# LANDSCAPE PAINTING AND MODERN DUTCH ARTISTS

E·B·GREENSHIELDS

FRONTISPIECE. — A Storm Coast of Zeeland. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

# Landscape Painting

and

# Modern Dutch Artists

BY

E. B. GREENSHIELDS

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# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| DEDICATION | | vii |
| PREFACE | | ix |
| ART FOR ART'S SAKE | | xvii |
| CHAPTER I. | A Brief History | 1 |
| CHAPTER II. | Revival of Dutch Art | 23 |
| CHAPTER III. | Various Opinions about Art | 35 |
| CHAPTER IV. | Nature and the Poets | 81 |
| CHAPTER V. | Modern Dutch Art | 109 |
| CHAPTER VI. | Johannes Bosboom | 127 |
| CHAPTER VII. | Josef Israels | 135 |
| CHAPTER VIII. | James Maris | 146 |
| CHAPTER IX. | Anton Mauve | 155 |
| CHAPTER X. | Matthew Maris | 164 |
| CHAPTER XI. | William Maris | 174 |
| CHAPTER XII. | J. H. Weissenbruch | 182 |
| APPENDIX | The Opinions of John Ruskin on various artists | 205 |
| | The Decay of Art, by W. J. Stillman | 207 |
| | Landscape, by J. A. Symonds | 213 |
| | Realism and Idealism, by J. A. Symonds | 219 |
| INDEX | | 225 |

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# ILLUSTRATIONS


| PLATE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. | A Storm Coast of Zeeland | *J. H. Weissenbruch* | Frontispiece |
| | | | FACING PAGE |
| II. | Adoration of the Magi | *Hubert and Jan Van Eyck* | 2 |
| III. | In S. Maria del Popolo, Rome | *Pinturicchio* | 6 |
| IV. | Madonna del Cardellino | *Raphael* | 8 |
| V. | Scene in the Cadore Country | *Titian* | 10 |
| VI. | Autumn | *Rubens* | 14 |
| VII. | Diogenes Throwing away his Shell | *Nicolas Poussin* | 18 |
| VIII. | Cephalus and Procris | *Claude le Lorrain* | 20 |
| IX. | Prince Balthazar Carlos | *Velasquez* | 26 |
| X. | Landscape with Church | *Jacob van Ruysdael* | 30 |
| XI. | Landscape with Stormy Sky | *John Constable* | 36 |
| XII. | Crossing the Brook | *J. M. W. Turner* | 40 |
| XIII. | Paysage | *J. B. C. Corot* | 46 |
| XIV. | Potato Gatherers | *Anton Mauve* | 50 |
| XV. | The Fisherman | *J. H. Weissenbruch* | 56 |
| XVI. | The Tow-path | *James Maris* | 60 |
| XVII. | The Sea Shore | *James Maris* | 66 |
| XVIII. | The Sower | *J. F. Millet* | 73 |
| XIX. | At the Cottage Door | *Anton Mauve* | 110 |
| XX. | Sand Boat — Evening | *J. H. Weissenbruch* | 114 |
| XXI. | Children of the Sea | *Josef Israels* | 118 |
| XXII. | Evening | *Anton Mauve* | 122 |
| XXIII. | Church at Oosthuisen | *J. Bosboom* | 128 |
| XXIV. | Interior of Church | *J. Bosboom* | 130 |
| XXV. | Scheveningen | *J. Bosboom* | 132 |
| XXVI. | Girl Sewing | *Josef Israels* | 136 |

| PLATE | | | FACING PAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| XXVII. | The Anxious Family . . | *Josef Israels* . . . | 140 |
| XXVIII. | Interior of a Cottage . . | *Josef Israels* . . . | 144 |
| XXIX. | The Peacock Feather . . | *James Maris* . . . | 146 |
| XXX. | The Canal Bridge . . . | *James Maris* . . . | 150 |
| XXXI. | Dordrecht . . . . . . | *James Maris* . . . | 152 |
| XXXII. | Sand Dunes . . . . . . | *Anton Mauve* . . . | 156 |
| XXXIII. | Entering the Village of Laren | *Anton Mauve* . . . | 160 |
| XXXIV. | Crossing the Moor . . . | *Anton Mauve* . . . | 162 |
| XXXV. | Boy with a Hoop . . . | *Matthew Maris* . . | 164 |
| XXXV *a*. | The Christening . . . . | *Matthew Maris* . . | 166 |
| XXXVI. | The Ox Cart . . . . . . | *Matthew Maris* . . | 168 |
| XXXVII. | The Dreamer . . . . | *Matthew Maris* . . | 170 |
| XXXVIII. | Milking Time at Abcoude . | *William Maris* . . | 174 |
| XXXIX. | River Merwerde . . . . | *William Maris* . . | 176 |
| XL. | A Cool Retreat . . . . | *William Maris* . . | 180 |
| XLI. | Autumn, near the Hague . | *J. H. Weissenbruch* . | 184 |
| XLII. | A Bend of the Canal . . | *J. H. Weissenbruch* . | 188 |
| XLIII. | Nieuwkoop . . . . . . | *J. H. Weissenbruch* . | 194 |
| XLIV. | Early Morning in Holland . | *J. H. Weissenbruch* . | 198 |
| XLV. | Nearly Home . . . . . | *J. H. Weissenbruch* . | 204 |

## *"ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS"*

*The years are fading fast,*
*But we will not complain,*
*While you and I outlast*
*The past,*
*And love and hope remain.*

*So let us just keep still,*
*While time flies far away,*
*And loiter on the hill,*
*At will,*
*Forever and a day.*

*Playing at life and art,*
*Wandering to and fro,*
*Forgetting we must part,*
*Dear Heart,*
*Some day, and all forego.*

*Though Art be long, yet we*
*Have little time to spend*
*Amid its witchery;*
*Ah me!*
*The years so quickly end.*

*Still when the leaves fall sere,*
*Foretelling wintry weather,*
*We'll travel on, nor fear,*
*My Dear,*
*If we but go together.*

*E. B. G.*

# PREFACE

The question "What is a picture?" at first consideration seems to be a reasonably easy one to answer intelligently, but the more thought one gives to it the more apparent its complexity becomes. A picture may be generally defined as a representation on canvas, or on some other material, by the use of colour and form, of the vision that forms itself in the mind of the artist when he looks on the landscape, or on the people and the scene which he is painting, or when he afterwards recalls it in his memory. This vision in the pictures painted by great artists changes as it passes through their imagination, and is affected, more or less materially, by their personality. It is obvious that there must be an accurate resemblance, as nature furnishes the symbols used by the artist for the expression of his ideas, and these must

be painted in such a manner as to be readily understood, and the technical skill necessary to produce adequately the effect desired is also an essential part of the artist's equipment. But it is the vision, which may be realistic or imaginative, according to his individual temperament, that is always painted; not the thing as it is in itself, but as it appears to the receptive mind of the artist. "I dreamed my picture, later on I will paint my dream," said Corot.

The same scene might be painted by Ruysdael and Hobbema, by Constable and Turner, by Daubigny and Rousseau, and each picture would take on the spirit of the individual artist, and give the observer very different ideas of identical views. For if it is not the actual scene before him that is painted, but his idea of it, it is evident that the personality of the artist counts for a very great deal in pictures; and so it is the subjective view of art that is the all-important one.

Those who are already lovers of art know the pleasure that is to be obtained from its study, and would like to interest others in

their favourite pursuit. It is my hope that this book will prove useful in drawing attention to a source of pleasure open to all, and that it will help to encourage a taste for it by trying to show what should be looked for and what should be found in pictures. In support of the views expressed I have given a number of opinions of the best writers and authorities. Those who are beginning to study paintings are often deterred by the difficulties they meet with or anticipate. As in all other matters worth knowing about, it certainly does take time and much seeking for it, to gain knowledge in this. But it must be remembered that as we look at pictures we learn, and that all through life we are learning. Yet the study is pleasant and helps to pass many an hour happily. And the more we get to know, the more grows our admiration for the artist and his work, and the greater becomes our pleasure in being able to appreciate them.

The common remark of a person who has given little thought to pictures, that he knows what he likes, shows that he has not con-

sidered them seriously at all, as he *should like only good ones.* Among these he will always have his preferences, but none but fine works should appeal to him.

> "It was my duty to have loved the highest,
> It surely was my profit had I known,
> It would have been my pleasure had I seen."

Such is the vain regret called up in after years by wandering from the way during the stormy passion of youth, and allowing the golden opportunity to pass. And similarly it is true of art, that it is our duty to know the best, and then it will be our profit and pleasure to recognize it and enjoy it.

Looked at from the observer's point of view, the first effect produced by a good picture on anyone commencing this study is a generally pleasing impression of harmonious colour and of interesting subject. Some people perceive the quality of fine colour more quickly than others, having a natural gift for it. But all who desire to learn can acquire this knowledge by practice, and then they soon begin to see that there is something besides this

first impression of colour and subject, about the picture, something that causes them to stop and think, and they find out by experience that this something they feel is the thought and individuality of the artist, impressed by him on the picture as he painted it, and expressed by it and revealed in some inexplicable way to the observer. As soon as this, the finer meaning of painting, is understood, it well repays anyone to learn as much as possible of the processes by which the artists produce their pictures, the drawing of form, the skilful use of colour, the attainment of perfect tone, the composition of graceful lines and well balanced masses, all the technical side of the subject. But it must not be forgotten that while there is great technical skill in all fine pictures, this should not be considered as the end, but only the means, and it must be informed and inspired by the mind of the artist. Then it becomes indeed the faithful and capable servant that carries out the will of its master and interprets on the glowing canvas his thought and the personal vision he sees.

All pictures that stop short of this ideal, and do not create in the observer feelings which have the power to stir his imagination, are not on the highest plane of art. They may have a value for decorative purposes and as showing the way in which difficulties can be overcome, but they are at best only clever exhibitions of skilled craftsmanship. On the other hand, the pictures of the great artists, besides showing this technical ability, have the power to take our thoughts away from our surroundings and to lead them wandering into other worlds.

These, then, are the important things to look for in a picture. It should convey a feeling of pleasure and content by its beautiful colour and form and its fine technique, it should reveal the poetry and imagination of the artist's vision, and it should communicate his thought and feeling to those in sympathy with his ideas. And so from the observer's position we come again to the subjective view of art.

This view finds its latest expression in the paintings of the seven Dutch artists to whom

I specially refer in this book. I have known and admired their works for years, while yet they were all living, painting their beautiful pictures, developing each according to his own bent, enlarging their ideas about art, broadening their style, and generalizing more and more as time went by. I think that seldom in the world's history has a greater group of individual artists appeared.

A poem sent to me by "Barry Dane" is given with his kind permission.

In the Appendix will be found some very interesting extracts from two volumes of essays by J. A. Symonds and W. J. Stillman, and I wish to thank the publishers Messrs. Chapman and Hall, Limited, and Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., for kindly allowing me to use them.

MONTREAL, CANADA, 1905. E. B. G.

## ART FOR ART'S SAKE

By Barry Dane

Art for Art's sake; but in that art,
The true, the beautiful, the good,
Traced from a throbbing human heart,
Should tint that sky, that field, that wood.

No lens may catch the soul that lies
Hidden in Nature's wondrous breast;
Alone, the lover's reverent eye
May there a blissful moment rest.

And how he wonders and adores,
As to his soul her own replies,
And yields the mystery of her shores,
Her trackless floods, her boundless skies!

# CHAPTER I

## A BRIEF HISTORY

"THERE is a passage in Emerson where he ingeniously observes that although fields and farms belong to this man or that, the landscape is nobody's private property." It is a real and lasting possession for all who can enjoy it. Its universality, its grandeur, its loneliness, its responsiveness to the moods of humanity, have drawn to it all the lovers of the beautiful in nature, and the greatest artists have striven to paint its loveliness and the manner in which their own personalities were affected by it. The actual beauty and glory of nature cannot be painted on canvas. A picture can never give this.

Landscape. Chap I. P. G. Hamerton.

"Who can paint
Like nature? Can imagination boast,
Amid its gay creation, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?"

"The Seasons. Spring." James Thomson.

Landscape art is something quite different from this. It cannot imitate nature. If it tries to do this it must fail, and give but a weak reflection of nature's inimitable pictures. But it can give, and it does give, in a very direct and sympathetic way, the effect produced on the artist by nature. It is the means the artist has of revealing the feelings that possess him in the presence of nature. This is its proper sphere, and in this only can it excel. It is not, as it is often supposed to be, something as like the solid earth as possible. It has a decided resemblance un-doubtedly, but its essence is spiritual and elusive. "The whole subject of landscape is a world of illusions; the only thing about it that is certainly not an illusion being the effect on the mind of each particular human being who fancies that he sees something, and *knows* that he feels something, when he stands in the presence of nature. His feelings are a reality, but with regard to that which causes them, it is hard to say how much is reality, and how much a phantom of the mind."

"Landscape." Chap. II. P. G. Hamerton.

Plate II.—Adoration of the Lamb. *Hubert and Jan Van Eyck.*

And F. W. H. Myers explains the difficulty of expressing these feelings, while asserting the possibility of doing so, in the following interesting way: "The range of human thoughts and emotions greatly transcends the range of such symbols as man has invented to express them; and it becomes the business of art to use these symbols in a double way. They must be used for the direct representation of thought and feeling; but they must also be combined with so subtle an imagination as to suggest much which there is no means of directly expressing. And this can be done, for experience shows that it is possible so to arrange forms, colours, and sounds as to stimulate the imagination in a new and inexplicable way."

"Essay on Virgil" in "Essays, Classical."

It is thus seen that it is a very difficult thing to render in any branch of art the feelings inspired by nature. It is perhaps harder to do so in painting landscapes than in depicting the human form on canvas, or modelling it in sculpture, or by using the sounds of music, or the language of poetry. Certainly only a comparatively small number of those who attempt it attain success.

One of the strangest facts in the history of the human race is the complete disappearance of literature and art, which had reached such a high state of development among the Greeks, for a period of six hundred years, and their new birth in the twelfth century in Italy. In the period of their great prosperity the Greeks were the most intellectual and art-loving nation the world has ever seen. They had an intense love for the beautiful in nature and for its artistic rendering in poetry, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Though subdued later by their mighty opponents, the more practical Romans, the literature and art of the Greeks conquered their conquerors and flourished anew in the Augustan age in Rome, and their philosophy had a decided and lasting influence on the growing power of Christianity. The Romans had also a very great love for nature, and they had more of a feeling of sympathy with it than had the Greeks, more of the feeling of modern times, as the poetry of Virgil shows.

"Sunt lacrimæ rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt,"

are the often quoted but untranslatable words of the "wielder of the stateliest measure."

But Greek and Roman literature and art were both lost in the conditions that followed the invasion of the empire by the barbarian tribes of the north about the sixth century A.D. In consequence of the conquests of Italy, Germany, and Gaul by the Goths, the language of each section of Europe grew corrupt; each country had a local speech of its own, and the Latin soon became a dead language. As all literature was in Greek or Latin, and as neither was now understood by these illiterate and uneducated races, a general and dense ignorance prevailed.

This was intensified by the views held by the early Christian Church, which was the custodian of learning. After the time of Constantine, Christianity dominated the empire, and its influence was used altogether to develop the religious character of man, without any regard to his æsthetic needs. In fact these were considered hostile to each other. Why waste precious time over matters of a day's interest or wonder, when the whole of the

eternal future depends on man's actions during his brief passage through this world? So the beautiful in literature and art must be shunned and neglected as temptations of the lower life.

Thus from the beginning of the sixth century to the end of the eleventh the gloom of the dark ages spread over the nations, and darkness like that of the sunless day of an arctic winter covered the earth.

We are accustomed to look on this page of history as one of hopelessness and desolation. But this is not the whole view. The period was like winter in another way, for it presaged the spring though all that makes for culture and æstheticism seemed lost. For though the Roman in his decline had ceased from writing, and the rising German was not yet able so to express his thoughts; though it was the time of the decay and breaking up of the great empire that had ruled the world, still, dark as was the apparent outlook, it was amid this ruin that the seeds of modern society were sown, and nourished, and grew up. The Roman and Germanic races were being

Plate III. — In S. Maria del Popolo, Rome. *Pinturicchio.*

welded together in the different provinces, the German element having secured the supreme power; but the new nations absorbed all that was best of the Roman civilization, and were preparing themselves for the fuller life that awaited them and for the successes and discoveries of modern times in science and the arts.

The springtime of the revival came in painting with Cimabue,[1] Duccio,[2] and Giotto,[3] and in literature with Dante and Petrarch. Painting in the Renaissance took the place that sculpture did among the Greeks, and the latter was subordinate to the former, for painting was better adapted to express the emotional feeling and the religious ideas of the time, and to depict the incidents in the lives of the Apostles and the Saints that were required for use in the decoration of the churches. Yet even it could not do for the Christian religion what sculpture had done for Paganism, because the gradual return to the joyfulness of nature and the portrayal of beautiful human forms brought in a feeling of sensuousness which was opposed to the

[1] 1240–1302.
[2] 1260–1320.
[3] 1266–1337.

Since writing this a visit to Siena and Florence has shown clearly that the more recent views held about these Artists are the correct ones. Cimabue and Duccio follow Byzantine traditions. To Giotto belongs the honour of being the founder of modern painting. For he first painted figures round and lifelike and put atmosphere into his pictures.

For a full account of this interesting subject see "Renaissance in Italy." Vol. III. Chap. I. J. A. Symonds.

ascetic ideas of the church. Art, which had begun in the service of religion, drifted away from it, and became free to express the beautiful wherever it was found. In this sphere it continued to excel, but never again, from the days of the early Renaissance, has it been able to express the ideas that dominated the world at any time, as Giotto and his followers represented the religious and social aspirations of their day.

From the beginning of this new life in art there are traces of interest in landscape painting, but until the commencement of the seventeenth century it was treated as a subordinate matter. It was used mainly as an accessory of figure painting, for which it made a convenient background. But it was mostly conventional work, and very seldom was there any attempt to treat nature for its own sake.

1380-1440.

Still very charming are many of the earlier transcriptions of nature, such as the delicately and sincerely painted landscape in Hubert and Jan Van Eyck's masterpiece, "The Adoration of the Lamb" (see Plate 2), with its green meadow, decked with flowers, its trees

PLATE IV. — Madonna del Cardellino. *Raphael.*

and far-off hills; or the scenery of Memlinc's[1] "Reliquary of St. Ursula" or Durer's[2] quaint and symbolic version of the country in which the "Knight on Horseback" is placed. Very fine also are the backgrounds painted by Perugino and Pinturicchio (see Plate 3) and the somewhat sad landscapes of Raphael,[3] with their beautiful drawing of grass, flower, and tree in every detail. (See Plate 4.)

