched the colours of which sunlight was composed, that is to say, the tints of the rainbow. They discarded black altogether, for, modified by atmosphere and light, they held that a true black did not exist in Nature: the darkest colour was indigo, dark green, or a deep violet. They would not use a brown, but set their palettes with indigo, blue-green, yellow, orange, red, and violet, the nearest colours they could obtain to the seven of the solar spectrum.

Further, they used these colours with as little mixing as possible. Every amateur in water-colour knows that the more he mixes his paints, the more they lose in brilliancy. The same is true of oil paints. The Impressionists refrained, therefore, as much as possible from mixing colours on





W. F. Mansell.

"LE BON BOCK," BY MANET

A splendid example of the realistic portraiture of the artist's middle period. It presents M. Belot, an engraver, who gave his friend eighty sittings before this lifelike picture was completed. Bock is the common term in France for a glass of beer ; hence the title may be rendered in English as "A Good Drink."

their palettes, and applied them pure in minute touches to the canvas. If they wanted to render secondary or tertiary colours, instead of mixing two or three pigments on the palette, they would secure the desired effect by juxtaposed touches of pure colours which, at a certain distance, fused in the eye of the beholder and produced the effect of the tint desired. This device is known as *optical mixture*, because the mixing is done in the spectator's eye. Thus, whereas red and green pigment mixed on a palette will give a dull grey, the Impressionists produced a brilliant luminous grey by speckling a sky, say, with little points of yellow and mauve which at a distance gave the effect of a pearly grey. Similarly the effect of a brilliant brown was given by the juxtaposition of a series of minute touches of green, red, and yellow; and this association of minute touches of three pure colours set up a quivering vibration which had greater luminosity than any streak of brown pigment. It was an endeavour to use paints as if they were coloured lights.

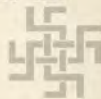
Various names have been given to this technique. It has been called "Divisionism," because by it the secondary and tertiary colours were divided into their constituent elements. It has been called "Pointillism," because the colour was applied to the canvas in points instead of in sweeping brush-strokes. It has been called "Luminism," because the aim of the process is primarily to express the colour of light with all its sparkle and vibration. This last is the best name of all, because it serves to emphasise the new outlook of the new painters. The tendency before the Impressionists was to regard colour from the standpoint of black and white. Thus, in considering a grey, it would have been asked is it a dark grey or a light grey, does it approach black or white? The Impressionists took quite a different attitude and asked whether it were a bluish grey, or a greenish grey, or a purplish grey, or a reddish grey: in a word, not whether it were light or dark, but to which colour in the solar spectrum it most closely approached.

To the Impressionists shadow was not an absence of light, but light of a different quality and of different value. In their exhaustive research into the true colours of shadows in Nature, they conquered the last unknown territory in the domain of Realist Painting.

To sum up, then, it may be said that Impressionist Painting is based on two great principles:

1. *The substitution of a Simultaneous Vision that sees a scene as a whole in place of a Consecutive Vision that sees Nature piece by piece.*
2. *The Substitution of a Chiaroscuro based on the colours of the solar spectrum for a Chiaroscuro based on Black and White.*

This new technique, with all the research and experiment which it implies, was not the invention of one man, but the outcome of the life



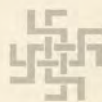


"THE LITTLE SERVANT," BY CAMILLE PISSARRO (1830-1930)

Copyright.

National Gallery, London

A typical work of Camille Pissarro, showing an obvious love of a structural pattern linked with the broken brushwork of the Impressionists. The picture was bequeathed by his son, Lucien Pissarro, to the National Gallery.



studies of a whole group of men. Most prominent among those who brought Impressionist painting to perfection in theory and practice were Camille Pissarro, Claude Monet, and Auguste Renoir.

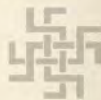
§ 4

Camille Pissarro (1830-1930) was born at St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies and came to Paris with his parents when he was twenty-five. He became a pupil of Corot, and his earlier works show the influence of Corot as regards style and colour and of Millet in subject and drawing. He was the eldest of the Impressionists, being two years older than Manet; but throughout his life Pissarro was an ardent student, never ceasing to investigate and experiment, always ready to listen to the theories and to observe the practice of a junior who claimed to have discovered a new truth. Though darker in colour than his later work, a small landscape now in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs at Paris, painted by Pissarro in 1869, shows that even at this time he was experimenting in the division of tones. Unfortunately nearly all the earlier paintings of Camille Pissarro are lost, for his home and studio were in the line of approach of the destroying Prussians in 1870. Owing to the war Pissarro and Monet came to London in 1871, and there they saw the later paintings of Turner, which confirmed their ideas about colour and encouraged them to paint brighter and still brighter.

