

Arcadia, which is to be included in the distribution for the present year, and is thought by some to be that distinguished artist's best production. Mr. EDMOND'S *New Scholar* and Mr. WOODVILLE'S *Card Players* were both contained in the distribution for 1848. The *Iconoclast* is the only painting which has never been the property of the Art-Union. It is one of LEUTZE'S most vigorous and effective works, and admirably adapted for engraving. These five prints will be stitched in a proper cover, with the addition, perhaps, of a page of letter-press. It may be said, in this connection, that as they are not intended for framing, they will not intrude themselves upon the eye as frequently as the larger Art-Union engravings must necessarily do, and therefore that one objection which is commonly urged against the latter will not apply to these smaller prints.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ENGRAVINGS AND OUTLINES FOR 1849.

THE members of the year 1849 are informed that preparations have been made to distribute, during the month of May, the Engraving of "*Youth*," the Etchings in Outline illustrating the "*Legend of Sleepy Hollow*," and the Transactions, to those members whose certificates are numbered from No. 1 to No. 5000. The particulars of future deliveries will be announced in the next Bulletin.

CRITICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ARTICLES.

ALLSTON'S OUTLINES.

OUTLINES AND SKETCHES, BY WASHINGTON ALLSTON.

These outlines and sketches, as our readers who have seen them will not need to be informed, are a portion of those found in ALLSTON'S studio after his death. A brief preface gives the following account of them:—

"They consist, in great part, of compositions hastily sketched in chalk, and never carried further; among them, however, are a few outlines in umber, on canvass, which, although more carefully done, should not be considered as finished outlines, since they were intended merely as a ground work on which to paint. The sizes of the figures, in the different compositions, vary, from that of life, to a few inches in length; and where it was necessary to reduce them for engraving, the daguerreotype was used, by which the image was conveyed to the engraver's plates, prepared for that purpose, and there fixed by tracing the line through the silver."

They are published on twenty plates, of convenient sizes, the largest about fifteen by thirty inches. The engraving was done by Messrs. J. & S. W. Cheney, to whose accuracy and skill we have testimony in accompanying letters from Franklin Dexter, Esq., an intimate friend of Allston's, and an amateur of painting, and from Edward Everett, the late President of Harvard University: both these gentlemen pronounce the plates correct transfers of the originals. The whole have been published under the supervision of Mr. Stephen H. Perkins, to whose taste and enthusiasm in carrying through the undertaking, our artists are much indebted.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be in judging of these outlines separately, there can be few capable of judging of such works at all who will not readily admit their general greatness. They display a profound knowledge of the human form, with the power of artistically

idealizing it, and the ability to conceive passion and emotion *picturesquely*—that is, by the use of this form depicted on canvas and apart from all language; and they also express refined ideas of beauty, grace, sublimity, and its younger brother romance,—above all, they exhibit that purity, as well as loftiness, of soul, which belongs to the highest department of Art.

The merit of good outlines and drawings is more striking at first than that of finished pictures. The eye is confined to form alone, either indicated or fully drawn, and is not distracted by color, and light and shadow. Besides, to an eye that is capable of appreciating the merit of an ideal employment of form, excellence in this quality is apparent at the first glance: it is more independent of style than either of the others. We can sooner recognize an artist by his composition, and his use of light and color, than by his form. Generally, in finished works, the merit of picturesqueness in form is the last quality to strike the observer: when we are gratified in other respects, it seems to be enough if the drawing is merely correct—if the forms do not offend. But where the lines arrange themselves in graceful contours, the eye is sure to find them out in the end, and rests upon them; and hence excellence in this respect is a great fundamental necessity in painting. It is that quality, more than any other, which gives to pictures the power of *permanently* pleasing.