But it is the Venetian school that makes the nearest approach to modern ideas. The little vistas of country in Bellini's[4] work are beautiful, and Giorgione[5] painted a lovely piece of nature, in which the "Sleeping Venus" reposes, in his picture in the Dresden gallery. Titian[6] and Tintoretto[7] continue the work of Giorgione, and reach the highest point, up to their time, in depicting nature. Titian's early life was passed in the Cadore country, and he never forgot the scenery amid which he was brought up, with its rapid rivers and torrents, its castles and crags, its spectral mountains, with ridges rising above the clouds and mist. This rugged pass in the Alps was the road taken by Roman armies and bar-

[1] 1430–1495.
[2] 1471–1528.
[3] 1483–1520.
[4] 1426–1516.
[5] 1476–1511.
[6] 1477–1576.
[7] 1519–1594.

barian tribes to descend into Italy, and its wild grandeur inspired Titian with an intense love. It was in this place, at the village of Valle, that the battle of Cadore was fought, and this is the scene described in his great picture of that battle, though like Turner and other artists he took some liberty with the mountains, and the bridge over the river Boita, to suit his picture. He also painted some fine landscapes in the "Adoration of the Magi," and the "Supper at Emmaus," and there is in the Pitti Palace, Florence, a drawing, without any figures in it, of a scene in the Cadore country. A wood of great trees is shown on the left, reminding one of Rousseau's oaks on the edge of a forest, and to the right there is seen open country with mountains in the distance, a very modern composition for that day. (See Plate 5.)

Tintoretto also has a remarkable piece of landscape work in the "Gathering of the Manna," and in the tree trunks and foliage of the "Crucifixion," and also in the trees and sky of the "Flight into Egypt."

In the following very beautiful passage,

Plate V. — Scene in the Cadore Country. *Titian.*

Ruskin expresses his surprise that Titian and Tintoretto did not more fully realize that the beauties of the scenery of their native land were subjects in every way worthy of their art.

"From the window of Titian's house at Venice the chain of the Tyrolese Alps is seen lifted in spectral power above the tufted plain of Treviso; every dawn that reddens the towers of Murano lights also a line of pyramidal fires along that colossal ridge; but there is, so far as I know, no evidence in any of the master's works of his ever having beheld, much less felt, the majesty of their burning. The dark firmament and saddened twilight of Tintoret are sufficient for their end, but the sun never plunges behind San Giorgio in Aliga without such retinue of radiant cloud, such rest of zoned light on the green lagoon, as never received image from his hand. More than this, of that which they loved and rendered, much is rendered conventionally; by noble conventionalities indeed, but such nevertheless as would be inexcusable if the landscape became the principal subject instead of an accompaniment."

"Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 77. 1888 edition.

Such progress had been made, it almost seemed as if a great school of landscape painting were about to appear. The signs of its coming were everywhere, both in Italy and in the North. But the time was not yet ripe, and it was not in Italy that modern landscape art was to have its birth. That honour was to be divided between France and Flanders; but still Italy was to have a strong effect on its development, for Claude spent his life and painted nearly all his pictures there, and Nicolas Poussin was very much influenced by his visits to that country and his love of antique art, and Salvator Rosa was an Italian living near Naples.

About three hundred years ago, at the end of the Italian Renaissance, and after the new learning had spread over Europe, the modern spirit awoke, and for the first time in the history of art the study of nature for its own sake began, and men gradually came to realize that landscapes without any interest connected with human life in them were proper subjects of study for their own innate beauty and loveliness.

Three great painters inaugurated the movement in art, Rubens,[1] Nicolas Poussin,[2] and Claude.[3] The earliest signs appear in that varied master, Rubens, who amid his vast achievement in allegorical subjects, religious pieces and portraits, first grasped the idea that the outside world should be treated naturally in art, and found time to paint the first unconventional landscapes.[4] (See Plate 6.) There is a superb painting of his in the National Gallery, London, called the "Chateau de Steen," in which the castle surrounded by water is shown against a sunset sky. The autumn colouring, the groups of trees, and the quiet ending of the day are all finely rendered. And in his "Landscape with a Rainbow" the golden corn is contrasted with the meadows in their fresh green after the shower of rain, and the trees, lit up by the sun, are seen against a sky full of rest after a storm. But although Rubens was first in this field, his principal work was in figure painting, and to this he gave his chief attention.

Nicolas Poussin was one of the great painters of France. He recorded nature very faithfully

[1] 1577–1640.
[2] 1594–1665.
[3] 1600–1682.
[4] For a very full account of Rubens and his work see "Rubens" by Émile Michel.

and accurately, with special attention to detail, describing minutely sky and mountain, tree and flower. His work is very impressive and has had a strong influence on the subsequent art of his country. (See Plate 7.) He is lacking in enthusiasm, and devotes himself too much to the antique. He is somewhat cold and formal, but his style is very original. He is opposed to naturalism, the taking of nature literally as it is seen. On the contrary his pictures are full of thought, and he describes painting as "an image of things incorporeal rendered sensible through imitation of form." He considers that the idea should first be conceived clearly, and then reproduced by means of external forms, used as symbols, and treated so as to enable the spectator to understand the idea in the picture. It is very remarkable that he should have arrived at these views at this early period. We also see that his pictures reflect his own moods very strongly. In a very fine painting, "In Arcady," he depicts some youthful shepherds coming accidentally upon a tomb with the inscription "Et in Arcadia ego," and this

"Painting, Spanish and French," by Gerard W. Smith.

PLATE VI. — Autumn. *Rubens.*

picture is full of the melancholy thoughts that filled his own soul.

Claude devoted his whole time to painting pure landscape (see Plate 8), and he abandoned the human motive almost entirely in his pictures, although, as Turner also did with some of his, he still gave them classical names. He seems to have been the first to fully realize the great importance of this branch of art, and he was also the first to fill his paintings with light; and he gives expression to all the varying effects of sunshine, its sparkle in the early morning dew, its dazzling midday radiance on the water, its rosy hues towards evening. For this, and the beauty and originality of his work, if one artist were to be chosen as the founder of modern landscape painting, that title would be rightly given to Claude. His influence has been very great and has had a lasting effect. Even Turner, two hundred years later, was anxious to show that he could rival the work of his illustrious predecessor. The composition of some of his pictures is strongly reminiscent of Claude, and later still we see traces of this master in

Corot's paintings. Ruskin fails to appreciate the greatness of Claude, and is unable to see the ideal in his work, though he gives him credit for the remarkable feat of first of all artists putting the sun in the heavens in his pictures.[1] Anyone who could produce such a revolution in the art of his day as this means is entitled to far more than the grudging praise accorded by Ruskin, and well deserves the great honour in which he has been universally held by succeeding generations.

[1] "Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 88.

It is interesting to note that these artists, while great lovers of nature, were all idealists, and so far from copying nature exactly, they had no hesitation in putting buildings or scenery of one part of the country into a view of another, if it made the composition of the picture better. Samuel Palmer wrote: "When I was setting out for Italy I expected to see Claude's magical combinations; miles apart I found the disjointed members, which he had 'suited to the desires of his mind'; these were the beauties, but the beautiful, the ideal Helen was his own."[2] Thus we see at the very beginning of modern landscape art, the sub-

[2] "Claude Gellée," by Owen J. Dullea.

jective view of nature is strongly held by artists and expressed in their works.

About the same time Gaspard Poussin,[1] a pupil of Nicolas Poussin, and Salvator Rosa,[2] who lived in Naples, were also working on somewhat similar lines, while in Spain Velasquez[3] was painting, amidst all his other work in portraiture and allegory, such landscapes as the "St. Anthony" at Madrid, with its massive rock, its valley and river, its hills and cloudy sky; or the "Garden of the Villa Medicis"; or the "Fountain of the Tritons"; or the beautiful background to "Prince Balthazar Carlos" (see Plate 9) with its tall tree extending up one side of the picture and the leafy branches covering the space above the figure of the young Prince.

[1] 1613–1675.
[2] 1615–1673.
[3] 1599–1660.

These artists were followed very shortly afterwards by Cuyp,[4] Ruysdael,[5] and Hobbema[6] in Holland, who contributed still more to emancipate landscape art from classical subjects, and from any subjection to figure painting that remained. Ruysdael is a very distinctive link in the chain of landscape artists that connects the present with the past. (See Plate 10.)

[4] 1605–1691.
[5] 1625–1682.
[6] 1638–1709.

He early became dissatisfied with painting nature for its own mere beauty, without expressing its effect on the artist. Like his contemporary, Rembrandt, his is one of those mysterious natures that flit across life's stage, coming no one knows whence, and disappearing in the gloom of poverty and amid the neglect of the world. These two great artists have a very similar manner of looking at life and its mysteries, and being in every way so out of the ordinary, it is little wonder that worldly success and the ways of the world were not for them. Ruysdael is the first to hear the plaintive minor chord in the harmony that rises from the earth and to feel the restless, never satisfied spirit which has become so dominant a factor in modern thought and feeling. He brings into landscape painting the strong subjective element, and looking at his pictures we can almost revive in imagination his gentle personality, through his tender and rather sad views of the flat meadows, the towns, and the bleaching-greens of his native Holland.

1607-1669.

The next great landscape artist to appear

Plate VII. — Diogenes Throwing Away his Shell. *Nicolas Poussin.*

was Watteau,[1] in France, who painted his lovely dreams with a strange creative power, and placed the figures of the gay men and women of his fantasies in idyllic scenes of remarkable beauty and charming, sparkling colour. It is in these landscapes with their delicate effects of light and sunshine, and their suggestive quality, that his great gifts and careful study of nature are seen. His life was a short one and his constitution was weakened by constant ill-health. He seems to have painted these scenes of a fairy land where all are happy, and where sorrow and suffering enter not, as a contrast to his own experience and as a relief to his distressed heart.

[1] 1684–1721.

Then the genius of art touches Constable[2] and Turner[3] in England. Constable was one of the creators and strong forces in the history of landscape. He was the first to give a real out-of-door, atmospheric appearance to his pictures, and he had a very vigorous and personal manner of painting. (See Plate II.) Some of his pictures were exhibited in France and made a great impression there. A note in

[2] 1776–1837.

[3] 1775–1851.

1798–1863. "Journal de Eugène Delacroix." Vol. I.

Delacroix' journal says that when he saw the pictures of Constable he sent for and completely changed his painting, "The Massacre of Scio," which was at the time being exhibited.

Ibid.

And in 1847 he writes: "Constable dit que la superiorité du vert de ses prairies tient à ce qu'il est un composé d'une multitude de verts differents. Ce qu'il dit ici du vert des prairies peut s'appliquer à tous les autres tons." And

Ibid.

again: "Constable, homme admirable, est une des gloires anglaises. Je vous en ai déjà parlé, et de l'impression qu'il m'avait produite au moment où je peignais le Massacre de Scio. Lui et Turner sont de véritables réformateurs. Ils sont sortis de l'ornière des paysagistes anciens. Notre école a grandement profité de leur example. Gericault était revenu tout étourdi de l'un des grands paysages qu'il nous a envoyés."

Delacroix and the other originators of the Romantic movement in France were very much impressed by the forceful work of Constable and at once adopted many of his principles. They were struck by the originality of his method, and he had a great effect on

PLATE VIII. — Cephalus and Procris. *Claude le Lorrain.*

them and on the "School of 1830," Millet, Daubigny, Rousseau, Troyon, and the modern successor of Claude, Corot, who, although not endowed with the imaginative power of Turner, yet idealized more than any landscape painter before him. His lovely notes of early morning and the quiet and rest of evening are a new personal and poetical revelation to the world. (See Plate 13.) Like Constable he was rejected by the critics of his day. They said his work was unfinished and careless. But the opinion of the few who recognized the coming of a genius in each case prevailed, and public opinion has placed them both in their true places among the most famous artists. Turner occupies a unique place in the history of art (see Plate 12), as the most imaginative landscape painter the world has seen, and as one of its supreme colourists.

1796–1875

About the middle of the nineteenth century the impressionists appeared in France. They had a new theory of placing brilliant colours pure on the canvas and not first mixed on the palette. This gave a very bright and beautiful quality of vibrating air, and many of the

ideas of this school will live; but its work seems an incomplete and transitional phase of art, though the names of its great leaders Manet, Monet, Degas and Renoir will always be remembered. This brings us to the latest school of landscape in Holland, with which we are more specially concerned, as the most recent expression of the subjective view of landscape painting.

It will thus be seen that the men who have had the most powerful influence on landscape art are Claude, Ruysdael, Constable, Turner, and Corot. They were all original and creative men, with a special love of nature and the gift of being able to reproduce their ideas on canvas. Each had his own characteristic views about art, and his own very individual manner and treatment. Each worked in ways not known before his day, and each had a great influence on those who came after him. They were the leaders of the different movements, that culminated in the modern art of landscape painting.

# CHAPTER II

## REVIVAL OF DUTCH ART

WHISTLER in his customary brilliant style has stated the theory that there is no such thing as a national art, but that all art is purely personal to the individuality of the artist, and has nothing to do with his environment, or the history of his country, or the special conditions prevailing at the time. It is in fact a matter of chance and accident. "Listen!" he says. "There never was an artistic period. There never was an art-loving nation." The genius of art, he tells us, flies hither and thither over the earth. At one time she touches the far-off dweller in the Celestial Empire. It is then that he produces those wonderful vases painted with the "blue of the sky after rain," or the deep dazzling reds of the Ming dynasty, the despair of all imitators, or the delicate apple green of the tender leaves that deck the trees in early spring, or the celadon colour of the sea, as the wave breaks into foam and reveals under-

"Ten O'Clock."

neath its white crest the glittering sheen of depths of pure green; or again she dwells with the great Spaniard; or comes to live with the artists of Italy and France; or with Rembrandt and Ruysdael, or the painters of Germany and England. And in every case Whistler holds that it is the individual she stays with and inspires, and when he passes away she sadly departs. Her course through the world is without reason, her ways those of mere caprice.

What truth there is in this lies in the fact that all great art is individual, and that artists do not reproduce each other's ideas, but must have originality. It is right to insist on this, and to emphasize the personal element. And there may not be such a thing as a national art, though each nation has certain peculiar characteristics in its art which assert themselves and are easily recognized. But history* does

"The Philosophy of Art." H. Taine. Translated by John Durand.

*"In order to comprehend an artist or a group of artists we must clearly comprehend the general social and intellectual condition of the times to which they belong. It is their voice alone that we hear at this moment, through the space of centuries, but beneath this living voice which comes vibrating to us we distinguish a murmur and as it were a vast low sound, the great infinite and varied voice of the people chanting in unison with them."

not bear out Whistler's theory that nothing is of importance except the temperament of the artist. It shows, on the contrary, that there are times in the lives of nations when a genuine and general feeling for art arises, after the people have successfully passed through some great crisis. The time in which their endurance was tested, and their ability to cope with opposing circumstances proved, is followed by a period of intense mental vigour and of material prosperity. A general feeling for art, which may have been lying dormant, awakens, and great writers, painters, and sculptors appear about the same time, and are called, for want of a better term, a school.

Such a spirit is found in Greece after the great struggle between culture and liberty on the one hand, and barbarism and slavery on the other, resulting in the overthrow of Persia, and the rise of Athens to supreme power, when those mighty works of art that are still the wonder of the world were produced by Pheidias and the other artists of the brilliant age of Pericles. Such a period is seen in Italy after the dark ages, when the revival

of learning spread through the land and the long line of artists from Cimabue to Tintoretto was its chief glory. Later, in the north, came the fight for freedom of thought, when Caxton was setting up his printing press, when Luther was struggling for liberty, and Columbus discovered a new world; and again there is a similar period under the leadership of Durer and Holbein. And in Holland, Rembrandt, Ruysdael, and Hals appear after the years of patriotic endurance and courage shown in the war with, and the defeat of, the mighty power of Spain.

Similarly we see in England that its greatest artistic period when Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Turner, and Constable were painting their masterpieces, followed the expansion of the empire after the war which resulted in the rise of Prussia, and the conquest by England of Canada and India; a time when the victories of Minden, Quiberon, Quebec, and Plassey were fresh in the memory, when the nation was inspired by the grand spirit that animated Chatham, and had imbibed his ardent belief in its destiny.

Plate IX. — Prince Balthazar Carlos. *Velasquez.*

Again in France, after the upheaval of the Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon, we find the protest against classicism made by Delacroix and the other leaders of the Romantic movement, and the appearance of the remarkable "men of 1830," or the "Barbizon" school, Corot, Millet, Daubigny, Rousseau, and Troyon, and the modern Dutch artists, inspired by the same ideals, followed shortly after.

It is not easy to trace the history of art in China, but there is no doubt that beautiful porcelain has been produced there for a long time and at frequent intervals, and the artistic environment must have helped to form those outbursts of supreme art which occurred after the conquests of the Han, Sung, and Yuan Dynasties. Certainly one of the greatest periods was that of Khang-hi (1662–1723), shortly after the great war in which the Ming rulers were overthrown.

It thus seems to be the case that art makes its appearance often in certain conditions of national life, usually after a period when a people has by a victorious struggle produced

a number of men of strong characters and varied talents, and society has become leavened with their spirit. When such a period of greatness in art once appears, it seems almost impossible that it should fail to reappear afterwards, unless the nation itself should succumb. The ground may remain unused and neglected, but sooner or later the seed will again be planted and the spirit will breathe into it the breath of life.

It seems wrong, then, to speak of art as subject to the whims of caprice. Its capriciousness is only in appearance. For art is serious and, in common with everything we know of, is under the rule of law. But the interpretation of its own laws, and its very spirit, are freely given to the earnest ones who are in sympathy with it, and endowed with the capacity to understand its ways and its aims.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a country that had once seen such a display of art as appeared in Holland in the seventeenth century should experience a revival in modern times. Such a reappearance has come, and we will briefly trace its history.

After the great era in Holland there was a steady decline, and for about a century the country passed through a dark age in art, the painters being occupied with old traditions and dead forms. In the first half of the nineteenth century there was a sort of life in the neo-classical school, of which the leaders were Schotel,[1] Pieneman,[2] Schelfhout[3] and Koekkoek.[4] They were serious enough artists, but were wanting in originality, and their work had no lasting effect. Better were the early romanticists and historical painters who followed them, Van Hove,[5] Rochussen, Stroebel, and Herman Tenkate.[6] To avoid the formalism of the previous school they went back to the study of the old Dutch masters. They were still occupied with a past art, but they were the precursors of the modern Dutch School.

The first sign of a change is to be found, strangely enough, in the work of an artist who occupied himself nearly altogether with the interiors of churches and other buildings as his chosen subjects, Johannes Bosboom.[7] He was the first to break with the old order of

[1] 1808–1865.
[2] 1809–1860.
[3] 1787–1870.
[4] 1803–1862.
[5] 1814–1865.
[6] 1803–1856.
[7] 1817–1891.

things and to give a new interpretation. The dry, stereotyped form of church, as hitherto portrayed, disappears before his vitalizing genius, and instead he gives us what he felt[1] rather than what he saw, — the vast, air-filled, sun-lit spaces; and henceforth art can never go back nor men be satisfied with less.