Claude Monet was ten years younger than Pissarro. Though born in 1840 at Paris, where his father was a merchant, he spent much of his boyhood at Havre, where he learnt a good deal about painting from Boudin. After completing his military service in Algeria, Monet returned to Paris and entered the studio of Gleyre. Here he formed a close friendship with two fellow-students, Renoir and Sisley, and became acquainted later with Manet, as has already been related. Monet's earliest paintings, however, are not lighter than those by Boudin and Corot, and he was first influenced by these and others of the Barbizon School.

Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was born at Limoges, where his father was a tailor in a small way of business, and at the age of thirteen young Auguste began to earn his living as a painter on porcelain. This early apprenticeship left a certain trace on his art which was always decorative and even elegiac in spite of its later realism. In time Renoir saved up enough money to go to Paris and become a pupil of Gleyre, but while his friends were landscapists Renoir was first and foremost a figure painter.

Alfred Sisley (1839-99) was born in Paris of English parents, and his development was parallel to that of Monet, whose work his own pictures closely resemble. We may say that all these young men, together with



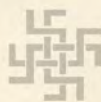


W. F. Mansell.

"THE UMBRELLAS," BY RENOIR (1841-1919)

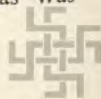
Tate Gallery, London

The strange spectacle presented by an array of umbrellas on a rainy day in a public place has here inspired the artist to give one of his most original and ingeniously designed impressions of Parisian life. Renoir excelled in rendering the actual colour of sunshine on human flesh and figures, and this picture is as true to Nature's own colouring as it is true to life in its intimate observation of human character and behaviour.



Pissarro, were discontented with the state of painting before 1870. They looked at their pictures and they looked at Nature ; but while they realised how far their painting fell short of their intention, they had not yet found the way to secure greater brilliancy and truth. That way was discovered during the 'seventies, after Pissarro and Monet had seen the Turners in London and returned to Paris. It is possible to exaggerate the influence of Turner on the new movement, for it had really begun earlier with Delacroix, but the sight of the Turners undoubtedly hastened its accomplishment as far as Pissarro and Monet are concerned. Not the beginning of Impressionism, but the first public revelation of Impressionism, was an exhibition held at Nadar's galleries, Boulevard des Capucines, in 1874. Here were gathered together works by many of the "rejected" of 1863—Manet being the best known of them and generally considered the leader of the movement—and also works by new adherents to Impressionist doctrine. The exhibition provoked much controversy, but it was sufficiently talked about to be something of a success, and thereafter for several years a *Salon des Impressionistes* was an annual event. But in 1874 the science of colour was still in its infancy, and if the exhibitors were "Impressionists" they were not all "luminists." Even Renoir's famous picture of people in a theatre-box, painted about this time, is sombre in colour, in comparison with the scintillating canvases he was to paint later.

Another contributor to this exhibition, whose picture, "The Dancing Lesson," attracted much attention, was Degas. Friendship with Manet drew Degas into this circle, though he never entirely accepted all the principles of Impressionism. Edgar Hilaire Germain Degas (1834-1917) was born in Paris, the son of a banker, and, like Courbet and Manet, was originally destined for a legal career. In 1855, however, he entered the École des Beaux Arts, and also studied under Lamothe, a pupil of Ingres. All his life Degas, who was brought up in the classical tradition, had the deepest veneration for Ingres. He was also an admirer of Holbein and Clouet, whose pictures he copied. In 1856 he went to Rome and remained two years in Italy studying the work of the early Italian masters. Returning to Paris, he began as an historical painter, his last picture in this style being "A Scene of War in the Middle Ages," shown in the Salon of 1865. But about this time he came into contact with Manet, and through him with Pissarro, Monet, Renoir, and others who frequented the Café Guerbois in the Batignolles, and there endlessly discussed their artistic aims and ideals. Because of this centre for social intercourse the Impressionist group was at one time nicknamed "The School of Batignolles." Owing to the powerful new influences surrounding him, Degas was led to abandon his historical works and devote himself to painting scenes of modern life. Always intensely interested in the rendering of movement, Degas was

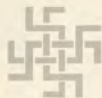




Giraudon.