The absence of all but the *out-lines* of forms in outline sketches, renders them more suggestive to the fancy than finished works with color, or than full drawings with the forms rounded out in light and shadow. There is only an indication, and our fancies are at once excited to complete what is wanting. Hence, it is that sometimes, in old books, one finds himself poring with delight over a meagre and coarsely executed wood cut; his mind's eye magnifying the distance, and investing the mansion of Squire Western with ideal magnificence; finding an air of comfort in the cold garden, laid out like a chessboard, and clothing the form of Sophia, who is walking there, in her hooped petticoat, with an imaginary grace. It seems that the sligher the hint the fancy receives, and the more impossible it is for it to perform what is required of it, the more readily and more successfully does it exert itself. We all know how it delights to build cities in the clouds of sunset, to discover the forms of angels and devils in the coals or on paper hangings, and to create fairy grottoes on frost covered window-panes. Wherever there is the least suggestion for it to go upon, it is as ready and able to work miracles as was the genii that served Aladdin.

Owing to this natural law of our mental being, outlines are capable of conveying a pleasure of a peculiar kind, differing from that of pictures and full drawings, and arising from their very incompleteness. In examining them critically, it is necessary to distinguish this from those effects which belong to them as the elementary parts of paintings. We must endeavor not to confound the impressions they convey, considered as complete in themselves, with those that belong to them as the unfinished beginnings of pictures. Looking upon them purely as studies, the artist must endeavor to judge of the merit they show in point of correct drawing, effective attitude and grouping, and adaptability to be clothed in the full splendors of light and

color—splendors which leave no scope to the fancy, but which ought to be used to satisfy and impart to that faculty vigor and elevation.

It is in this point of view, aside from the pleasure they afford of themselves, that these outlines are valuable to artists. And, beautiful and suggestive as they are, it is but just to the memory of their author that they should be so regarded. He never intended they should be published as outlines; they were only studies for his own use—designs which he had at some time intended to elaborate into finished pictures, and had either abandoned altogether, or allowed to remain in his studio as material he might possibly make use of after the completion of his *Belshazzar*.

Another observation, it seems to us, should be made, in justice to him, though to some of our readers it may appear a little superfluous. This is, that no engravings, however well they may be executed, can give all the effect of drawings in chalk upon canvas. This is not said from any desire to disparage these engravings in comparison with others, but as a remark which ought to be made in this connexion. No mechanical process can perfectly imitate the work of the *human hand*. In original outline drawings there is a something which makes us feel more vividly the intention of the artist and his skill. The O of Giotto, although a perfect circle, was not such an one as we might draw with a pair of dividers.

Especially is this true of outlines reduced and thus copied. The Daguerreotype, which has here been employed, and which it is gratifying to find is at last doing some service to art in return for the staring and grinning caricatures of the human face it has been for several years spreading over the country, can copy accurately, if rightly adjusted; but it cannot transmit the entire spirit of the original. There is a certain inequality and indefiniteness in actual drawings which can no more be copied than the lines of Nature. ALLSTON, we have been told, was accustomed to use a blunt crayon, and to give variety and character to the line with the finger: he could thus produce an effect which could only be copied by doing exactly the same thing in the same manner.

The first six of these plates consist of figures of angels, from a work which the artist had in contemplation, but never composed—" *Gabriel setting the Watch* "—a subject from Milton. We almost wonder that he did not pursue it, when we look at these sketches and recollect the passages the picture was to have illustrated.

"It was a rock
Of alabaster, pill'd up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Between these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
Chief of the angelick guards awaiting night;
About him exercis'd heroic games
The unarmed youth of Heaven, but nigh at hand
Celestial armory, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high with diamond flaming, and with gold."

"Now had night measur'd with her shadowy cone
Half-way up hill this vast sublonar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim,
Forth is-uing at the accustomed hour, stood arm'd
To their night watches in warlike parade;
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spoke:
'Uzziel, half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north;
Our circuit meets full west.' As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear,
From these two strong and subtle spirits he call'd
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge.
'Ithuriel and Zephor, with wing'd speed
Search through this garden, leave unsearched no nook.'"