Closely following him came Josef Israels,[2] the recognized leader of the school. He at first seemed to be one of the historical painters, but he emancipated himself and with Bosboom inaugurated the new era. By his originality and force of character, and the beauty and variety of his paintings, he has gradually gained the position among his countrymen of being their greatest artist since the days of Rembrandt. Bosboom and Israels were the first to appear, but they were soon followed by the other creative forces of this period, Anton Mauve, James Maris, Matthew Maris, William Maris, and J. H. Weissenbruch.

The appearance about fifty years ago of the works of these artists showed a remarkable return of that strong artistic spirit whose breath made Holland in the seventeenth cen-

[1] "Try and identify yourself with nature; let it possess you, and then reproduce it not in external form merely, but with every beautiful, solemn, sacred, and secret suggestion that it conveys to you." J. Bosboom, quoted in "James Maris" by Th. de Bock.

[2] Born 1824.

PLATE X. — Landscape with Church. *Jacob Van Ruysdael.*

tury so alive; the same spirit but the environment changed. And so it is not the aim of these masters to emulate or copy the great men of a past age. They are full of modern ideas and endeavour to solve the problems of their own day and generation. It is vain to hark back to the days of Raphael or earlier. If art has no new living message to give to its children, it is a dead art and useless. When sufficient time has elapsed to give a true perspective view, these men will stand out as the worthy successors of their own great artists, and as a powerful force, carrying further on the work of Constable and of the French School of 1830.

*All men of striking originality, they broke

* The catalogue of an Exhibition of Old and Modern Dutch paintings, held at Whitechapel, London, in the spring of 1904, says:

"Dutch art with bold originality set itself in the seventeenth century to paint the portrait of the new-born Holland, its men and women, its manners, its plains and canals, its taverns and kitchens. The Dutch, with the misty, diffused light of their Northern climate, discovered the true basis of fine colour, the effect of contrast in giving values. It is commonly said that Dutch art is realistic and positive, but in reality its charm and greatness lies in the fact that it idealizes the actual. There is an imaginative power about their work that is far more haunting than the more obvious idealization of forms by the Italians. The

away from the past traditions of art in their country, and, going direct to nature, strove, by careful study, to give a truthful view, each as he saw it, of her many changing moods. This individual way of painting what they saw makes these men the creators of a new personality in art. They form an extraordinary collection of individually great men, each painting in his own way, but preserving the most sensitive sympathy with the same fundamental truths of nature. As Turner and Constable in England, Corot and Millet and others in France, through *their* individuality of vision, showed the effect of the scenery and the people of their country upon highly sensitive and poetic natures by a wholly different revelation from anything that had been seen

Dutch painters almost accidentally, it seems, merely by their very truthfulness, caught that mysterious poetry of the fleeting moment that lies on landscapes, houses, and men. The modern Dutch painters, when the revival began about the middle of the last century, had merely to cultivate the soil of their native land, which had lain fallow since the end of the seventeenth century. Like their great ancestors they sought inspiration in their own land and times. Though their range is more limited than that of the old Dutch masters, which swept life from the magnificence of Rembrandt, to the somewhat gross burlesque of Ostade, they possess the tranquil sureness of effect that marked the classic masters."

before, so in Holland, though the peasantry and their humble homes had been the common subjects of artists for centuries, no one saw them as they are painted by Israels until revealed by his genius. And the spacious interiors of Bosboom are equally personal to him, as are the cattle and sheep of Mauve, and the landscapes of James Maris and Weissenbruch and the sun-lit fields of William Maris to them. This is the reason of their greatness; they were original and self-revealing, their insight went further and deeper than that of others, and they painted with great technical skill what they each saw, in a way that showed how intensely their feelings were affected by the wonders and beauty of nature.

The study of nature must be the basis of all art, but it is only the foundation, and on this the artist must build. If these men had given us merely a correct topographical view of what they saw, their memory would fade with that of many other clever craftsmen.[1] But they give us much more; for with this truthfulness to nature, subordinated to higher

[1] "Only emotional art moves mankind, and emotion is incompatible with accuracy. Studies may be accurate; noble pictures are never accurate." "Thoughts about Art." 1873. P. G. Hamerton.

ends, they show to us their distinct individual interpretations, unconsciously revealing, through the gift of imagination, the effect produced on their own feelings, and awakening a responsive echo in the observers.

# CHAPTER III

## VARIOUS OPINIONS ABOUT ART

We have seen in the first chapter that the earliest of the modern landscape painters were idealists, and by no means close copyists of nature. Since their day there have been frequent attempts to prove that realism is the true aim of art. The upholders of the art for art's sake theory in its crudest form have even gone so far as to say that subject in a picture is of no importance, and that it does not matter what is painted as long as the work is well done, and the design and the colour make a beautiful piece of decoration. The men who hold these views are usually artists, busily engaged in painting, who imagine that they are faithfully copying nature and doing nothing more than this. They think that they are not able to see more than the actual scene before them, or to do more than give as lifelike a rendering of it as their

knowledge of art enables them to paint. Yet often some of these men do put their very thought into their work without consciously knowing it. At the same time they are still quite genuine in thinking that art is realistic, and is not determined by the individual mental endowment of the painter.

Such artists, however, as Nicolas Poussin, Delacroix, Millet, and Fromentin see further into the heart of the matter, and having the gift of expression they have given their views to the world. They believe that great art is ideal and subjective, and that nature is changed as its varied scenes pass through the alembic of the artist's imagination ere he bodies them forth on his canvas.

There needs must be both realism and idealism in art, but the former should be subordinate to the latter. There must be realism; for the correct rendering of facts is the basis of all art, and it is the only means that the artist has to express himself. But the personal element comes in whenever the artist commences to work, and the only really important things in a picture are the charac-

Plate XI. — Landscape with Stormy Sky. *John Constable.*

ter and the harmony of colour that the mind of the artist gives to the facts of realism.

John Ruskin and P. G. Hamerton in the latter part of the nineteenth century were the two best known writers on art subjects in England. If Hamerton had been endowed with more poetry and imagination, he would have been one of the best of critics. As it is he stands very high. Every person interested in scenery and in painting should be familiar with the very fine thirteenth chapter of his book on "Landscape." Although it reads as if he, a conscientious and painstaking artist by training, were somewhat annoyed that good, faithful, and honest work did not produce a great picture, yet he shows that he does see the higher truths about art, and he states them clearly. He writes in a very interesting manner and has published a number of instructive and entertaining books on art.

Ruskin has the gift of poetic expression in a very high degree, and as a writer of magnificent English prose has scarcely an equal. He also has a vivid imagination and is often very daring, as in that beautiful passage

quoted by Hamerton from "The Mountain Gloom." "Through the arches of this trellis-work the avenue of the great valley is seen in descending distance, enlarged with line upon line of tufted foliage, languid and rich, degenerating at last into leagues of grey Maremma, wild with the thorn and the willow; on each side of it, sustaining themselves in mighty slopes and unbroken reaches of colossal promontory, the great mountains secede into supremacy through rosy depths of burning air, and the crescents of snow gleam over their dim summits, as — if there could be mourning, as once there was war, in Heaven — a line of waning moons might be set for lamps along the sides of some sepulchral chamber in the Infinite."

"Modern Painters." Vol. IV. Page 349.

But as a critic of art, while he holds many advanced views, his teaching is nearly altogether taken up with inculcating the necessity of such knowledge of science on the part of the artist as it would take a lifetime to acquire, and the supreme importance of painting in the most minute and faithful detail.

For a logical and clear statement of what

art really is, we do not know of anything so luminous and convincing, or couched in such well expressed terms, as the essays on art by John Addington Symonds and W. J. Stillman. We give in the appendix extracts from these essays, as some of them are out of print and difficult to find. They convey a great deal of information and are full of interest.

Another beautifully written book is "The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland," by Eugène Fromentin, which presents some of the best and most truthful criticism to be found and well repays a careful study.

In the present chapter we give a number of opinions from writers and artists, in support of the subjective view of art. And first let us quote the following passage, which forms an admirable introduction, from a course of lectures delivered to students at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, charming in their style, original in treatment and most instructive: "I remember, years ago, sketching with two well-known men, artists who were great friends, a passing effect upon the hills that lay before us. Our three sketches

"Considerations on Painting." John La Farge.

were different in shape, the distance bore a different relation to the foreground, the clouds were treated with different precision and different attention. The drawing was the same, that is to say, the general make of things, but each man had involuntarily looked upon what was most interesting to him in the whole sight. The colour of each painting was different, and each picture would have been recognized anywhere as a specimen of work by each one of us, characteristic of our names. We had not the first desire of expressing *ourselves*. We were each one true to nature. Of course there is no absolute nature; as with each slight shifting of the eye involuntarily we focus some part to the prejudice of others. . . . You will see that the *man* is the main question, and that there can be no absolute view of nature. At some moment or other you will have brought before you that most important conflict of realism and its opposite. What I want you to notice is that though in abstraction there must be such a thing, yet in these realities with which we are concerned realism is a very evasive distinction. If ex-

Plate XII. — Crossing the Brook. *J. M. W. Turner.*

periences such as I have just stated bring out the result that you have seen, there is for you no such thing as realism. If you ever know how to paint somewhat well, and pass beyond the position of the student who has not yet learned to use his hands as an expression of the memories of his brain, you will always give to nature, that is, what is outside of you, the character of the lens through which you see it . . . which is yourself."

P. G. Hamerton tells us that after living on Loch Awe for a year, and after careful study, he painted a picture of the great mountain Ben Cruachan, that towers aloft at the upper end of the lake. He drew it with absolute fidelity. Turner painted the same mountain.[1] To gain the real but not the apparent truth, he disregarded local conditions. He drew the mountain too high, left out a neighbouring peak, Ben Vorich, and changed the shape of another. In literal and exact truth he was wrong, but Hamerton realized that his own fidelity to nature had only produced a topographical picture and did not give the true impression made on him.[2] Whereas Turner

1 "Life of Turner." Chapter IV. P. G. Hamerton. And "Landscape." Chapter XIII. P. G. Hamerton.

2 "Talent lacks that

indescribable nothing, that inestimable something, that constitutes the life and soul through which the picture gets its immortality." Hawthorne.

had by an effort of the imagination so painted the scene as to impress the beholder with the same feeling of awe and wonder that had inspired him as he looked at this guardian giant dominating one of the most beautiful of the lakes of Scotland. Hamerton felt that it was not only grander than his view, but that it was *in reality more truthful.* "I used to believe," he writes, "that if work *was* truthful it would *appear* truthful, and if the artist put deep feeling into his picture it would be visible to everyone. I have no remnant of these beliefs now. It becomes clear that the landscape painter must look out for compensations to counterbalance the weakness of his art in conveying the emotions excited by nature. Accuracy in drawing makes simple topography the inevitable result. So the artist goes to nature for suggestion and materials, and not to draw accurately; but the student-struggle for imitative skill must be over before the soul of the master can make its way through the clogging material pigments. After the first great disappointment caused by the discovery that truthful portraiture in landscape

"Landscape." Chapter XIII. P. G. Hamerton.

painting does not produce the impression conveyed by the natural scene, there comes a return to art, with clearer views of its true power and of its inevitable deficiency. There is something in art of an intimate character that addresses itself to our sympathetic imagination, and it is by this, rather than by the conquest of technical difficulty,[1] that representations of landscape retain their hold on the mind." This is the position he arrived at, against his own former strongly held opinions. He learned by experience the true view, and he states it very decidedly.

[1] It is a canon of art that a painting is fine, not from the absence of faults, but on account of the presence of great qualities.

Ruskin's teaching is somewhat contradictory. He lays too much stress on accuracy of detail in leaf, tree, and rock forms.

[2] "Infants in judgment, we look for specific character and complete finish. As we advance we scorn such detail altogether and look for breadth of effect. But perfected in judgment, we return in a great measure to our early feelings, and thank Rafaelle for the shells upon his sacred beach, and for the delicate stamens of the herbage beside his inspired St. Catherine."

[2] "Modern Painters." Vol. I. Preface. 2d Edition.

[1] "Modern Painters." Vol. I. Preface. 2d Edition.
[2] Ibid.

[1] "Poussin's picture, in which every vine-leaf is drawn with consummate skill, produces a perfect tree group."

[2] "The background of Sir Joshua Reynolds's Holy Family, owing to the utter neglect of all botanical detail, has lost every atom of ideal character."

[3] Ibid.

[3] "Every class of rock, earth, and cloud must be known by the painter with geologic and meteorologic accuracy."

Too much attention is given to these matters in this beautifully written book, "Modern Painters," and indeed photographic accuracy in all the details is the chief thing he inculcates, and we are told he was sorry in later life when he saw the effect that was produced by the importance he placed on them. And it is to be regretted that, with all his knowledge of and love for art, he was not able to see the greatness of such splendid artists as Rembrandt, Ruysdael, Hobbema, and Constable,[4] and that he expressed such slighting opinions about their works; and also that he should speak in a similar manner of modern French landscape. These mistakes and omissions de-

[4] For Ruskin's opinions about these artists, see Appendix.

tract from the value of his writings. But while we admit this, and also that his ideas that a great artist can be developed by this extreme attention to the correct drawing of details and the acquirement of scientific knowledge, and that any good can be done by teaching the necessity of minute study of phenomena after the artist has once learned the proper use of his materials, are quite wrong, yet how true and noble his opinions on the whole question of art can be at times is shown when he comes under the spell of the overpowering genius of Turner, who with all his knowledge subjected everything to the higher ends of mystery and imagination. Then Ruskin realizes the true power of art and the great achievements of its supreme masters, and sees that his theories only apply to minor matters, and he gives expression to his thoughts in such fine passages as these:

[1] "Modern landscape painters, rejecting all idea of *bona fide* imitation, think only of conveying the impression of nature into the mind of the spectator."

[2] "The landscape painter must have two

[1] "Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 75.
[2] Ibid. Vol. I. Pages 43 to 46.

great and distinct aims — the first to induce in the spectator's mind the faithful conception of natural objects, and the second to inform him of the thoughts and feelings with which they were regarded by the artist himself. The artist talks to him and makes him a sharer in his own strong feelings. He endows him with the impetuous emotions of a nobler and more penetrating intelligence. The artist cannot attain the second end without having previously reached the first, and this is why, though I consider the second as the real and only important end of all art, I call the representation of facts the first end, because it is necessary to the other and must be attained before it. And thus though we want the thoughts and feelings of the artist as well as the truth, yet they must be thoughts arising out of the knowledge of truth, and feelings arising out of the contemplation of truth."

"Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 36.

"Nature is always mysterious and secret in her use of means, and art is always likest her when it is most inexplicable."

Ibid. Vol. IV. Page 70.

"As people try honestly to see all they can of anything, they come to a point where a

PLATE XIII. — Paysage. *J. B. C. Corot.*

noble dimness begins. They see more than others, but they feel they cannot see all, and the more intense their perception the more the crowd of things which they partly see will multiply upon them, and their delight may at last principally consist in dwelling on this cloudy part of their prospect, somewhat casting aside what to them has become comparatively common, but is perhaps all that other people see."

"It is impossible to go too finely or think too much about details in landscape so that they be rightly arranged and rightly massed; but it is equally impossible to render anything like the fulness or the space of nature, except by that mystery or obscurity of execution which she herself uses."

"Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 199.

"The aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts, and to reach a representation which, though it may be, when tried by rule and measure, totally unlike the place, shall yet be capable of producing on the beholder's mind the impression which the reality

Ibid. Vol. IV. Page 23.

would have produced, had he verily descended into the valley from the gorges of Airolo."

"Modern Painters." Vol. IV. Page 75.

"Yet, here and there, once in a couple of centuries, one man will rise past clearness and become dark with excess of light."*

And indeed Ruskin's lofty ideas about art are only fully seen in his splendid appreciation of the greatness of Turner, whose reputation stands supreme, not for the accurate knowledge of form which he undoubtedly possessed, but for his unrivalled power of imagination, which, with his great gift for colour, enabled him to paint on canvas what Wordsworth dreamed of in verse:

* The following extract is from an article in the New York *Evening Post*:

"He (Ruskin) was one of the inspiring voices of his own generation when it was young. He was among the rare men out of whom virtue goes at the touch of the life of their time upon them. Whatever the fate of his teachings, the tradition of his stimulating personality will long remain. He dawned on too many lives as the great awakener to be soon forgotten. We can never lose the memory of it, even if we do not always find it the "gleam" by which to guide our lives. Art critics as a whole rate him low; political economists and theologians shake their heads over him. He was often fallacious, self-contradictory, and inconsistent, yet no ordinary ranter could have set the art world by the ears as his writings on painting and architecture did. As in the case of Carlyle's prophet-bursts, you saw that the doctrine was doubtful, but the sacred inspiration was always there and that was the main thing."

> "Ah! then if mine had been the painter's hand
> To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
> The light that never was on sea or land."

"Stanzas suggested by a picture of Peele Castle." Wordsworth.

M. Henri Taine, Professor in the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris, gives us his views in his instructive lectures on art:

"The Philosophy of Art." Translated by John Durand.

"All the great arts possess a common character, that of being more or less *imitative* arts. For it is plain that a statue is meant to imitate accurately a really living man, that a picture is intended to portray real persons in real attitudes, the interior of a house and a landscape such as nature presents. Must we conclude that absolutely exact imitation is the end of art? If this were so, absolutely exact imitation would produce the finest works" . . . "But in fact it is not so. Art is intellectual, not mechanical" . . . "The province of art is to render the essential character. In order to accomplish this, the artist must suppress whatever conceals it, select whatever manifests it . . . There is one gift indispensable to all artists; no study, no degree of patience, supplies its place. In confronting objects the artist must experience *original sensation;* the

character of an object strikes him and the effect of this sensation is a strong peculiar impression. . . . Through this faculty he penetrates to the very heart of things, and seems to be more clear sighted than other men. . . . The end of a work of art is to manifest some essential or salient character, consequently some important idea, clearer and more completely than is attainable from real objects."

Delacroix, the leader in the revolt against classicism in France, writes very strongly against realism:

"Journal de Eugène Delacroix."

"Le réalisme devrait être défini *l'antipode* de l'art. . . car peut-on concevoir que l'esprit ne guide pas la main de l'artiste, et croira-t-on possible en même temps que, malgré toute son application à imiter, il ne tiendra pas ce singulier travail de la couleur de son esprit?" "Le but de l'artiste n'est pas de reproduire exactement les objets; c'est à l'esprit qu'il faut arriver."