"THE DANCING LESSON," BY DEGAS (1834-1917)

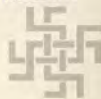
A passionate interest in movement and life drew Degas to the study of professional dancers, and his pictures of the Ballet are world-famous and unique. In this comparatively early work he shows us the hard realities which lie behind the fairyland of the stage. The varied attitudes of the dancers, in difficult positions, reveal his mastery of drawing, while the aerial spaciousness of the scene as a whole results from his perfect rendering of light and air.



first attracted to subjects he found on the racecourse, one of the earliest successes in his new manner being "A Carriage at the Races." He also painted washerwomen at their work, scenes in cafés and in theatres, and revealed himself as an artist passionately absorbed in the spectacle of city life, though with rather a cynical outlook. Degas was the greatest draughtsman among the Impressionists, and in his pictures of modern life he relied upon line more than any other of the friends with whom he exhibited. Like Whistler, he was much influenced by Japanese colour prints, which gave him new ideas of pattern and design.

After the Franco-Prussian war, during which he served in the artillery, Degas concentrated on the Ballet, a subject for which he became famous throughout the world, and which occupied his best attention for twenty years. In these works Degas stands revealed as an uncompromising Realist. What he usually shows us is not the glamour and illusion of the Ballet from the spectator's standpoint; Degas gets behind the scenes and exposes the work and discipline which lie behind this artificial fairyland; he strips the dancers of their tinsel, compelling us to see that they are not lovely young nymphs, but plain, tired, hard-worked women, often middle-aged. The beauty of his pictures is to be found not in any prettiness of his models, but in the lighting, the arrangement, the drawing, and later, in the colour, in the convincing truth of his vision, and in the decorative charm of his design. In the later 'seventies and thenceforward, Degas worked more frequently in pastel than in oils, and in these later pastels he adopts the prismatic hues of Luminism, based on the rainbow colours of the solar spectrum, so that these works, in addition to their masterly drawing and decorative design, have the additional beauty of shimmering, iridescent colour. A superb example of his later style is the pastel "A Dancer on the Stage" in the Luxembourg, Paris. Here, for once in a way, Degas forgets his cynicism and shows us the magical glamour of a *première danseuse* quivering with movement, bathed with light, and happy apparently in her moment of success. After 1886 Degas retired almost completely from the public eye, living the life of a recluse on a fifth floor in Montmartre; refusing for the most part to sell his works or even to show them to collectors, though his fame continually increased and the value of his earlier works rose to sensational prices. Before his death his picture "Dancers at the Bar," which he had originally sold for £20, was bought by an American collector for £17,400, this being the record price obtained to-day at public auction for a picture by any living artist. But Degas was equally contemptuous of praise or criticism, and to the end he declined all honours.

Claude Monet, who died in 1927, had also seen pictures he sold for £4 bring thousands of pounds in America and elsewhere. Devoting himself



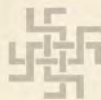


Giraudon.

"A DANCER ON THE STAGE," BY DEGAS

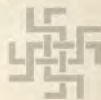
The Luxembourg, Paris

This pastel, which gives a wonderful impression of a ballet-dancer almost floating into the brilliant light of the stage from the obscurity of the "wings," should be compared with the earlier painting by the same artist on page 565. It is miraculous in its suggestion of quivering movement.



to the painting of landscapes in bright sunlight, he carried the pitch of painting into a higher key than any artist before him had done. "Pine-Tree at Antibes" is a beautiful example of his style at its maturity; radiant colours are laid side by side in small broken touches to suggest the vibration of light, while the decorative arrangement shows that Monet also has taken hints for design from the artists of Japan. Light is always the "principal person" in Monet's landscape, and since he always aimed at seizing a fugitive effect, he insisted on consistency of illumination at particular hours of the day and season. With this object he adopted, since the early 'eighties, a habit of painting the same subject under different conditions of light. He would set out early in the morning with a carriage-load of canvases, and arriving at his destination he would start his day's work, changing his canvas every couple of hours as the light changed. In this way he painted a series of views, all of the same subject, but all different in colour and lighting. Among the most famous of these series are those known as "Haystacks," "The Poplars," "The Thames at Waterloo Bridge," "Rouen Cathedral," and "Water-lilies," the last being a scene in his own riverside garden at Giverny. When he was a young man Monet once said, "I want to paint as a bird sings," and all his pictures have this delicious lyrical quality. While he adopted the rainbow palette and the technique of the small touch—"the procedure by the touch" as it is called in France—Monet was never dogmatic in his use of divisionism.