Although Whistler speaks as if what he calls the *painter* quality were the only really great thing in art, it is evident to anyone who has seen those strangely personal nocturnes which

PLATE XIV. — Potato Gatherers. *Anton Mauve.*

emanated from him how fully he expressed his inner feelings in his works. And scattered here and there among his writings, concealed under a covering of such brilliant and satirical wit as has seldom been seen, we find his true ideas about art. Talking of the critic-writer, who had no technical knowledge of painting, he says: "Meanwhile the painter's poetry is quite lost to him; the amazing invention that shall have put form and colour into such perfect harmony, that exquisiteness is the result, he is without understanding; the nobility of thought that shall have given the artist's dignity to the whole says to him absolutely nothing." In the celebrated lawsuit, Whistler *v.* Ruskin, he was asked, "Do you say that this is a correct representation of Battersea Bridge?" "I did not intend it," he answered, "to be a correct portrait of the bridge. As to what the picture represents, that depends upon who looks at it. To some persons it may represent all that was intended; to others it may represent nothing." Again he writes: "The imitator is a poor kind of creature. If the man who paints only the tree or flower

"Ten O'Clock." Whistler.

"The Gentle Art of Making Enemies." Whistler.

or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this: in portrait painting to put on canvas something more than the face the model wears for that one day; to paint the man, in short, as well as his features."

One of the finest appreciations of the Flemish and Dutch artists of the seventeenth century has been given by a modern French artist, Eugène Fromentin, a painter of great technical skill, who shows himself also to be a very able critic and a very interesting and beautiful writer. He not only sees the exterior, but goes beneath to the painter's thought and ideas, and writing about Rubens, Rembrandt, and others, he allows us to see his own opinions about art. First see what he says about "the lost way" of modern painting: "All the fancies of the imagination, and what were called the mysteries of the palette, when mystery was one of the attractions of painting, give place to the love of the absolute, textual truth. Photographic studies as to the effects of light have changed the greater proportion

1820-1876.

"The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland." Eugène Fromentin.

of ways of seeing, feeling, and painting. It seems as if the mechanical reproduction of what is, becomes to-day the highest expression of experience and knowledge, and that talent consists in struggling for exactitude, precision, and imitative force with an instrument. All personal interference of sensibility is out of place. What the mind has imagined is considered an artifice; and all artifice, that is, all conventionality, is proscribed by an art which can be nothing but conventional. There are even scornful appellations to designate contrary practices. They are called the *old game*, as much as to say an antiquated, doting, and superannuated fashion of comprehending nature, by introducing one's own into it."

In the following extracts from the same book, it must be remembered that it is not one of those merely literary critics that painters object to (and perhaps with some reason if they have no knowledge of art practically and so cannot discuss that phase) who is writing, but a thoroughly trained artist of well-known and high reputation, who gives his views about the spiritual side of art, and expresses

his belief in the greatness of those pictures which show the ideas and feelings of the artist:

"The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland." Eugène Fromentin.

"The glory of Rubens must be found in the world of the true through which he travels as a master, and also in the world of the ideal, that region of clear ideas, of sentiments and emotions, whither his heart, as well as his mind, bear him incessantly."

Ibid.

"The art of painting is the indisputable witness of the mental state of the painter at the moment he held the brush."

Ibid.

"It is true that in the world of the beautiful two or three spirits can be found who have gone farther with a more lofty flight, who consequently have seen more nearly the Divine light, and the Eternal Truth. There are also in the moral world, in that of sentiments, visions, and dreams, depths into which Rembrandt alone has descended, which Rubens has not even perceived."

Ibid.

"In Dutch art, reputed so positive, among these painters considered for the most part as near-sighted copyists, you feel a loftiness and goodness of soul, a tenderness for the true, a cordiality for the real, which gives to their

works a value that the things themselves do not seem to have. Hence their ideality, an ideal a little misunderstood, rather despised, but indisputable for him who can seize it, and very attractive to him who knows how to relish it. No painting gives a clearer idea of the triple and silent operation of feeling, reflecting, and expressing. At times a grain of warmer sensibility makes of them thinkers, even poets on occasion."

"Rembrandt, that morose and mighty dreamer, . . . who seemed to be painting his epoch, his country, his friends and himself, but who at bottom painted only one of the unknown recesses of the human soul."

"The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland." Eugène Fromentin.

"Rembrandt is before all a visionary, and there are in the depths of nature things that this pearl fisher alone has discovered. He was a pure spiritualist, an idealist; I mean a spirit whose domain is that of ideas, and whose language is the language of ideas."

Ibid.

Similarly J. F. Millet writes: "To have done more or less work which means nothing is not to have produced. There is production only where there is expression." "Men of

"Jean-François Millet. Peasant and Painter." Alfred Sensier.

genius have the mission to show out of the riches of nature only that which they are permitted to take away, and to show it to those who would not otherwise have suspected its presence. They serve as translators and interpreters to those who cannot understand the language."

A. P. Ryder, A. N. A., one of the most subjective painters among the artists of the United States, whose works have the power in them of starting the observer's thoughts and setting them wandering far away, says in his "Paragraphs from the Studio of a Recluse:"

"Broadway Magazine." Sept., 1905.

"Nature is a teacher who never deceives. When I grew weary with the futile struggle to imitate the canvases of the past, I went out into the fields. In my desire to be accurate I became lost in a maze of detail. Try as I would my colours were not those of nature. My leaves were infinitely below the standard of a leaf, my finest strokes were coarse and crude. The old scene presented itself one day before my eyes framed in an opening between two trees. It stood out like a painted canvas — the deep blue of a midday sky — a

Plate XV. — The Fisherman. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

solitary tree, brilliant with the green of summer, a foundation of brown earth and gnarled roots. There was no detail to vex the eye. Three solid masses of form and colour — sky, foliage, and earth — the whole bathed in an atmosphere of golden luminosity. I threw my brushes aside; they were too small for the work in hand. I squeezed out big chunks of pure, moist colour, and taking my palette knife I laid on blue, green, white, and brown in great sweeping strokes. I saw nature springing into life upon my dead canvas. It was better than nature for it was vibrating with the thrill of a new creation."

"The artist should fear to become the slave of detail. He should strive to express his thought and not the surface of it. What avails a storm cloud accurate in form and colour, if the storm is not therein?"

"Broadway Magazine." Sept., 1905.

"Imitation is not inspiration, and inspiration only can give birth to a work of art."

Ibid.

"It is the first vision that counts. The artist has only to remain true to his dream, and it will possess his work in such a manner that it will resemble the work of no other man

Ibid.

— for no two visions are alike, and those who reach the heights have all toiled up the steep mountains by different routes."

"The idea of what a work of art is," said W. Brymner, R. C. A., in an interesting lecture on painting, "is very vague in the minds of most people. I think the majority are satisfied it is the faithful copying of objects or individuals. From the earliest times we find writers on art extolling paintings, not because they said something, but because they were deceptively lifelike. Zeuxes painted grapes the birds pecked at. Vasari continually praises the deceptive painting, and Leonardo said that a painter's best master was the mirror. What is it, then, that elevates a painting from the mere representation of objects to the level of a work of art? Zola describes art as 'a corner of nature seen through a temperament.' That is, that an artist must, before he begins his picture, have experienced some emotion, some thought suggested by the view of nature before him. The artist conveys to us the feeling he has experienced by perhaps making everything very real to us and true, but all as

seen from his standpoint. He leaves out, does not see, the sides of the question that do not emphasize his argument. He wishes to convey the idea he has, and everything tending to give form to that idea he uses. Everything not helpful to this end he leaves out. In conveying a great truth, he may sacrifice inconsequent facts. I believe, however, that this is done unconsciously. The artist thinks he is copying what he sees, because he feels so strongly from his point of view. Of course, this is open to discussion; but if the imagination is true imagination and not merely a grotesque play of fancy, the mind must be in some such condition. Many can learn to copy nature. Few are artists who can make us see and feel with them. The real artist makes us see even the simplest things in a new light. We feel to be true what he shows us, although we have never thought of it in that way before. Thus an artist, although he imitates nature and reproduces its external forms, must throw the light of his individual thought upon it, and this thought or emotion that he conveys by means

"The beauty of nature reforms itself in the mind for new creation." "Essay on Beauty." Emerson.

of nature must be his own thought, or some emotion he has personally experienced, and his manner of expressing himself must be proper to himself."

The point mentioned by Mr. Brymner, that the act of the artist in leaving out unnecessary facts, or even changing them, is performed unconsciously, is a very interesting one. It is alluded to by Ruskin, who says:[1] "In making these changes Turner does not think at all. They come into his head involuntarily. An entirely imperative dream has taken possession of him; he can see and do no otherwise than as the dream directs. No happy chance, nay, no happy thought, no perfect knowledge, will ever take the place of that mighty unconsciousness."

In such cases as that of Turner painting Loch Awe,[2] or "striking off the refractory summit of Mount Pilatus"[3] as its lines did not compose well with the rest of the picture of Lucerne, or painting the gorgeous colours of a sunset in a sky where the sun is still well above the horizon,[4] it is difficult to realize that the act was an entirely unconscious

[1] "Modern Painters." Vol. IV. Page 25.

[2] "Landscape." Chap. XIII. P. G. Hamerton.

[3] "Modern Painters." Vol. IV. Page 232.

[4] "Essay on John Ruskin." W. J. Stillman.

Plate XVI. — The Tow-Path. *James Maris.*

one.[1] But generally it does seem most probable that the artist feels what he must paint, what he must leave out, and the manner in which he must paint, without any distinct consciousness that he is changing what he sees, or giving other than the truthful impression of the scene before him.

"To-day," writes Amiel in his "Journal," "we have been talking realism in painting and of that poetical and artistic illusion which does not aim at being confounded with reality itself. The object of true art is only to charm the imagination, not to deceive the eye. When we see a good portrait we say, 'It is alive!' In other words, our imagination lends it life. We see what is given us, and we give on our side. A work of art ought to set the poetical faculty in us to work to complete our perceptions of a thing. Sympathy is a first condition of criticism."[2]

Thus there are two ways of painting a landscape, and there are two points of view from which the painting may be studied. The artist, in the first place, may give us merely an exact likeness of the external view, well

[1] "It was not merely topography that he upset, and the mountains that he marshalled about, but he outdid Joshua in the liberties he took with the sun and the moon." "The Decay of Art." W. J. Stillman.

[2] "Painting does not deal in the purely visible. It deals also in the suggestive and the allusive,

therefore in thoughts beyond the visible proof of the canvas. Still the medium is a visible one and is at the mercy of the spectator's amount of comprehension." "Imagination and Fancy." Leigh Hunt.

and carefully painted as to technique; or, secondly, if endowed with the capacity to do so, the same view, but after passing through and being influenced by his own personality, the accuracy of detail and the carefulness of the drawing subordinated to matters of more importance. The observer, similarly, may stand aloof and criticize the painting's merits or faults from the technical or realistic standpoint, finding out the difficulties that have been overcome, and generally looking as it were from the outside. Or he may endeavour to enter into the spirit of the artist, and try to feel the way in which he was affected by the scene and the message he sought to give on his canvas, looking from the inside, and in sympathetic union with the artist. These are the two points of view, the objective and the subjective. It is the subjective that is of vital importance, and that has the lasting and impressive effect. We can all see the correctness of details and the technical skill of the worker for ourselves. We want great artists to show us deeper and more hidden truths.

"Nature is apparent on the surface of things. To find the man requires deeper sight," as H. R. Poore,* A. N. A., a very interesting writer on art, well puts it. "The landscape painter becomes an interpreter of moods, his own as well as nature's, and in his selection of these he reveals himself. What he takes from nature he puts back out of himself. Does he make you listen with him to the soft, low music when nature is kindly and tender and lovable, or is his stuff of that robust fibre which makes her companionable to him in her ruggedness and strength?

"'Back of the canvas that throbs
the painter is hinted and hidden,
Into the statue that breathes
the soul of the sculptor is bidden.'"

"Indirection." Richard Realf.

We therefore must come to the conclusion that when an artist is able to make us feel the

* "Pictorial Composition and the Critical Judgment of Pictures." Henry R. Poore, A. N. A. New York: The Baker & Taylor Company. In this book Mr. Poore draws special attention to the great importance of composition in pictures. "Without good composition there can be no great picture." After giving the different forms of composition which have gradually, and probably unconsciously, been evolved by the masters of painting, Mr. Poore continues with chapters on different subjects of great interest to "students and lovers of art," for whom the book is written

"If a picture is to give lasting pleasure, it has to satisfy more than the eye." James Maris.

loveliness or mystery of a scene, and to communicate through his work the emotions that stir him, he shows the possession of a rare power. It is difficult enough for the figure painter, who has the assistance given by the expression of the features, to move us by the emotion he feels. It is very much more difficult to do this by means of pure landscape. When this is realized, we know that paintings of landscape that have this power of moving us* are different from all others, not only in degree but in kind. They belong to a different and a higher order of art. The ability to see and realize this comes only with time, as undoubtedly the first feeling of the student or observer is to look for mere likeness. He cannot, indeed, understand any other view of pictures, until he feels the effect of imagination and idealism as shown in them. Then all is changed. He has learned what to look for,

* "SUBJECTIVITY IN ART."

"If, in the Work, must needs stand manifest
The Person, be his features, therein shown,
Like a man's thought in a god's words express'd —
His own, and somehow greater than his own."
W. Watson.

he feels the new influence, and lives in a different world.

The subjective view of art must not be confounded with the theory of "literature" in painting, which is so denounced by Whistler, Manet, and many other artists: the painting of historical and literary subjects which are not self-explanatory, and about which we require to be told, by the name attached to them or in some other way, who the people are that are represented, what they are gathered together for, etc., etc. It is held that these are not properly speaking pictorial subjects, and should be treated in literature; that they should not be used in painting except for their decorative quality, without regard to the subject; and that we should not ask from any picture more than the artist intends to give, and is able to express by the use of form and colour on his canvas. For instance, some one paints Othello telling his adventures by sea and land to Desdemona. This is a subject for literature, for the picture cannot tell that it is the Moor of Venice, but only that two people are having a conversation; so that the

picture, if it be a work of art, must be of value for other reasons than the subject. Many artists hold very extreme views about this, but it is certainly a matter that may be argued from both sides. It is the great struggle in which Ruskin and Whistler were engaged, and both seem to have been in part wrong; Ruskin, in not looking sufficiently at the painter quality, and Whistler in trying to banish literary ideas altogether. When Whistler paints "An Arrangement in Grey and Black" (Portrait of the Painter's Mother) are we only to consider it as a piece of beautiful decoration, with values and tones perfect, and not to look at it as the loving rendering of the resigned figure, sitting in her room in the twilight of life, by one who owed so much to her and wished to express his affection and gratitude by portraying her gentle character as he could so well do? The artist-critic may say, "Yes, its decorative quality, its dexterous workmanship, and the expression of thoughtfulness on the face, this is all the picture tells and should tell." But most people will doubt this and will feel strongly that the knowledge of the

PLATE XVII. — The Sea Shore. *James Maris.*

fact that this is a portrait of his mother, painted by her son, gives an added charm to the picture, and detracts in no way from it as a work of art. Without this knowledge the painting loses a great deal of interest and does not express fully the thought of the artist. It is a case where the use of the illustrative idea seems necessary to enable the observer to understand the picture, and it shows how difficult it is to keep these ideas altogether out of pictorial art.

Delacroix is said to have believed as Whistler did about this, yet we find him painting a beautiful picture called the "Death of Ophelia," while the picture itself could only tell that a girl had fallen into the water, but whether it were the melancholy sweetheart of Hamlet or not, it could not explain by itself to anyone not acquainted with the details Shakespeare gives of the event. The fact is, there is truth in each view. There are many subjects used by painters that are not pictorial subjects and should not be used by them, and there are subjects purely pictorial that should not be used in literature; but there is a border land

between the two that seems common property, and to deprive painting of all literary interest would take from it one of its great charms.

But whatever views are held about this, we would like to make it very clear that the subjective view of art is not concerned in the dispute. Whether the artist is conscious of it or not, he does in some way put into his picture very often his own personal feeling, and people can find this in the picture. The subjective view merely holds that we find in the picture itself certain things that are self-explanatory, personal traits put into it by the artist and found in it by the observer. Whistler's nocturnes are an example of this in an extreme degree. They show the poetical feeling he had, and how sensitive his temperament was to the effect of moonlight.

"We feel the movement of Even, the very steps of the goddess, and almost seem to hear the trailing of her violet stole," as a recent writer very beautifully says about them. Whistler tells us himself how the coming on of night on the Thames affected him: "And when evening mist clothes the riverside with

"Edinburgh Review." April, 1905.

"Ten O'Clock."

poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become *campanili*, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us . . . nature sings her exquisite song." When he felt like that, it is little wonder that he put something of this feeling into his pictures, and that we find it there, and see how subjective his painting is. In these landscapes he is at his greatest and unrivalled.

This poetic, reflective, and imaginative representation by the artist of what he sees and feels, united with mastery of his materials, constitutes great art as distinguished from merely technical dexterity, and shows the ordinary observer of nature, to his greatly added delight, much more than he can see for himself. We have all often seen and passed with little notice groups of trees on the margin of a lake, or others throwing their shadow over a still pond; or calm stretches of a river with its banks of verdant foliage; or meadows with peaceful cattle; or lonely seashores. But we never realized the full beauty, the poetry

and deep feeling that lay in them, until we were shown by Corot the witchery of romance that invested his lovely mysterious corners of nature; by Daubigny the charm of those quiet reaches of water; by William Maris the light falling in brilliant patches on cattle in the fields and on the foliage and grass; by Mauve the gentle sadness that broods over the country plains; by James Maris and Weissenbruch the loneliness of the meeting place of the restless waves of the ocean and the sandy shore that stays their progress and bounds their desires. Those who are fond of pictures and have come to understand them do indeed learn a great deal from them, and owe them a debt of gratitude; for besides the pleasure they afford in themselves they add also greatly to the enjoyment of nature, the sympathetic observer finding out that the poet painters have given him their own eyes to see with, and their own mighty thoughts to conjure with!

This is a very important matter, when people are actually discussing[1] the necessity for art at all, a subject seriously enough considered. Some hold that the usefulness of

[1] For such a discussion see the "Revival of Art," by W. J. Stillman, in "The Old Rome and the New."

art was great in the past, but now exists no more, and that outside of a comparatively small circle art is little known about and less cared for, and is not necessary. It is hardly possible to see how this view can be maintained, as we must and do derive pleasure and good from the beautiful wherever it is found around us. The additional pleasure and happiness that great art gives us, in enabling us to see for ourselves what would be otherwise hidden and unknown, is surely a strong claim for the necessity of art. Under its kindly influence we learn, as we also do in other schools in which we are taught our lessons in the journey through the world, many things that are for our lasting good as well as that add to our enjoyment, many things that help us materially in our efforts to lead a higher life. It is a matter of surprise that so many lovers of pictures ignore or actually look down on the grandest and rarest quality they possess, the feeling* or sentiment in them, expressed by

* "Colour is, and in its highest expression can only be, subjective; the element of form is necessarily dependent on nature for the intelligibility of its forms and types, the artist having only the faculty of exalting and refining her forms into what we recognize

the artist and found by those in sympathy with him. They seem only to find pleasure in the skilful workmanship and the colour; but the skill is only the perfection of handicraft,[1] and if the picture does not reflect the artist's feelings, it is the lower and not the higher kind of art that is admired. If people would only look always for the higher element, the thought and feeling that filled the artist and compelled him to its expression, as well as for artistic merit and skill, a brighter day would soon dawn for art. Emerson expresses the higher truth when he says, "The painter should give the suggestion of a fairer creation than we know."[2] And this is the meaning of Turner when he answered the critic who said that he never saw such colours in nature as in

[1] "That form of death that keeps a body and loses the soul." "The Revival of Art," by W. J. Stillman, in "The Old Rome and the New."