The elaboration of Divisionism into a rigid scientific theory of painting was the work principally of two younger men, Georges Seurat (1859-91) and the living artist Paul Signac, born at Paris in 1863. But for his early death Seurat, who was a genius in design as well as a great colourist, would have obtained a foremost place in modern art. It was Seurat about 1880 who definitely established the superiority, for the purposes of brilliance and intensity, of "optical blending" to actual blending on the palette. The division of colour, which was never more than a convenience to painters like Monet and Sisley, became a law not to be departed from in the work of Seurat and Signac. This new scientific development of Impressionism became known as "neo-Impressionism." For a time Pissarro also practised this method of Divisionism with scrupulous exactness, but eventually he adopted a broader and freer manner, though still retaining the general principle of divided colour. In addition to Seurat and Signac, the chief exponents of neo-Impressionism have been Henri-Edmond Cross (1856-1910) and the Belgian painter, Théo van Rysselberg. This method of painting and the scientific theories on which it is based are fully described in M. Paul Signac's book *D'Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionisme* (Paris, 1898).

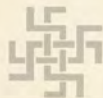


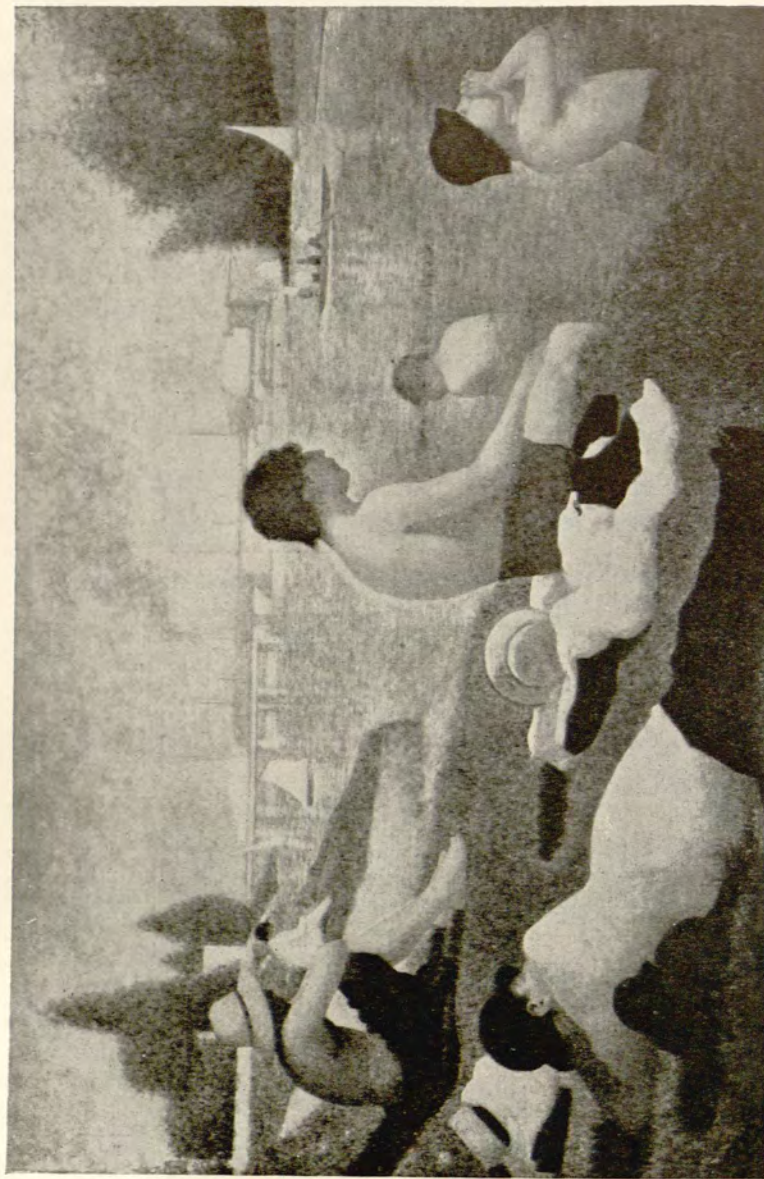


"PINE-TREE AT ANTIBES," BY MONET

Courtauld.