[2] "Essay on Art." Emerson.

as the ideal. But the essential condition of all the arts of design becoming true art is in their being expression, not imitation; creation, not repetition. The form of materialism which menaces the arts of design is therefore science. 'The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life,' and though artistic creation does not involve the creation of the prime material, no more does, so far as science teaches, the creation of the world: the old material takes new forms, that is all. The idealist gets his materials from nature, but he recasts them in expression; the realist who is no artist repeats them as he gets them. The copyist is not an artist." The "Revival of Art." W. J. Stillman.

his pictures, "Don't you wish you could see them?" Yes! that is the great prerogative of genius, to be able to see what is invisible to the ordinary mortal. We feel this when we are in the presence of such a picture as Millet's "Sower." Many of his own paintings and many of those of other artists are as fine in colour and as clever in drawing as this, but are wanting in its peculiar charm. For Millet had a grand conception in his mind of the typical sower, and after numerous attempts, resulting in different versions of his thought, he at last gives on this canvas his perfect idea. A man of heroic size comes striding over the ground, his arm swinging round him and scattering the seed in the ground, where, under the influence of the sunshine and the rain, it will fructify and grow into an abundant harvest. The figure of the sower is shown against the brown earth, and his features can hardly be made out in the dark shadow under his cap. Here we have the great master's idea of the labourer doing his allotted share in the ever recurring mystery of the spring. He has not attempted to tell any story, but simply

In the Vanderbilt Loan Collection, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1905.

shows us the sower going forth to sow. Yet as we sit before this wonderful creation of Millet, it has the mysterious power of setting our thoughts wandering over the past and the future, and we feel that he has painted an epitome of life with its labour and toil, its successes and failures, its hopes and its fears. Thinking over the effect such a picture produces, it is quite useless to tell us that art consists only of beautiful decoration in fine colours. No! It must be decorative, but the greatest quality in a picture is the grandeur of its idea, and its speaking power to us. The idea must of course be artistically expressed and in glowing colour, but without it the painting sinks to mere cleverness.

But in much of the art criticism of the inner circles it is held that fancy and passion have no place in painting. Technical ability remains the great standard of judgment. Notwithstanding this, the forces that have moved the world in all matters have been the dreamers and the imaginers, since the time when the great statesman of Egypt, the dreamer of dreams, showed the close connection between

PLATE XVIII. — The Sower. *J. F. Millet.*
After an etching by Matthew Maris. By permission of Messrs. Cottier & Co., New York.

the ideal and the practical. In all true art it is the thrilling power that tells. The mechanical side, the organ of expression, must, of course, be made as perfect as possible, but not the absolutely accurate performer is the true artist. No! great technical skill alone only leaves us cold, comfortless, and unsatisfied. But *he* is the master, the musician who stirs us to the hidden depths of our nature and calls the tears to our eyes — the orator who plays on his hearers as on the strings of a harp — the painter who makes us feel!

"Not imitation but creation is the aim." "Essay on Art." Emerson.

Strange as it may appear, it seems that, as has been alluded to in the beginning of this chapter, there must always be two views of this matter, one that of many artists, and the other that of the observers, both honestly held, yet apparently contradictory. The recognition of this may help to throw light on the question. It is generally the artist, and usually one completely taken up with the more practical side of art, that is, one who is studying to find the perfection of form and colour and to acquire the skill to reproduce them, and occupied wholly with striving to reach his ideal

in his pictures, who has little time to analyse his thoughts and feelings and thinks not of these things, it is he who holds, as a rule, the art for art's sake theory in its extreme form. And it is hardly to be wondered at. For as he works unconsciously, in so far as regards revealing himself, he must *think and believe* that he is working altogether for art's sake. It is not to be supposed that he could say to himself, as he commenced to paint any scene, "Now I will show how my feelings are affected by what I see." Such posing would be fatal.

No, he thinks he is working solely for art, and trying as far as possible to give a true and faithful account of nature, and he uses all his knowledge and craftsmanship in doing it. For him, so he thinks, the ability and skill he can acquire to reproduce exactly what he sees are the all-important matters. And so he believes thoroughly in the art for art's sake theory, and is very intolerant of any criticism of it from those outside the pale, who know nothing of the technical difficulties that have to be overcome before an artist can produce even a picture whose only merit, in

its way a great one, is perfection of technique. If this were all that art could give there would be nothing more to be said about it.

But the other view holds that it is only a part of the truth that artists of this way of thinking see. The observers, from careful study of the masterpieces of painting (and artists are apt to forget how much non-technical but very important knowledge and information can be acquired in this manner), get a broader and more general outlook. They are able to distinguish from all other work, that of the artist who honestly holding this view, yet does more than he dreams of, and gives unconsciously the true essence of the scene before him, tinged with his own personality. They look not only for fine technical skill and colour, but in addition to these they want to find something of the *thought that inspired the man as he worked.* They consider that this is a higher view of art and *that it contains the lower in it.* As regards the merely technical part of the painting, they cannot be as good judges as the artists themselves, but they may often be very well able to form a

truer opinion of the *real* greatness of the picture.

It is not a question as to whether there should be fine technique and colour and design. The artist is inclined to imagine that the ordinary observer neither knows nor cares about these things, and so he accentuates unnecessarily their value. There may be some truth in his idea as to the indifference of the public, but he should remember that it is the opinions of the few who know, that, gradually filtering through society, in the end influence the public and form its judgments. And so people generally come to have right views about pictures, even if they do not fully understand the reasons of their belief, nor why they should admire both Rembrandt and Whistler, Turner and Daubigny, Terburg and Degas, Watteau and Monticelli. All who think seriously about it are fully aware of the importance of the matters the artist lays such stress on, only they believe that, while these are undoubtedly essential elements of a picture, there are others as necessary, if not more so, and that sufficient attention is not paid to them.

It is quite right for the artist to hold that he should paint decorative pictures, and fill the space at his disposal with graceful design and fine colour, and those on the other side entirely agree with him about this, only adding that it is not the whole truth and so does not go far enough. This decorative treatment should be seen in all good paintings. They should all be beautiful in line, form, and colour. But if they are to rise to greatness they must have, besides these, a subject of interest, one that has stirred the thought of the artist and fired his imagination, and at last been recorded by him on his canvas in such a way that it has the mysterious power of communicating the feelings that animated him to others who are in sympathy with his mood. In painting in this way he is usually quite unconscious that he is doing more than recording the scene before him to the best of his ability; and the personal feeling and originality expressed in these records depends just upon his ability or, in other words, his genius.

"Il serait inutile d'être un excellent esprit, et un grand peintre, si l'on ne mettait dans son œuvre quelque chose que la réalité n'a pas. C'est en quoi l'homme est plus intelligent que le soleil, et j'en remercie Dieu." E. Fromentin.

If we consider the works of the greatest painters among the old masters, such as

Raphael, Titian, Rembrandt, and Velasquez, we find that the combination of these two views is always there. From the technical and decorative standpoint they are the admiration of the artist, and by their subjects, and their suggestive power, they fascinate the observer and draw him into sympathy with the painters' ideas. We find the same thing in the pictures of Turner, Reynolds, Corot, Mauve, and Whistler. The highest art contains both these views intimately combined. As we descend in the scale there is a gradual separation, the decoration sometimes, and sometimes the subject, being forced into prominence, until we reach the level of mere decoration on the one hand, and a subject inartistically treated on the other. Separated they are of little value, combined they make the world's greatest pictures.

"Let artists remember that nothing is more rare than that the finite should awaken the idea of the infinite. To do this they must be broad and deep, pitiless against the seductive surface prettinesses." Jules Breton.

# CHAPTER IV

## NATURE AND THE POETS

It is very interesting to see how the poets treat nature. They differ from the painters in the means they use, but the aim of each is to appeal to the head and the heart, and their higher efforts must reach both. The poets give many descriptions of nature and these fall into classes similar to those of the painters, as they are merely descriptive, or subjective, giving the effect of the scene on the narrator. As in painting the landscape was often found necessary as a background for the figures, so the poet describes the scenery in which the action of his story is placed. These are often passages of great beauty, but they are usually merely descriptive, appealing to the intellect but not to the feelings. Splendid as many of them are, they do not reach the highest point of art, that in which the objective and subjective are combined, and nature is moulded by humanity. For instance, take the beautiful

description of the effect of the dawn on Loch Katrine, in which the lake is depicted as bright and happy in itself, without reference to any human interest:

'The Lady of the Lake." Canto III. Sir Walter Scott.

"The Summer dawn's reflected hue
To purple chang'd Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the Western breeze
Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees;
And the pleas'd lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy.
The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie
Like future joys to fancy's eye."

Or the following masterpieces in the use of words, describing the coming on of quiet, peaceful night:

"Paradise Lost." Book IV. Milton.

"Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompany'd; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests,
Were slunk all but the wakeful nightingale;
She all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleased. Now glow'd the firmament
With living Sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen unveil'd her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw."

"The Curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

"Elegy in a Country Churchyard." Thomas Gray.

Or this of the seashore and hamlet where Enoch Arden lived:

"Long lines of cliff, breaking, have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sand;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf,
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; a hazelwood,
By Autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down."

"Enoch Arden." Tennyson.

This is a minute and pre-Raphaelite piece of landscape work, but uninteresting until we come to the last three lines. It describes very realistically the scene in which the story is laid, but clearly the poet's interest is elsewhere and this is merely the setting.

More poetical is the account of the home of the mysterious lady who dwelt near Camelot, but it still only describes the island and the obvious view of the country road through fields of grain, though the second stanza gives

a hint that nature is vaguely apprehensive of the impending catastrophe:

"The Lady of Shalott." Tennyson.

'On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow,
Round an island there below,
The Island of Shalott.

" Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott."

These are all like the artists' backgrounds in which the subject is set. But the poets, like the painters, also hold very strongly the view that nature is intimately associated with the joys and sorrows of men, and for showing this their medium, the use of words, gives them greater opportunities. In this, the higher

form of their art, they appeal to the feelings and the imagination, and their most affecting passages are those in which the human element is bound up with the natural, and nature seems to be in sympathy with their feelings. Cowper realizes this:

"A Song." Cowper.

"When all within is peace
How nature seems to smile!
Delights that never cease
The livelong day beguile.
It is content of heart
Gives nature power to please;
The mind that feels no smart
Enlivens all it sees.

"The vast majestic globe,
So beauteously array'd
In nature's various robe,
With wondrous skill display'd,
Is to a mourner's heart
A dreary wild at best;
It flutters to depart,
And longs to be at rest."

But he does not see that the painter should be similarly affected:

"The Sofa." Cowper.

"Strange! there should be found,
Who, self imprison'd in their proud saloons,
Renounce the odours of the open field
For the unscented fictions of the loom;

Who, satisfied with only pencill'd scenes,
Prefer to the performance of a God
The inferior wonders of an artist's hand!
Lovely indeed the mimic works of art;
But nature's works far lovelier. I admire,
None more admires, the painter's magic skill,

. . . . . . . . .

But imitative strokes can do no more
Than please the eye — sweet nature every sense.
The cheering fragrance of her dewy vales,
And music of her woods — no works of man
May rival these; these all bespeak a power
Peculiar and exclusively her own.
Beneath the open sky she spreads the feast;
'Tis free to all — 'tis every day renew'd."

Nothing could show more clearly the confusion that exists in so many minds as to what painting really is than this passage. It is a beautiful piece of poetry and a charming description of nature, and it is all perfectly true as regards anyone who would prefer such an art to nature, or even compare nature and art at all. But painting is not a "mimic" art, produced by "imitative strokes"; it is something far higher, and there should be no comparison like this made. It shows the necessity of clearly understanding that nature and art are entirely different things, and that the

artist does not try merely to copy nature. Sir Thomas Browne saw further: "Nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature. Art is the perfection of nature. Nature hath made one world, and art another." Coleridge puts forward the subjective view very strongly:

"Religio Medici."

"It were a vain endeavour
Though I should gaze forever
On that green light that lingers in the West;
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within,
O lady! we receive but what we give
And in our life alone does nature live;
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold of higher worth
Than that inanimate cold world allow'd
To the poor loveless, ever anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the earth . . .
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element."

"Ode on Dejection."

And again he tells us in his wonderful poem how the personality is affected by nature:

"Beyond the shadow of the ship
I watch'd the water snakes;

"The Ancient Mariner."

They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watch'd their rich attire;
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black
They coil'd and swam, and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! No tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I bless'd them unaware;
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea."*

Wordsworth shows us how nature moved him:

"Tintern Abbey."

"For I have learn'd
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity,

*"Just between the third and fourth stanzas the thing has occurred in the mind, which makes all nature and external phenomena part of the history of the personality. It is reality passing into higher reality, the world being minted by the soul." Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus.

Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And in the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

What a world is lost to the man typified by the same poet:

"Peter Bell."

"He rov'd among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell.
They were his dwellings night and day,
But nature ne'er could find the way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

"In vain through every changing year
Did nature lead him as before.
A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

Well might such a lover of nature as Wordsworth cry out in irony:

"The World."

"Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

Examples of the suggestive power of nature are found in the works of nearly all the great poets. This view is not developed to any great extent by the earlier poets, yet it is hinted at by Shakespeare, Herrick, and Milton, and others in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But from the latter part of the eighteenth century the idea of finding our own feelings reflected in nature grows and develops into the modern subjective way of looking at the outside world. Thus we find in Shakespeare:

"As You Like it."

"Blow, blow, thou wintry wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude."

And

"The Merchant of Venice."

"Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims,
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it."

And in Milton:

"But neither breath of morn when she ascends
With charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glittering with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
Nor grateful evening mild, nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon,
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet."

"Paradise Lost." Book IV.

When we come to the modern poets, the subjective view is much more strongly developed. Thus Byron tells us what bitter feelings oppressed him when he looked on the loveliness of Greece:

"The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal Summer gilds them yet,
But all except their sun is set.

. . . . . . . .

"The mountains look on Marathon,
And Marathon looks on the sea,
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

. . . . . . . . .

"What! silent still? and silent all?
Ah no, — the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise — we come, we come!'
'Tis but the living who are dumb."

"Don Juan." Canto III.

In a fine chapter on the poetry of Sir Walter Scott, Ruskin, while recognizing the sadness in his writings, tries to prove that his habit was not of looking at nature as changed by his own feelings in this way, but as having an animation and pathos of *its own*, wholly irrespective of human presence or passion. He paints nature as it is in itself, bright, serene, or gloomy. But we think few people can agree with Ruskin in this. Scott's descriptions of nature are very beautiful, but like other great artists he very often, and in his finest passages descriptive of nature, reflects the moods of man, as the following instances will show. In the touching song:

"Quentin Durward."

"Ah, County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark his lay, who trill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh,
Bird, breeze, and flower proclaim the hour,
But where is County Guy?"

what matters it, the beauty and loveliness of the night? Nature is not in sympathy with the feelings of the lover, and it is all a

sad and weary affair, unless shared with County Guy. And what suggestions nature makes to the aged ministrel describing the battle:

"The Lady of the Lake." Canto VI.

"There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measur'd tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?"

The following fine description of a sunset is full of sad regret, recalling happier hours, ere they faded away and were gone like the setting sun:

"Rokeby." Canto V.

"The sultry Summer day is done,
The western hills have hid the sun,
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.

And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given."

And how full of sadness are these lines:

"Marmion." Canto II.

"Now from the summit to the plain
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And on the landscape as I look
Nought do I see unchang'd remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan
Of early friendships, past and gone."

The following pathetic verses show clearly how deeply nature reflected his changed feelings:

Written for George Thomson's "Scottish Melodies."

"The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill
In Ettrick's vale is sinking sweet,
The westland wind is hush'd and still,
The lake lies sleeping at my feet;
Yet not the landscape to mine eye
Bears those bright hues that once it wore,
Though evening with her richest dye
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

"With listless look along the plain
I see Tweed's silver current glide,
And coldly mark the holy fane
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.

The quiet lake, the balmy air,
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,
Are they still such as once they were,
Or is the dreary change in me?

"Alas, the warp'd and broken board,
How can it bear the painter's dye?
The harp of strain'd and useless chord,
How to the minstrel's skill reply?
To aching eye each landscape lowers,
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill,
And Araby's or Eden's bowers
Were barren as this moorland hill."

This poem shows how subjective was Scott's view of nature, and he seems in it to completely refute Ruskin's argument in his own verse.

That nature is not always sad to the poets we see in Wordsworth's beautiful poem about the daffodils, and the delight the recollection of them gave him:

"I wander'd lonely as a cloud."

"I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.
. . . . . . . .

"The waves beside them danc'd, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay

In such a jocund company!
I gaz'd — and gaz'd — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

"For oft when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils."

But these same flowers suggested a sadder train of thought to Herrick:

"To Daffodils." R. Herrick.

"Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along.

"We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the Summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew
Ne'er to be found again."

Tennyson in this well-known passage shows how the same scene can be full of happiness or despairing sorrow, in accordance with the feelings of the lover:

"Locksley Hall."

"Many an evening on the moorland
did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses
with the fulness of the Spring.
Many an evening by the waters
did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together
at the touching of the lips.
O my cousin, shallow hearted!
O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland!
O the barren, barren shore!"

And again in one of the most perfect of his short pieces he tells of a scene recalling to memory the friend he had loved and lost. How fine is the effect of the constant repetition of the words "All along the valley"! It seems to unite the present and the past, and to give a permanence and reality to the poet's dream and make it a living thing:

"In the Valley of Cauteretz."

"All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved, two and thirty years ago.

All along the valley while I walked to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me."

And the general effect of nature on the poetic temperament seems undoubtedly to be a sad one. Thus Tennyson writes:

"The Princess."

"Tears, idle tears, . . .
Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more."

And Burns sings:

"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair,
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause love was true.

"Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wist na o' my fate."

And again in the poem "To a Mountain Daisy":

"There in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

"E'en thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine, no distant date;
Stern ruin's ploughshare drives elate
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom."

Similarly the old ballad tells how

"Thy braes were bonnie, Yarrow stream,
When first on them I met my lover,
Thy braes how dreary, Yarrow stream,
When now thy waves his body cover!
For ever now, O Yarrow stream,
Thou art to me a stream of sorrow,
For never on thy banks shall I
Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow."

"The Braes of Yarrow." J. Logan.

And Rossetti writes, in his intense vision of human grief:

"Her seem'd she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

"The Blessed Damozel."

"To one, it is ten years of years.
But now, and in this place,
Surely she lean'd o'er me, her hair
Fell all about my face;
Nothing; the Autumn fall of leaves
The whole year sets apace.

. . . . . . . .

"Ah, sweet, even now in that bird's song
Strove not her accents there
Fain to be hearken'd? When those bells
Possess'd the midday air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?"

This is almost equalled in sadness by his sonnet:

"Sunset Wings."

"To-night this sunset spreads two golden wings
Cleaving the western sky;
Wing'd, too, with wind it is, and winnowings
Of birds; as if the day's last hour in rings
Of strenuous flight must die.

"Even thus hope's hours, in ever eddying flight,
To many a refuge tend.
With the first light she laugh'd, and the last light
Glows round her still, who natheless in the night
At length must make an end.

. . . . . . . . .

"And now the mustering rooks innumerable
Together sail and soar,
While for the day's death, like a tolling knell,
Unto the heart they seem to cry, Farewell,
No more, farewell, no more!

"Is hope nôt plum'd, as 'twere a fiery dart?
And O! thou dying day,
Even as thou goest, must she, too, depart,
And sorrow fold such pinions on the heart
As will not fly away?"

Emerson in the following suggestive verses shows the power that scenery connected with his early years had of recalling the past:

"Dirge." R. W. Emerson.

"Knows he who tills this lonely field,
To reap its scanty corn,
What mystic fruit his acres yield
At midnight, and at morn?

"In the long Summer afternoon,
The plain was full of ghosts;
I wander'd up, I wander'd down,
Beset by pensive hosts.

"The winding Concord gleam'd below,
Pouring as wide a flood
As when my brothers, long ago,
Came with me to the wood.

"But they are gone, the holy ones
Who trod with me this lovely vale;
The strong, star-bright companions
Are silent, low, and pale.

"I touch this flower of silken leaf,
Which once our childhood knew;
Its soft leaves wound me with a grief
Whose balsam never grew."

And in a similar manner Longfellow writes of the seashore:

"Palingenesis." H. W. Longfellow.

"I lay upon the headland height and listen'd
To the incessant sobbing of the sea
In caverns under me,
And watch'd the waves that toss'd and fled and glisten'd,
Until the rolling meadows of amethyst
Melted away in mist.

"Then suddenly as one from sleep I started,
For round about me all the sunny capes
Seem'd peopled with the shapes
Of those whom I had known in days departed,
Apparell'd in the loveliness which gleams
On faces seen in dreams.

"A moment only and the light and glory
Faded away, and the disconsolate shore
Stood lonely as before;
And the wild roses of the promontory
Around me shudder'd in the wind, and shed
Their petals of pale red."

Matthew Arnold gives a more modern version of the ideas Coleridge expressed in the "Ode on Dejection," which has already been quoted in this chapter. The comparison of the two passages is a very interesting one. The form in which Coleridge gives expression

to his thoughts is more poetical and the treatment more that of a mystic. Matthew Arnold has not the tolerance of the older poet nor his gentle outlook on the world, and his verse lacks somewhat of skill in construction, though it has a strength and charm of its own, and goes very straight to the mark. But both poets see clearly that the feelings and thoughts that arise in the mind from intercourse with nature are personal to the observers, and depend upon the temperament, the constitution, and the environment of each one.

"The Youth of Man."

> "Fools that these mystics are
> Who prate of nature! For she
> Hath neither beauty, nor warmth,
> Nor life, nor emotion, nor power.
> But man has a thousand gifts,
> And the generous dreamer invests
> The senseless world with them all.
> Nature is nothing; her charm
> Lives in our eyes which can paint,
> Lives in our hearts which can feel."

And we find, as we would expect in one whose poetry is full of the restlessness of modern life, numerous references to the effects of nature on the feelings:

"Dover Beach."

"Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in."

"Thyrsis."

"He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? Next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see.

"Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle draws her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her softly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with grey;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotions new,
And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again."

One of the modern great poets writes in a very remarkable ode to Autumn, full of imagination and suggestion, and felicitously worded phrases, these stanzas:

"Still'd is the virgin rapture that was June,
And cold is August's panting heart of fire;
And in the storm-dismantled forest choir
For thine own elegy thy winds attune
Their wild and wizard lyre:
And poignant grows the charm of thy decay,
The pathos of thy beauty, and the sting,
Thou parable of greatness vanishing!
For me, thy woods of gold, and skies of grey,
With speech fantastic ring.

"Autumn." William Watson.

"For me to dreams resign'd, there come and go,
Twixt mountains drap'd and hooded night and morn,
Elusive notes in wandering wafture borne,
From undiscoverable lips that blow
An immaterial horn;
And spectral seem thy winter-boding trees,
Thy ruinous bowers, and drifted foliage wet,
O Past and Future in sad bridal met,
O voice of everything that perishes,
And soul of all regret!"

Very fine also is Andrew Lang's song of harvesting time. The flowing classic metre has a very soothing effect, and its rhythm is admirably adapted to produce the feeling of rest that is desired, and very gently are our thoughts led on to the time when "our little life is rounded with a sleep."

"Mowers weary and brown and blythe,
What is the word methinks ye know,

"Scythe Song."

Endless over word that the Scythe
Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
Something still they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
Sings the Scythe to the flowers and grass?

"*Hush, ah hush*, the scythes are saying,
*Hush and heed not* and fall asleep;
*Hush*, they say to the grasses swaying,
*Hush*, they sing to the clover deep!
*Hush*, 'tis the lullaby time is singing,
*Hush and heed not, for all things pass*,
*Hush, ah hush!* And the Scythes are swinging
Over the clover, over the grass."

"Job."

And the dramatist of old says: "There is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

Shelley epitomises thus the whole matter, and explains the use the poet makes of the materials supplied by Nature:

"The Poet's Dream."

> "He will watch from dawn to gloom
> The lake-reflected sun illume
> The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
> Nor heed nor see what things they be;
> But from these create he can
> Forms more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality!"

This is what poet and painter alike should try to do, and expel forever the idea that art is the imitation of nature, and so create a new world of art, like yet very unlike, the world they see.

It is important to consider this subjective view of nature in the poets; for the painter in words and the painter in colours work toward the same end, both seeking to inspire the thoughts and move the feelings of the people they appeal to in their different ways. The poets have the advantage of being able to relate a story, and are not limited to one action, or one period of time. The painters have the powerful attraction of colour and form. But both must strive to give the spirit if they would

attain the rank of masters. So we find in painting, as in poetry, the greatest power will always be with those artists who have this sympathetic imagination, who are able to discern the poetical in the actual, the ideal in the real, the universal in the particular. They alone can produce those glorious "speaking" pictures, which continually reveal the ideas and feelings that possessed the artist, when his brush was touched by a power that he knew not of.

# CHAPTER V

## MODERN DUTCH ART

THE seven Dutch artists we have already spoken of form a unique group, inasmuch as their paintings have this strong subjective phase, this revealing of nature, and of their own feelings unconsciously inspired by nature, and because, in addition to this, they each see the subjects they paint in an absolutely different way from anyone who has preceded them. They have shown us new phases of art, they have expressed the ideas that possessed them in new and varied forms, and they have transferred their thoughts to canvas with masterly execution in a large and noble manner and dignified style, giving the impression of power in reserve. As usually happens with strong and original characters, they have inspired others, who see more or less through their eyes; but they themselves are creators. They have caught a spark of the divine fire of genius, and stand splendidly alone.

"Art seeks the artist alone. When he dies she sadly takes her flight, though loitering yet in the land from fond association. And so we have the ephemeral influence of the master's memory, the after-glow in which are warmed for a while the worker and disciple." "Ten O'Clock." Whistler.

The last portion of the nineteenth century will be remembered in art as the time when the work of these men, whose powers gradually developed to the end of their lives, reached its highest point. Matthew Maris, the wonderful painter of dreams, whose canvases are the artists' and the picture-lovers' delight; Josef Israels, the father of the school, the revered of his countrymen, the sympathetic portrayer of the homes and occupations of the peasants of the land, and William Maris, the unrivalled painter of cattle and river scenes, sparkling in the sunshine, are the only ones that survive of the original band that has revolutionized Dutch art. The rest have passed away; Bosboom — but not his visions of spacious churches permeated with light and air, the sunbeam pouring its rays through the windows, radiating warmth everywhere, lingering lovingly round the great pillars, and half revealing the darkness of the dim recesses beyond; Mauve — but not his landscapes, with ploughmen, cattle, or flocks of sheep, all bathed in atmosphere, and painted with a rare tenderness and beauty; James

Plate XIX. — At the Cottage Door. *Anton Mauve.*

Maris — but not those vigorous and boldly-handled seashores, canals, and grand, massive, cloudy skies, which have made him famous; and Weissenbruch — but not his poetical renderings of the Holland he loved so well, the clear, cool morning skies, the darkening shades of evening, and the mysteries of moonlight he delighted in.

These men are the inheritors, probably through the French, of the principles and methods of Constable, who himself learned from Ruysdael and the other Dutch artists of the seventeenth century, developing their ideas much further and adding to them. So that we see the spirit of the old masters of their country descending through Constable and the French artists on the nineteenth century Dutch painters. That same spirit that made them so keenly alive to the new ideas of their day has fallen on their modern fellow countrymen in full measure.

Constable was the first artist who strove to give the very actual and natural out-of-door feeling in his pictures, showing the very personal way nature affected him. In this he

inaugurated a new departure in art, and stands out a very prominent figure in its history. He found it necessary to adopt very bold and vigorous brush work, and to paint in the broadest way, leaving out details and all so-called finish to gain the end he wanted. "He recorded his experience in terms so personal in their masculine directness and sincerity as to make his innovations irresistible. Never had so much nature been set forth in art. He demonstrated once for all the eternal principles of generalization. The results obtained and the conventions through which he obtained them were new and right. They foreshadowed a world of possibilities, the right of way through which was only to be won by close and patient intercourse with nature. They suggested the basis of an art which should deal broadly with man's impressions of the natural appearance of weather, atmosphere, and distance, and their correspondence with his moods."

"Memorial Catalogue." Edinburgh, 1886. W. E. Henley.

His work was not appreciated in his lifetime, in his own country, but some of his paintings were exhibited in Paris, and, as has been

already mentioned, produced a strong effect on the French artists of the Romantic movement, and largely influenced the work of the Barbizon school. But the manner of Constable was perhaps too rugged and strong for the times, and not exactly suited to the ideas prevalent in France. Though he had a profound effect on the artists there, they cannot be said to have carried his ideas any further. They adopted them, but the soil was not adapted to their growth and development. It remained for the artists of Holland to do more than this. It was long ago pointed out by W. E. Henley, in the Memorial Catalogue of the French and Dutch Loan Collection held in Edinburgh in 1886, that James Maris was the great successor of Constable in painting skies with masses of moving clouds, and that the modern Dutch artists were the successors of the traditions and the greatness of the French school of 1830.

See Chapter I.

"None since Constable has rendered clouds, the mass and gait of them, the shadow and the light, the mystery and the wonder and the beauty, with such an insight into essentials, and such a command of appropriate and moving terms, as James Maris." "Memorial Catalogue." Edinburgh, 1886. W. E. Henley.

But it is not only in special instances like that referred to that they show this development of the ideas of Constable. For probably through the works of the Barbizon school,

which were greatly admired in Holland, the artists there learned his principles and put them into general practice, and carried them further than had been seen before. His main idea was to give the effect of atmosphere and light in nature, and he realized that this could only be done by giving the appearance of great simplicity in his paintings and leaving out all detail that could be dispensed with.

To see how these principles could be developed and applied to figure painting, and to interiors as well as to landscapes, we have only to look at the late work of the Marises, Mauve, Israels, Weissenbruch, and Bosboom, and to notice its great boldness and breadth in execution, and its extreme simplicity in appearance. In the later works of James Maris and of Weissenbruch the generalization of Constable has been carried out to the latest development so far known.

Whatever subjects these modern Dutch artists paint, those who have made a careful study of their works know how completely they are taken up with the fascinating problem of light, and realize the wonderful success

Plate XX. — Sand Boat — Evening. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

they have achieved in depicting the effects of atmosphere. To this everything in their paintings is put in a subordinate place, and whether they render the mysterious grey of early morning, the bright sunshine of day, or the falling of the shadows of evening, the atmosphere surrounding everything is their first consideration. For this they leave out and discard many things, for this they blur the outlines, for this they make the form and drawing indistinct and vague, and for this they are willing to sacrifice much. They feel that it is the most important thing to be secured. Their intimate knowledge of pigments, and their masterly use of them, usually in low tones of greys and browns, but often, as in the work of the Marises, in schemes of brilliant colour, help largely in producing true aerial perspective. This all gives their pictures an appearance and feeling of simplicity and naturalness, which is peculiar to them and very remarkable.

This is an important matter and it is worthy of more than a passing mention. If art is to give a true representation of nature as far as

the symbols at its disposal are capable of doing this, and if it is at the same time to stir the thoughts of the observer, one of the most important requisites to secure these two ends is to paint the picture so that it will appear very simple and natural, and not lead the thought away from the feelings the artist wished to convey or from the colour effect. It may be that we shall discover on closer examination the manner in which the technical skill of the artist and his knowledge of the rules of the best forms of composition have been concealed. But that comes later. "*Ars est celare artem*" is as true of painting to-day as of that in the past. Whenever we feel, on first seeing a picture, how cleverly it is done, and what ability the artist has shown and what trouble he has taken in overcoming technical difficulties, we may be sure, no matter how much we are impressed by the skill exhibited, that we are not looking at a *really* great picture.

We may take as an example the works of Alma Tadema. Very beautiful in a sense they are, and the workmanship is of the finest.

So is that of Meissonier, whose broader brush work is more attractive though his attention to detail is equally great. But when we have fully admired the great ability shown by these artists we cannot get any further. In attempting to do so we are met by the nothingness behind it all. The pictures contain no thought. They do not set us dreaming as we gaze into them. There is no inspiration in them.

There is an invitation in all great pictures for those who are able and willing to accept it. If the observer, as he studies a painting, cannot see as it were a long way into it, but feels himself, after a short time spent before it, blocked and debarred from further progress, then there is either something wanting in the artist, or a lack of sympathy in the observer.

So it will be found that great pictures produce in the observer a feeling of simplicity, as if they were quite easy to paint, a feeling that the artist was not distracted by any difficulty in accomplishing his purpose. And the tone and values are also right, without any discordant colour note to call away the attention. And so the observer feels in accord with the artist, and able to listen undisturbed to what he has to say.

In looking at the work of these seven Dutch artists, we are struck by their unaffected simplicity and straightforwardness, and also by their perfect tone quality and beautiful harmony of contrasted colour. Showing how much can be gained by emphasizing this

simplicity and tone quality, proving the importance of generalizing, and exhibiting the strongly subjective side of painting, are their additions to the art knowledge of the world. For these things they have given up much, but they held them to be all-important and well worth what they cost. Following these ideas and developing them, they were able to aim at, and to secure, great freedom from artificiality in their work, and to give to it a strongly suggestive element. A comparison with the work of other schools will show that in these two matters the Dutch artists certainly excel.

Modern art cannot hope to surpass in perfection of detail and finish, united with as much breadth as the treatment can possibly allow, such works as those of Van Eyck, Raphael, Titian, and Holbein. Finely and minutely as they have finished their paintings, they yet in some marvellous way gain an effect of broad treatment, and with all their detail reveal the essence of the subject. There is no use in trying to rival this. It has been done once for all in such a magnificent man-

PLATE XXI. — Children of the Sea. *Josef Israels.*

ner that the world still wonders and admires. It was original and great work, but if anyone were to try to paint like that now, it would be to ignore the compensations the modern painter has in the advance in knowledge that art has made, and to produce at the best only copies of the ideas and the styles of the past, which would be devoid of individuality, and from an artistic standpoint vain and useless.

Modern artists must aim at something different from this. They realize that more knowledge as to the painting of air and atmosphere and effects of light has been gained and that many other matters are better understood, and they feel that on certain lines they can get results different from, and a degree of perfection greater than can be found in, the works of their predecessors. So we find that modern artists have tried to give in a manner unthought of in the past the very feeling of space in their landscapes by their new rendering of sunshine and shade, of stretches of country and seashore filled with atmosphere, and of skies in which the clouds float in the air. The figure painters try to get the same atmospheric

surroundings, and both have discovered new methods, and have found that to succeed in their efforts they must give the appearance of simplicity and freedom from artificiality we have been speaking about. They have to dispense with a great deal of what they thought in their student days was necessary accuracy, for this prevents the suggestion of the real characteristics of the scene. The amount of genius an artist has can be gauged by the power of suggestiveness his pictures possess, combined with their artistic quality. It is on these lines that progress has been made since the time of Constable and Turner. Their ideas were popularized, and their methods of painting made familiar to many by their adoption by the French artists of 1830, and they have been developed and carried further on by the modern Dutch painters.

These artists of Holland are painters of nature, and the peasants, the cattle, the canals and boats, are incidents only. And we see by the broad way in which they are treated how careful the artists were not to allow them to interfere in any way with the greater

object they had, of painting the scene as a whole.

Each has his own way of treating the effects of light and atmosphere. Mauve usually sees the light diffused, and softly refracted here and there by figure or tree, and by his treatment of it, as it brightens the sky and floods his landscapes of silvery grey or autumn yellow browns, he gains a very beautiful atmospheric effect. And it is just because he is not trying to paint portraits of sheep and cattle, but wants to show the effect of a lovely spring or fall day, with the animals as they appeared to him very truly an intimate and integral part of the scene, that he is one of the greatest painters of sheep and cattle the world has known. In the works of James and William Maris, it is the more striking effects of light we often meet with. They delight in painting the bright sunlight shining on the backs of horses, or pouring down in brilliant rays on cattle in the meadows, or throwing a warm silvery light on the water. So we find Bosboom painting, not the architecture of a church, with its hard linear

perspective, but the light pervading the whole building, and softening everything. And Israels has the same aim constantly in view. Whatever the subject of interest in his pictures may be, it is the mystery of the lighting of his cottage interiors that is ever before him. With Weissenbruch it is always the light in the skies that attracts him, as it illuminates the clouds, or shines down on the quiet sea, or strikes the white-edged waves as they are lifted into the air and driven before the gale.