This view from a promontory on the Riviera is a beautiful example of true impressionist or "luminist" painting in which the artist uses the radiant hues of the rainbow to get the actual colours of sunshine and small "broken touches" of paint to suggest the vibration of light. Note how full of colour are the shadows, also the decorative balance of the composition, which betrays a hint of Japanese influence.



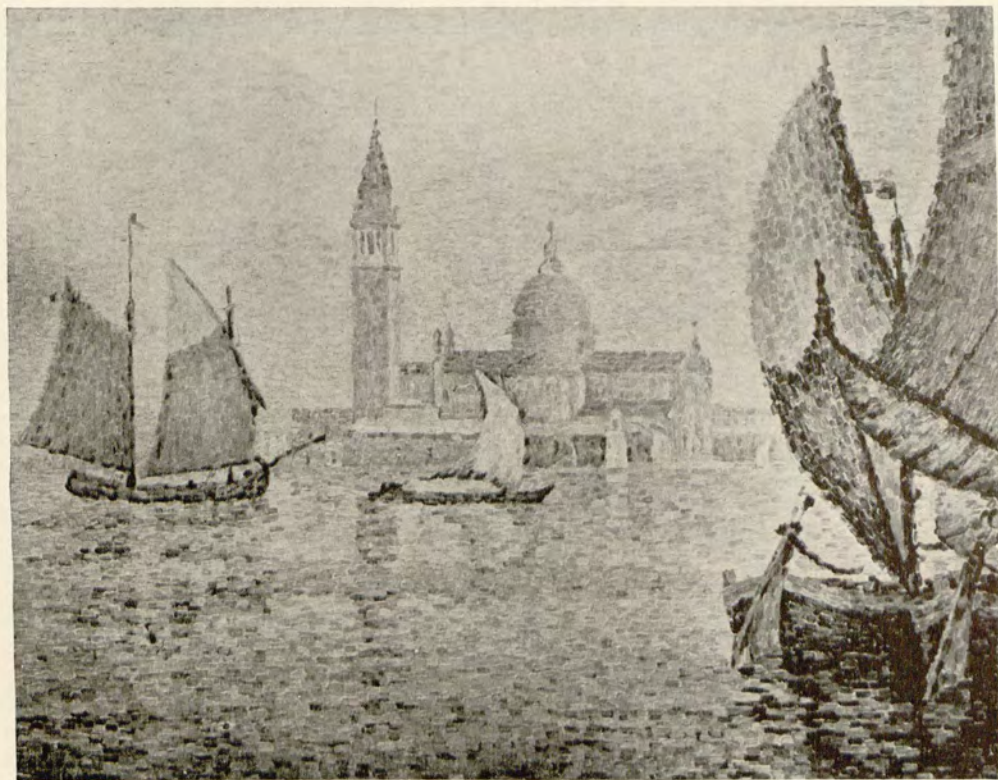


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"LA BAIGNADE," BY GEORGES SEURAT (1859-91)

Tate Gallery, London.

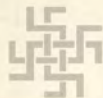
Seurat, feeling that the broken colour of Impressionism lost the form, attempted to regain this while keeping the brilliant effects of light. In this picture of lads bathing at the river bank he has strong form and vivid flickering colour.



Courtesy of Leicester Galleries.

“VENICE, SAN GEORGIO,” BY PAUL SIGNAC (b. 1863)

Signac endeavoured to counteract the looseness and loss of form in Impressionism by building up his pictures with carefully placed almost rectangular brushstrokes. By this means he hoped to bring back the outline which had been sacrificed, without losing the new brilliance of colour.



The effect of this art method of Impressionism on the art of our own day is enormous, especially upon art in England where we have taken to the idea of broken paint and bright tones. It is true to say that the vast majority of artists are now painting in the way they are because of this theory of the effect of light upon forms and colour which the French artists first put forward in the latter part of last century. Actual divisionism or *pointillism* is not so evident; but something akin to it in broken colour, loosely put on to the canvas with more regard for the effects of light than for the basic form permeates contemporary art. As we shall see later, a reaction from this ideal, already noticed in Seurat and Signac, but becoming definite in the theories and practice of Cézanne, is equally important.