They are all impressionists in the true sense of the word, giving the impressions made upon them by the scenes they paint. They do not attempt to tell any stories in their pictures. Their subjects are the simplest and of common occurrence, belonging to the ordinary life about them. Even the cottage interiors with their inmates have nothing of the anecdotal quality in them. Whether they paint out-door or in-door life, their pictures are just the records of what the artists saw as they watched the peasants engaged at work in their every-day pursuits, and as they shared in their happiness or sorrow.

PLATE XXII. — Evening. *Anton Mauve.*

In addition to their works in oil, these artists discovered a new method of painting in water-colours. They revived this branch of art by the beautiful and rich effects they produced through the novel treatment of their materials. The paper is allowed to get saturated with colours, and it requires great knowledge of the process and skill in handling to use this method to advantage. The aim is to give more of the depth and colour of oil painting, without losing the softness and richness of water-colours, and the use of body colour is allowed where necessary. The result has been a new manner of painting, and all these artists have been very successful in its use, and have produced brilliant pictures, which have much of the strength of oil painting, yet preserve the charm and the delicacy of the slighter medium, and have a peculiar quality and beauty of their own.

Thus these painters of Holland have been always seriously and earnestly at work, yet very happy in the enjoyment of life as it passed on the difficult but inspiring road they chose for their journey; wandering each one into his own special

and favourite by-path, as the spirit of art led him, but all advancing to the same goal, the heart of nature, and its deeper and hidden meaning. Though this object of constant pursuit is elusive and is always escaping just as the prize seems won, though the end is never fully attained, perhaps is never attainable, the true artist still strives on, and the greater the man, and the stronger and farther his sight, the more is he able to penetrate into the mystery that curtains us around.

There is a vigorous School of Art in Holland to-day, and the painters there are following in the footsteps of the men we have been speaking of. This includes such able artists as Albert Neuhuÿs, who with great facility in execution, and a fine sense of colour, comes next to Josef Israels as a figure painter, B. J. Blommers, P.ter Meulen, W. Steelinck, H. J. Van de Weele, H. W. Mesdag, the well-known marine artist, J. Kever, W. B. Tholen, Tony Offermans, Jan Van Essen, J. H. Van Mastenbroek, J. Scherrewitz, J. H. Jurres, Simon Maris, the son of William Maris, and the younger William Maris, the son of James

Maris. P. J. C. Gabriel, a clever landscape artist, and Th. de Bock, at one time a pupil of James Maris, have recently passed away. De Bock was a landscapist of ability, and the best of his work is strong and broad in treatment, and full of restrained colour. He often introduces into his pictures the birch trees so common in Holland. They evidently had a great fascination for him, especially when the sunlight struck the trunks of the trees, and made them shine a glowing white amid the prevailing green of the landscape. Though his early pictures are suggestive of his master, James Maris, and though he is sometimes slightly reminiscent of Corot, still de Bock developed a distinct and original vein of his own, and by the straightforwardness and sincerity of his work he has made a position for himself in the art annals of Holland.

In writing, however, about modern Dutch artists, we have only considered the seven great painters who came among the first in order of time, and by their originality and striking characters completely changed the ideas of art that were prevalent in their coun-

try, and turned the artistic current into its present channels. They are the men of genius who brought about the revival of Dutch art, and whatever may be the opinions held by different people concerning this phase of art, there can be no doubt that these seven men are responsible for its existence, — Bosboom, Israels, Mauve, Weissenbruch, and the three Marises. While we are perhaps too near the time of the production of the works of their successors to judge as to their value, we are farther removed from the founders of the school, and are in a somewhat better position to form an opinion of them and of the pictures they painted. In the following chapters an account is given of each of these seven artists, and an estimate of their work, and what it means. This does not pretend to any finality of judgment, but is only the expression of the opinions arrived at by one who is fond of their pictures and has derived a great deal of pleasure and enjoyment from the opportunities he has had of seeing and considering them.

# CHAPTER VI

## JOHANNES BOSBOOM

1817–1891.

In giving a short account of each of the seven artists referred to in the last chapter, we commence with the one who appeared earliest on the scene, and was the first to introduce the ideas of a living art among his countrymen. Quiet and uneventful was the life of Johannes Bosboom, but he was a man of strong individual character, and of striking originality. He had a very inspiring influence on the artists of his day, and was looked up to by the younger men and respected by all. Many of them benefited by his kindly and sensible advice at critical times, when they were in doubt as to the future and in despair about their art work. He married a lady of literary tastes, "his dear Truida," who proved a sympathetic and loving companion until her death a few years before his own. In his congenial home, surrounded by friends, his days passed happily.

But peaceful as his outer life was, his views in regard to art were revolutionary, and he inaugurated the movement that brought about the revival of art in Holland. His enthusiastic personality helped materially to introduce and to foster the new ideas. Dissatisfied with the dry formal painting of the schools, he longed for greater breadth and freedom. His work soon showed how far in advance of the times he was, and proclaimed him the first interpreter of the reviving spirit that, unknown as yet, was gradually permeating the art life of Holland.

He was little influenced by any modern school and his work was very original. He takes as his model, as far as he has one, his great predecessor Pieter de Hooghe. This painter's drawing is minute and masterly, his colour is splendid, and you feel he has described the effect upon himself of the scenes before him, in giving us those peaceful, happy idylls of home life. He usually shows the light coming into the room in rays of sunlight, that fall in sharply defined lines on wall, floor, and figures, and the rest of the picture is

Plate XXIII. — Church at Oosthuisen. *J. Bosboom.*

in shadow. This in less able hands would tend to become a mannerism, but beautiful in every way are the works of this great artist.

Very different is the aim of Bosboom. He gives us interiors of churches and other buildings without any hard lines and filled with diffused light and air. All the shadows in them are full of light in deeper tones, and the more brilliant parts, that receive the direct rays of the sun, sparkle with a brilliancy that rivals the older master. In colour he is equally fine, though the general tone is lower, and there is a greater feeling of simplicity in the technical handling. This feeling of apparent simplicity permeates a great deal of the work of the whole school.

Bosboom modifies the strict rules of ordinary perspective to get the higher truth of aerial perspective, and we must not look to him for correct drawing as generally understood, as that is not at all what he is aiming at, though curiously enough to some people his pictures appear too architectural. An architect, who was a great lover of art, once said to the writer, "From *that* point of view, Bos-

boom is all wrong. He does not draw correctly from the architect's standpoint, but he does something far more difficult and much finer. He gives us the effect of airy atmospheric spacious interiors. He reaches the end he sought splendidly, and produces wonderfully beautiful and poetical pictures, but not architectural drawings." In his later years, so inspired is he with this quality of space, and so intent on securing it, his brush work gets very broad, details almost vanish, and the fine colour of his earlier work becomes almost monochromatic. Perhaps his finest period is when his work is broadening and yet keeps its colour, but it is a difficult matter to decide, so much depends on individual feeling; for those masterpieces of his late years, in the Mesdag Museum at the Hague, are extremely grand and attractive, and, on the other hand, there is no question regarding the great beauty of the paintings he made about 1870 to 1880.

Bosboom painted some very attractive scenes on the beach at Scheveningen, which are highly prized and much admired, and also

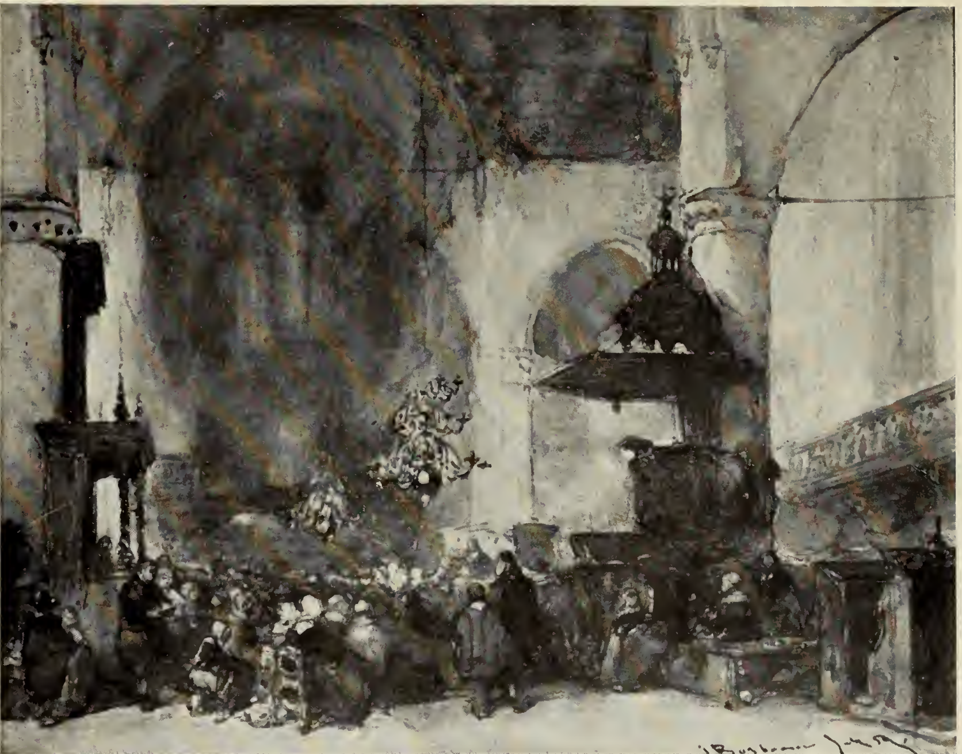

Plate XXIV. — Interior of Church. *J. Bosboom.*

out-door views and interiors of farmhouses, but his typical pictures are those of churches. Of these he has given us a great number of examples, but they nearly all belong to one or other of two types: the cathedrals of Belgium, with their long aisles and lofty pillars losing themselves in the duskiness of the pointed arches and vaulted ceiling, while the light comes in through the Gothic window and shines brightly on wall, column, and floor, burnishing the organ as it passes into rich yellow brown, regilding the golden pipes, and lightening up the fantastic carving of the dark mediæval pulpit; or the simpler Protestant churches of Holland, with their grey undecorated walls, their sombre pulpits, and box-like reading desks and pews.

There are some very interesting things to be noticed about these interiors; how level and flat the floors are, for instance — only Bosboom and Israels paint them so, the secret seeming to be in the delicate gradation of colour that gives the aerial perspective, as the floor recedes into the distance; then how finely the crowd of people in the church is

indicated — a broad firm touch puts each in the right place, and though they seem unfinished when examined closely, at the right distance the effect is perfect; and with what skill he hangs the brass chandeliers on their long chains down from the lofty roof, verily suspended in air. Indeed everything he paints is done with the one object always before him, to put on his canvas the interiors as he sees them, full of light and shadow, with every detail enveloped in atmosphere, and so well does he render their mystery and poetry that he has been called the "Corot" of interiors.

We often wonder what it is exactly in Bosboom's pictures that makes us like them so much. We do not specially care for architecture; there is little human interest in his interiors; the cathedrals and churches are used for services, but it is not the use of their shadowy halls by man, nor their religious side, that appeals to him, and that he shows to us. What is it then? It can only be that, no matter what he paints, the genius of the man puts into it the poetry and the love of beauty that belong to his own nature; and his great ability

PLATE XXV. — Scheveningen. *J. Bosboom.*

is shown in being able to delight us with what in other less imaginative hands would only be realistic copies of cold interiors of churches, or peasants' homes, with no living interest in them. Yet such ordinary material this alchemist is able to turn into pure gold.

Bosboom was of a very sociable and agreeable disposition, and was very much liked and looked up to by his fellow artists. It is cheering to hear of his remark when no longer young, "You do not know how many nice people I have met with in my life." Thus happily went by the too short years of this peaceful revolutionary.

"Dutch Painters of the Nineteenth Century."

Mr. P. A. M. Boele Van Hensbroek gives a very charming account of the celebration of Bosboom's seventieth birthday by the members of the Pulchri Studio, a society of artists, literary men, and lovers of art, in March, 1887, in their domed-shaped room, with its wooden ceiling and carved chimney-piece, and its walls hung with sketches by the members. In the middle of the feasting and toasting there appeared through an open doorway the picture of a church such as Bosboom

had so often painted, and streams of music at the same moment filled the room.

Would that the artist could have lived for many years to enjoy the position he had earned for himself!

> "But no,
> Death will not have it so,"

and four and a half years after he passed peacefully away.

## CHAPTER VII

### JOSEF ISRAELS

JOSEF ISRAELS has long occupied the position of leader and father of the Dutch school of painters. He comes in order of time only a few years after Bosboom, and contemporary with Weissenbruch. He was born fourteen years before Mauve and is twenty years older than William Maris. He is the leading figure painter in Holland, and paints also many landscapes, seashore scenes, and other out-door subjects, but always associated with men and women, and these are the more important parts of the pictures. But the chief reason of his prominent position is that Israels, besides being a great artist, is in every way a striking character. A Jew by descent, he has many of the strong qualities of his race; a painter, he has shown his originality in departing from conventional methods and adopting a style and depicting subjects of his own choosing; a man intellectually powerful and well informed,

Born 1824.

he became an innovator in art, and though not the first to break with the past, coming as he did after Bosboom, he yet has been the greatest force in dethroning in his own country the historical and romantic views and theories about painting that prevailed there; a man of very sociable habits, he is a good friend and agreeable companion, and is thought so highly of by his fellow artists that he is usually their representative in art matters and the chief speaker at their entertainments.

Israels was born in 1824. He first studied at Groningen, and in 1840 went to Amsterdam, where he was much impressed with that large city and especially with the life in the Jews' quarter. Then, having saved a small sum of money, he went for two years to Paris, but he derived little benefit from the schools there. On his return to Holland he made a new departure on his own account and, leaving the historical subjects which he chose at first, commenced to paint the scenes around him, not looking for pretty things so much as trying to express the inner spirit of the lives of the people. He was the first to give

Plate XXVI. — Girl Sewing. *Josef Israels.*

life and vigour to figures, trying to paint them in a way that would reveal their thoughts and feelings, and he brought into his pictures new ideas of light and colour. Like most innovators, he was laughed at, but he persevered in his own way, and he has now the satisfaction of seeing his ideas and opinions about art prevailing and gaining general acceptance, and his paintings admired and highly valued.

Israels painted in rich, deep colours in his early and middle period. His pictures in recent years, owing to their breadth of treatment, and his desire to secure what he considers the essentials, are in lower tones. Each period of his work has qualities peculiar to itself, and they cannot be found together. The lover of brilliant colour, careful drawing, and attention to detail will not find these in his late work, but in their place more atmosphere, more life, more feeling, wider and truer knowledge, perhaps really greater art. Certainly it was Israels' opinion, as he grew older, as it was that of Constable, Turner, Corot, James Maris, and Mauve, that greater freedom from

the trammels of accurate realistic drawing than they had at first imagined, was necessary to enable the artist to thoroughly express himself.

"Josef Israels' Art from an Analytical Viewpoint." Frederick W. Morton.

A critic has drawn attention to the fact that Israels is not a master draughtsman nor a distinguished colourist, and that he has not a sense of beauty, simply as such, and that decorative treatment does not appeal to him; but he goes on to say, "Yet by an interpretative sense and a power peculiarly his own he has made himself the central figure in his nation's art. It is a supreme tribute to his genius that the artist should be able to dispense with so many of the elements of popularity and power on which other men are accustomed to rely, and still have his canvases so grandly impressive, so wonderful in their simple appeal." Surely this critic has answered himself. It is this very appeal to the feelings of the audience to which he is speaking through his pictures that he is anxious to secure; this impressive personal sympathy of his own with the scenes he paints that he unconsciously reveals. If a certain amount of apparent

craftsman's skill must be dispensed with to secure these results, he decides to let it go for the sake of the higher truths. But his broader and more generalized treatment of his subject reveals always masterly ability on the technical side as well.

The late Mr. J. S. Forbes, of London, at a banquet given in Holland in Israels' honour, "spoke of the greater things of life as small, and the smaller things as great, in alluding to the pictures of the master; and said if his humble men and women, and their poverty-stricken homes, speak to us apparently of the smaller things of life, for all that, the greater things lie hidden within them, and it is our want of intelligence if we do not perceive them."

J. de Meester in "Dutch Painters of the Nineteenth Century."

Can we judge of Israels' views of life from his pictures? It is an interesting and fascinating study. His work, like that of Rembrandt, the artist with whom he has most in common, is that of one who ponders over what he sees, and it reveals as much as he cares to tell of his thoughts. He paints all the various stages of life. When representing the springtime of

existence, he sees, as is only natural, the joy of mere being, and he thoroughly enters into it. He shows us the happy children on the seashore, playing in the sand, building castles in the air. Like little voyagers starting out in life, they are occupied, as others who have travelled farther on, with the trifles around them, and how serious these seem! Bright and cheerful are these scenes; the sea is always calm and peaceful, and the sky a perpetual azure blue.

Then in the pictures of which the "Bashful Suitor" in the Metropolitan Museum in New York is a type, we find the lovers, in those years when "to be young" is "very heaven," absorbed in themselves and their own feelings. The landscape seems to fall into tune and to sympathize with them. Israels has a peculiar way of painting these country roads and fields. The colour, except in his small window-landscapes, is unreal but imaginative. Such greens and blues and browns are quite unlike anything we can see, but what a depth of feeling and wealth of suggestion there is in them! He gives us something so strongly personal we feel it is a very part of himself; and, like the

Plate XXVII. — The Anxious Family. *Josef Israels.*

"Wedding Guest," we listen and learn new things or old things in a new guise, from one who has come through more than the ordinary experience, and knows the people who must sympathize with him and hear him tell his tale of life.

He also frequently paints the mother with her child, the peasant girl sitting near a window in her home sewing, or, as the twilight falls and darkness gathers, just looking out and thinking; the fisherman's daughter seated on a knoll of the sand dunes near the sea, waiting for the return of the boats; the old woman resting before a comfortable fire, enjoying the evening of life, or her companion lighting his pipe. Israels devoted himself to the painting of this peasant life, and as the first to depict it in this natural yet very personal way, his name will always be associated with this branch of art in a very special manner. He has a very intimate sympathy with the toilers of the land, and he portrays their homes and occupations in a loving and poetic manner, always trying to show the inner and spiritual side of their lives.

We spoke in the last chapter of the beautiful manner in which Israels paints the floors of his interiors, and produces a perfectly level appearance in them as they gradually retreat from the spectator. The failure of so many artists in this apparently simple matter shows that it is by no means easy of accomplishment. The effect is gained by a masterly combination of linear and aerial or colour perspective, and by getting the values absolutely true, all of which gives the appearance of depth to the flat surface the painter has to work on. It helps largely to give a feeling of atmosphere to the scene, and we are able to follow the strong light in the foreground as it plays round figures and furniture through finely graduated passages of colour, until it is lost in the dim distance.