XXX

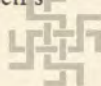
THE REVIVAL OF SCULPTURE

THE ART OF RODIN, MEŠTROVIĆ, MILLES, EPSTEIN, AND OTHERS

§ 1

DURING all these years, centuries even, since Michael Angelo had carried the art of sculpture to a supreme height in Renaissance Italy and Cellini had rounded off the period with his decorative fancy, surprisingly little had happened in this sister art. While painting flourished marvellously in seventeenth-century Spain and Holland, no important sculpture was produced in either country. When the vortex swung to England in the eighteenth century and painting in France climbed steadily to its climax, a few names appear in sculpture, but nothing comparable to the galaxy of painters. If anything were done during those centuries it was a cold imitation of the antique. Flaxman (1755-1826) in England achieved something so completely Græco-Roman that it has a merit of its own. Happily he found a niche in designing for the new Wedgwood Pottery which gave that coldly classical work a real beauty. His sculpture was a perfect expression of the Augustan spirit. Antonio Canova (1757-1822), the Italian, simultaneously worked in this classical spirit, a mood that was tremendously abroad in the world largely as the result of the writings of Winkelman and the excavations at Herculaneum. Canova's monument to Clement XIV in Rome created a sensation unknown since the days of Michael Angelo and sent sculpture for many years along this path of Neo-classicism. Sometimes he swerves over to a sentiment which has little in common with the Greek spirit, as in his well-known "Cupid and Psyche," and often he is a noble worker, and he turned the eyes of Europe again to the possibilities of his form of art.

Thorwaldsen (1770-1844), the Dane, took up this story, and in turn produced a vast body of work in the tradition. His work can best be studied in Copenhagen where a gallery is devoted to it; but when inspiration comes from art to art and not from life to art, the influence tends soon to slip down into decadence, and the rest of the sculptors in this vein are of little importance, until we come to Alfred Stevens, that great artist who came near to the perfection of Michael Angelo in the comparatively small amount of work which he did. Stevens worked in Thorwaldsen's



studio as a young man, and when he returned to England from this Italian period he applied himself to work which was in the best Renaissance tradition. There was, alas, little call for the kind of big thing he might have done and he turned to the designing of ironwork—a passion in England in the mid-nineteenth century. The Wellington Memorial in St. Paul's cathedral, the delightful lions around the railings of the British Museum, and a magnificent fireplace at Dorchester House are the outstanding works of this man who, in a more propitious time, might have created so much more.

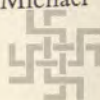
Meantime, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such interest as there was in sculpture was in France. From the time of Louis XIV, France had had a thin trickle of talented sculptors, but until the coming of Impressionism none of genius. Then in Auguste Rodin she produced a great world artist, one whose name might truly stand with that of Michael Angelo.

Among the earlier French sculptors Jean Baptiste Pigalle (1714–85) was a pioneer of realism, his vigorous and fertile imagination giving his work a certain amount of life and originality. Jean Antoine Houdon (1741–1828), his pupil, was famous for the power and truth of his portrait busts. The head of his “Voltaire” is probably one of the best known pieces of sculpture in the world. François Rude (1784–1855) was a still greater liberator of French sculpture from cramping classicism. His famous group “*La Marseillaise*” on the Arc de Triomphe, shows Rude's realism and the fervour of his expression of patriotic feeling. This passion of patriotism, allied to a flamboyance which continually overstepped the bounds of good taste, became the mark of French sculpture of the nineteenth century. It was absurdly pictorial, had little sense of form, and, indeed, none of sculptural form, which depends for its beauty on the relationship of the masses one to another.

§ 2

Into this decadence about the middle of the century came Antoine Louis Barye (1796–1875), painter and sculptor, the contemporary and friend of the Barbizon School men. Like them Barye turned to Nature, and as they looked for their truth in landscape, in field and sky and woodland, he sought the truth and beauty of form in animals. Barye held an appointment as Master of Drawing at the Paris Zoological Gardens, and he made himself a master of animal form. His lifelike work opened a new path in the art.

It was a pupil of Barye, an even greater modeller than himself, who was destined to achieve the greatest fame won by any sculptor since Michael



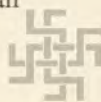
Angelo. Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) was of humble origin, and in his youth had to earn his living working in a mason's yard, where he became familiar with the material he was destined to master. For years his only studio was his humble bedroom, and it was here that he modelled his early bust, "The Man with the Broken Nose." At first, in 1864, it was rejected by the Salon, the judges being shocked by the absence of ideal beauty in the work. When, however, it was accepted it was acknowledged to be a masterpiece of realism modelled with a power and truth unknown for many generations.

In 1877 his beautiful statue, "The Age of Bronze," was exhibited at the Salon, and the authorities were so astonished by its masterly modelling that Rodin was accused of having taken a cast from life. To prove the falsehood of this accusation the sculptor made his next statue, "St. John the Baptist," rather more than life-size, and again the modelling was miraculous in its perfection and lifelikeness. If "The Age of Bronze" with its polished rendering of the graceful form of adolescence reminds us of the best Greek sculpture, this second powerful and lifelike rendering of a mature man is comparable to the figures by the master sculptors of the Renaissance.

It has often been asked why a statue by Rodin is different from any other, and the explanation is simple : instead of copying Greek work as others had done, Rodin did as the Greeks did—he went direct to Nature. He had learned that from his master, Barye. "Everything," said Rodin, "is contained in Nature, and when the artist follows Nature, he gets everything." And again he said : "I am not at the orders of my model, but at those of Nature."

Rodin taught his contemporaries that distinction in sculpture is obtained not by selecting a certain type of figure, but by the gift of modelling the natural truth in any figure. He was essentially a modeller, with a marvellous eye for seeing form, a miraculous hand for expressing it. When, as in his earlier style, he worked realistically, he would with infinite patience recreate every twist and turn of the planes in his subject. Later, he felt that in order to present a true appearance of form it was necessary to fashion the "holes and lumps" as he called them, not exactly as they existed in anatomy, but as they appeared to the human eye when the subject was enveloped in atmosphere and bathed in light. Thus he introduced Impressionism into sculpture.

However he chose to work—realistically as in the "St. John Baptist" ; impressionistically as in the great "Balzac" ; symbolically as in "The Hand of God," a great hand holding a male and a female figure—he always makes his work seem to hover on the borders of actual living itself. It has a curious mobility, a restlessness almost. It is full of emotion, an



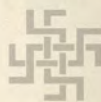


W. F. Mansell.

"ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST," BY RODIN (1840-1917)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Falsely accused of having taken a cast from life and shown it as an original statue, Rodin modelled this heroic figure larger than life to prove his ability in modelling. It was first intended to portray nothing more than "A Man Walking," but while he was working on it Octave Mirbeau told the sculptor it was an ideal St. John, and Rodin accepted the title.



emotion arising from life itself and from thought about life, and not necessarily from abstract form. This quality, less acceptable to a later generation than it was to Rodin's own, has been brought against him in criticism. It makes him essentially a dramatic sculptor.

His famous monument, "The Citizens of Calais," is remarkable thus not only for the pure beauty of its workmanship as sculpture, nor for the truth and atmosphere of this procession and its sense of movement as it winds its way slowly and sadly along, but for the poignant expression of the different characters of the various figures. These are no graveyard figures, but living men moving and breathing in the air which surrounds them. This fine work, erected at Calais, was repeated in a copy on the Victoria Embankment, London, close to the House of Lords, thanks to the generosity of English admirers of the French sculptor.

The rugged technique by which Rodin obtained his wonderful effects of atmospheric reality was long in establishing itself in public favour, yet there have been few sculptors animated by a more profound respect for the basic material of their art. It was Rodin's love of marble itself which led to a new development of his style, in which he would leave rough the matrix from which his sculpture was hewn, so that the delicate heads and figures seemed to grow like flowers out of the marble of their origin. A memorable example of this is "Thought," in which a feminine head of exquisite refinement and spirituality emerges from a rough-hewn block of marble.

Rodin reached his extreme limit of Impressionism in sculpture with his colossal statue of "Balzac," which, when exhibited in the New Salon of 1898, threw the world of art into a condition bordering on frenzy. A man who twenty years before had been declared too skilful to be genuine was now accused of not knowing the elements of his craft. Yet the sublime simplicity of this figure, loosely wrapped in a dressing-gown, with the upturned face, the lion-maned head of genius, soaring as it were to heaven, revealed Rodin at his highest not only as a master of impressionist modelling, but also as a psychologist who could conceive and create an unforgettable expression of the very soul of genius.

§ 3

Rodin brought this art of sculpture back into the front line of æsthetic expression. Or it may have been that the time was ripe for a renaissance of the art, and he was a product of that new spirit. Certain it is that all across Europe there was a revival of interest and almost every country produced men of fine achievement, and some gave us artists who stand in the front rank.