We would like to draw particular attention to the artistic and charming way in which Israels puts the windows into his cottages. Through them the diffused light enters the room, brightening everything and penetrating to its dusky corners. But we can also look through them, and see the fair outside world,

with its green trees and quiet evening sky. In all his interiors these effects of light have a fascination for him, and he succeeds in passing it on to us. We like to watch the girl sitting quietly there, with the light falling in bright rays on her cap and dress ere it loses itself in the shadows, and to look out with her on the spring fields and the rosy-tinged sunset; and we wonder what were the dreams that were passing through her young mind as she sat there alone, and the night came on.

This double effect of treating the light inside the room and outside is very characteristic of Israels, and it has not been treated in this natural way by anyone before him. Yet natural as it seems, it has a magic power; for it carries our thoughts out of ourselves, out through the window in the walls that shut us in, and we dream as we gaze away into the far beyond.

Another and very serious phase of Israels' art is his representation of his own people, the Jews, in such masterpieces as the Scribe, the old Jewish writer intent on copying on a roll of parchment the law and the prophets,

while the light falls on his head and long beard and floods the writing table; or the old Rag Merchant; or the great painting of Saul in his tent, founded in part on Browning's poem, with which he was familiar.

But when the final stage is near, when men grow old and companions pass away, what does Israels tell us? Is there really anything more than this world he has been painting in all its busy life? What of the future? "Alas," he seems to say, "who knows? I cannot see any light shining on the path." Indeed, even in the present he sees more of the sadness of life than of its happiness. Man must suffer, and he has just to go through with it. All have to submit to what life has in store for them, and must endure their lot. Then comes the end lit up by no ray of hope. At least this appears to be what he tells us in his most serious moods, when he paints the old woman cowering over the fire to get a little warmth, no comfort left in life, and nothing to look forward to: or when he describes, in "Alone in the World," such utter and over-whelming loneliness as had never been put on

Plate XXVIII. — Interior of a Cottage. *Josef Israels.*

canvas; that loneliness that falls so despairingly on a home when the long and happy ties that bound two people in loving companionship during their lives are severed, and one is left alone. There is no hope for the broken-hearted man as he sits amid the ruins of his home, staring out on the meaningless world; no hope now, and nothing to tell of any for the future.

Israels is a profound thinker, and his is the philosophy of the Persian poet:

> "There was the door to which I found no key;
> There was the veil through which I might not see;
> Some little talk a while of Me and Thee
> There was, and then no more of Thee and Me."

Omar Khayyám.

It is the thought of the East, whence Israels came, but before it had conquered the world through the beautiful life that lit up the country-side of Galilee and poured forth its rays of loving sympathy upon mankind, giving to men the greatest of gifts, Hope!

## CHAPTER VIII

### JAMES MARIS

1837-1899. "The favourite utterance of James Maris, 'I think in my material,' affords a clue to his innate sense of art. He was essentially a painter, and the external impressions conveyed to him were of so graphic a character that he at once interpreted in colour whatever came within the range of his observation. With him technique was paramount. The scenes depicted conveyed no special message, were never designed to point a moral, but depend only upon the ability of the beholder to appreciate in the treatment his meaning and intent. His pictures in fact appeal to the very sentiments that gave them birth; they reveal his intimate acquaintance with colour in all its gradations, his splendid contrasts of light and shadow. The charm they exert upon us is due in part to the grandeur of Maris's artistic sense, his power of sympathy, strength of conception, and his glori-

PLATE XXIX. — The Peacock Feather. *James Maris.*

ous schemes of colour, and in part to the nobility and loftiness of spirit ever unconsciously reflected in this great artist's work." So wrote the late Th. de Bock in his monumental work on James Maris. It gives a full account of his life and of his manner of work, and is full of interest and written in a very attractive style.

"James Maris." By Th. de Bock.

James Maris settled for a time with his brothers when they were young men in Antwerp, and they afterwards went to Paris, where they lived until after the troubles that followed the Franco-German war. He and William returned to Holland in 1871, expecting only to pay a visit. He rented a house at the Hague, near the canal and bridge and flour-mill he painted so often in his pictures, and he became very soon so enamoured of the scenery of his own country that he decided to dwell there, and not wander any more to other lands. Here he became really himself and found congenial employment, and produced those paintings that have made him so well known.

James Maris is the most varied artist of

the school. To him all seems to come easily. He has made his own and depicts equally well landscapes; seashores and shipping; towns, with their cathedrals and red-roofed houses and wharves; ploughmen on their farms; and horses on the canal banks towing the heavy sand-laden barges. In all these pictures he paints beautiful cloud-filled skies, which are a never-ending delight. They differ from each other in countless ways, as did the skies themselves that he watched as the wind drove across them grand mountains of pure white cumuli against backgrounds of heavenly blue, or filled from horizon to zenith with grey masses of rushing darkness that threatened storm and rain.

All these are the pictures that he paints *con amore*, and these are the scenes he loves and that he ponders over. The technical skill shown cannot be surpassed, but all that he does has the far higher quality of revealing the true love of nature felt by this poet painter, and his own feelings about the world around him. He has not quite the sympathetic quality of Mauve, nor the large simplicity of Weissen-

bruch, but he is a stronger colourist than either, and has more varied technical equipment, and his pictures compel admiration for their brilliancy and beauty, an admiration few people can withhold.

He also paints figures, and these have a great charm, the best being those in which his own children appear. The draughtsmanship and skill shown in them, and their colour, are very fine, but we do not find that his figure paintings have the depth of spiritual feeling in them that Josef Israels puts into his work. They do not seem to us to reach the level of his own wonderful landscapes, which remain his masterpieces and speak his last word to us.

James Maris held very strongly that an artist's strength depended on the way in which he arranged and moulded his materials together into one harmonious whole, which should be complete in itself. So he gradually came to the conclusion that while it was very necessary for the beginner to study nature closely, when maturity is reached direct study from nature is not so necessary. Th. de

Bock has explained how little realistic James Maris was in his paintings, which have such an appearance of frank truth that one would hesitate without this proof to think they were other than records of the places he painted. He used to make numerous sketches of the bridge and canal near his house, but when he came to paint he combined all these into a picture which, though not this bridge, yet got the indefinable something, the essence of the scene before him, though it was far from being like a photographic statement of it.

Nowhere is to be found the exact original of any of his completed pictures, here and there a motive only. He often put churches and towers from one town into another. "When I am tired," he said, "of long, straight roof lines, why should I not introduce a cupola, especially where the cloud formation requires its support?" And again, "Why should I not build my own towns to suit myself?" Why not, indeed! Glad are we, great builder, that like another Kubla Khan, you were able to raise such sunny domes in air, and win us to so great delight! Glad are we that you did

PLATE XXX. — The Canal Bridge. *James Maris.*

not heed the cavillers who knew not of the celestial food, but went on building your cities at the bidding of imagination, and followed the guidance of your genius, as did Claude and Turner theirs; and very glad that you suffered no interference from nature and hard facts to spoil the beautiful lines and forms, the symmetry and poetry, of the visions you saw in your mind's eye, and transferred undimmed to your glowing canvas!

This shows the originality of James Maris, how little he was a mere recorder of facts, how imaginative and poetic his character really was. He is a master that his fellow countrymen unite in considering one of the greatest artists that Holland has ever produced, and it must cause those people who think that Dutch art is the realistic matter-of-fact record of the ordinary things of nature and life, to pause and consider if they are right in their opinion, or whether possibly a similar spirit may not have inspired the artists of Holland in the nineteenth century to that which Eugène Fromentin found in the works of the masters of the seventeenth.

"The Old Masters of Belgium and Holland."

As revealed in his pictures, James Maris seems to be one of those somewhat reserved men who cannot quite "let themselves go," as the saying is. He did not receive at his birth the gift of a frank and communicative disposition; and while he does succeed in expressing himself, and that in no uncertain manner, but in an attractive and charming way, we still feel as if it was a little of an effort on his part to take us into his confidence, and that it is not done quite unconsciously. He does not put you at once at your ease, as do Mauve and Weissenbruch, with their pictures so immediately delightful to the eye, yet apparently so simple that one never pauses to consider how they are painted. We cannot help being just a little struck with the wondrous ability displayed by James Maris; in fact we are constrained to admire. Yet we almost hesitate to say even this, for he is a great artist, and the work of each period of his life is fine in composition, colour, and subject, from the time he painted the beautiful brown-toned pictures of canal bridges, and towns with their red-roofed houses, to the

Plate XXXI. — Dordrecht. *James Maris.*

latest and broadest of his descriptions of horsemen on the tow-path. In his last period he is altogether taken up with generalizing the effects of nature, trying to get its very essence, giving only the salient facts, and vaguely indicating the innumerable details that are there, yet may only be barely hinted at. He forgets all about the means and is intent only on the end; he is himself and he is in many ways at his greatest, notwithstanding a lack of definiteness and a daring freedom which some do not like. But indeed nearly all his work is splendid, though it may be that it belongs too near to the present day to enable us to see it in true proportion and to realize its greatness.

The fact that his character lends itself to an analysis of this kind shows how interesting the man and his career are, and as we study his pictures, which are all very original and vivid impressions of what he saw, and as we find their beauty revealing itself and growing on us, we know that we are in the presence of a master-mind; and even if the painter quality be often in evidence, so also are the

poetry and spirit of his nature clearly expressed. Every great artist must remain himself, and we are thankful to all the masters for what they tell us of the ideas and thoughts that guided the brush in transferring the fleeting scene to lasting canvas.

# CHAPTER IX

## ANTON MAUVE

It is a rare thing to find anyone who does not like the pictures of Anton Mauve. They are general favourites, and are fortunate in finding a ready response from nearly everyone to the appeal they make for recognition. The lover of fine art turns to them with delight, for their tender and sympathetic rendering of nature and their great technical ability; but they also have a strong attraction by their natural appearance and poetic beauty which can hardly escape any person, for those who, knowing and caring little about artistic quality, yet like to have on their walls pleasant reminders of the scenes they are fond of in life out-of-doors. It is little wonder, then, that his works are hard to find, and that they have been gradually absorbed in the seventeen years that have passed since his death.

1838–1888.

Mauve was born at Zaandam. His father was a Baptist minister, and although at an early

age he showed great taste for drawing, and was completely possessed by the idea of becoming an artist, it was with great difficulty that he got permission to follow his favourite pursuit. He first studied under Van Os, but derived little benefit from his teaching. It was a dry and formal art that was taught in his studio, and the young and ardent student was soon anxious to escape from it. The influence that affected him most, apart from his own personality, was Josef Israels. For him Mauve had a great affection, and they became firm friends. He was also very much attracted by William Maris, and he had a great admiration for J. F. Millet.

After leaving Van Os, it was necessary for Mauve to sell some pictures to gain a living. These were highly finished, carefully drawn, and brilliant in colour, but gave little promise for the future. But soon after this a more sensitive feeling for nature came to him, and he began to paint the scenes with which he was to become so identified, the green fields and country lanes, and the soft grey-green dunes, with the shepherds and their flocks going

Plate XXXII. — Sand Dunes. *Anton Mauve.*

to and returning from the pasture lands, or cattle grazing on the scattered patches of grass, or ploughmen turning up the soil into furrows. At the same time his manner of painting changed and began to get broader, and his work more certain, and his pictures showed more of the personal element. In the period from 1870 to 1880 his work has reached maturity and from the technical point of view is at its best; the workmanship is brilliant, the brush work vigorous, strong, and effective, and the colour sparkling, yet the soft hazy atmosphere envelops everything in its mysterious folds, and the very spirit of the scene is given.

But we find his views of the meaning of life and of its expression in art still developing. Though he never surpassed the paintings he made during these years, from the painter's standpoint, though technically he even loses something, still if we would seek the full poetry of his revelation of nature, and the finer qualities of his own personality, we must go to some of the pictures that he painted in the last years of his life, from 1883

to 1888, when he lived in his happy home in the quiet village of Laren. In these a more tender, perhaps a sadder note is struck, but a more appealing, more lasting, and more fascinating effect is produced.

Mauve is the sweet lyric artist of Holland. The great strength and colour of James Maris, the brilliancy of William Maris, are not his. But how peaceful and soothing are his personal transcriptions of the quiet life on the sandy dunes near the Hague and Scheveningen, in the country about Oosterbeek and Wolfhezen, and in the fields close to Laren, with their dark fir trees and slender birches; the places he has made so familiar to us all, the scenes he so loved to paint! His low-toned harmonies seem indeed to catch the very spirit brooding over the teeming earth, and almost to reveal its meaning; and from them there wells forth an intense, longing love of nature, with an ever present sympathy with mankind. There is a tenderness, a wealth of feeling, and often a sadness in his pictures that puts the observer in sympathetic touch with his gentle and lovable disposition,

and his kindly view of the world around him.

Yet with all this they have a very striking dramatic quality that arrests the attention at once, and makes us pause and consider what the powerful attraction can be of these pictures apparently so simply painted, and that have so little so-called subject in them. The flocks of sheep bunched and huddled together as they cross the moors, in sunshine and storm, the ploughmen and toiling horses going through their day's labour as the morning wears away to evening, the herdsmen bringing home the cattle at the approach of night, these his favourite scenes are to be found frequently on his canvases, shown in all kinds of weather and with many varying surroundings. He painted them broadly and simply and just as he thought he saw them, and in such an individual way that they are now intimately associated with his memory. But his vision has the poet's insight, and besides painting as he thought just what he saw, in beautiful and decorative design, he really suggests unconsciously something of the unknowable

mysteriousness of nature, and this makes his pictures as it were types of her different moods more than views of particular places.

How do the pictures of Mauve affect those who only know him by his works? Well, we do not go to them to see the cheerful side of nature, as we do to William Maris, although he does not feel the intense gloom that oppressed J. F. Millet, nor are his types of labourers in the fields so devoid of intelligence nor so borne down by a relentless fate as are those painted by the French artist. The Dutch peasants are painted in more comfortable surroundings, but they are still governed by the same immutable laws; and the impossibility of warding off suffering and sorrow, and the quiet endurance of them when they come, are shown by Mauve in the resigned and pathetic figures that do their day's work on the farms, or guide the flocks of sheep from one pasture to another. We cannot look at his pictures without noticing that very often he finds reflected in nature, and unconsciously records in his paintings, his own rather sad turn of mind, which grew more melancholy when he was

PLATE XXXIII. – Entering the Village of Laren. *Anton Mauve.*

under the influence of those times of mental depression which occasionally came over him.

Listening in the same fields and meadows in which William Maris finds the symbols that reflect the contented happiness of his own disposition, Mauve hears only the minor chords of earth's music, a tender, beautiful, but sad strain. Like Beethoven's question, repeated again and again, but always in vain (for all the different forms of art seek to get beyond the phenomena of the world around us, and to find some solution of the problems that are met at every turn), Mauve's questionings of nature have no reply save the answer of his own sad heart that comes echoing back to him. So truly has Coleridge told us:

Andante. Fifth Symphony.

"We receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live."

Mauve's pictures give back his own thoughts. They have in them no restlessness, nor discontent with the beautiful world, whose loveliness he well understood and described so charmingly; the pearly grey spring, with its delicate blue sky, as if just newly created,

the fuller if less subtle colouring of summer, the rich deep tones of autumn, and the white harmony of winter. Rather do they show that "the tears of things" sadden him, as he sees that man moves through this life like a shadow passing over the ground, and like it disappears and is forgotten, while nature is permanent and enduring. Hear her speaking:

"The Youth of Nature." Matthew Arnold.

"Will ye scan me and read me and tell
Of the thoughts that ferment in my breast,
My longing, my sadness, my joy?
Will ye claim for your great ones the gift
To have render'd the gleam of my skies,
To have echo'd the moan of my seas,
Utter'd the voice of my hills?
Race after race, man after man,
Have thought that my secret was theirs,
—They are dust, they are changed, they are gone!
I remain." —

Mauve is an artist and not a philosopher, and we do not expect any theories of life from him; but he cannot help expressing in his art what he feels, when he looks out on the varied phenomena of the world, and this seems to be the burden of it: the earth is beautiful in itself, but sad in relation to man, for he lives

Plate XXXIV. — Crossing the Moor. *Anton Mauve.*

but a short time on it, and passes away, and the future is not known.

What an influence Mauve had on his brother artists, and on his fellow countrymen, their loving and affectionate memory of him shows. This is beautifully expressed by M. A. C. Loffelt, in his study of the artist's life and work: "But Mauve is not dead! When we walk in those pretty country lanes under the birch trees, with their silvery leaves and pearly aspect; when we watch the sun caressing the green meadows and playing about among the branches of the willow, or over the alder and hazel trees; when we hear the echo of the tinkling bell of the sheep on the heath, we say: 'Mauve lives, he is here, he is here!'"

"Dutch Painters of the Nineteenth Century."

# CHAPTER X

## MATTHEW MARIS

Born 1839.

THERE are some artists about whose place in the art world there is always great discussion; they have strong admirers, and these perhaps exaggerate their good qualities, and on the other hand there are many people who go to the other extreme, and do not care even so much as to look at their works, are even annoyed at them for their apparent impossibility and unreality.

Matthew Maris is one of these artists, and while very many admire the paintings of his earlier period, with their fine colour, perfect tone, and poetic realism, the work of his maturer years is little understood, and appeals to those only who are willing to accept without questioning as much as he is able to disclose to them, in weird but beautiful terms, of the dreamland in which he lives, and

Plate XXXV. — Boy with a Hoop. *Matthew Maris.*

the shadowy, haunting forms of the men and women who dwell in that realm of spirits.

If it be a gain occasionally to escape from this matter-of-fact world, with its trivial rounds, its cares and troubles, and lose ourselves awhile in a purer air, perhaps even visit the fairyland we read of, and almost believed in when we were young, then must we be glad that art exists; that Matthew Maris lived; and that he painted those visions of an unseen world, in which we can let our thoughts wander at will, though we never fully realize the meaning of their wonderful mystery, which he only partially reveals, only imperfectly sees himself, yet indicates in such suggestive manner, with so evanescent a charm, and in colour tender, delicate, and rich.

The advent of one great artist is a rare enough occurrence, but that three brothers should all be painters of note is almost unheard of, if it be not a unique event in the annals of art. Yet it has happened in this remarkable family in the nineteenth century. James, Matthew, and William Maris have,

in different phases of art, attained to very high rank among the artists of Holland.

Matthew Maris seems to have acquired his knowledge of painting at an early age, and he became a great admirer of the old masters. He went with his brothers to Antwerp, and there first came under the Romantic influence, which later had such an effect on him. He afterwards went with them to Paris, where he stayed until some years after the Commune, and then he made his home in London. There he lives the life of a recluse, apart from his fellows, an enthusiast in art, yet unable to paint much, as he is ever seeking an ideal he finds it impossible to realize.

Before this a feeling of dissatisfaction had been growing on him, and he gradually gave up painting those charmingly realistic yet ideal pictures, like the works of the old masters in their careful attention to detail, and their strong and even quality, which he had produced from about 1860 until 1874. These were full of beautiful bright colour, and showed great delicacy of execution, like the well-known paintings called the "Butterflies," and "He

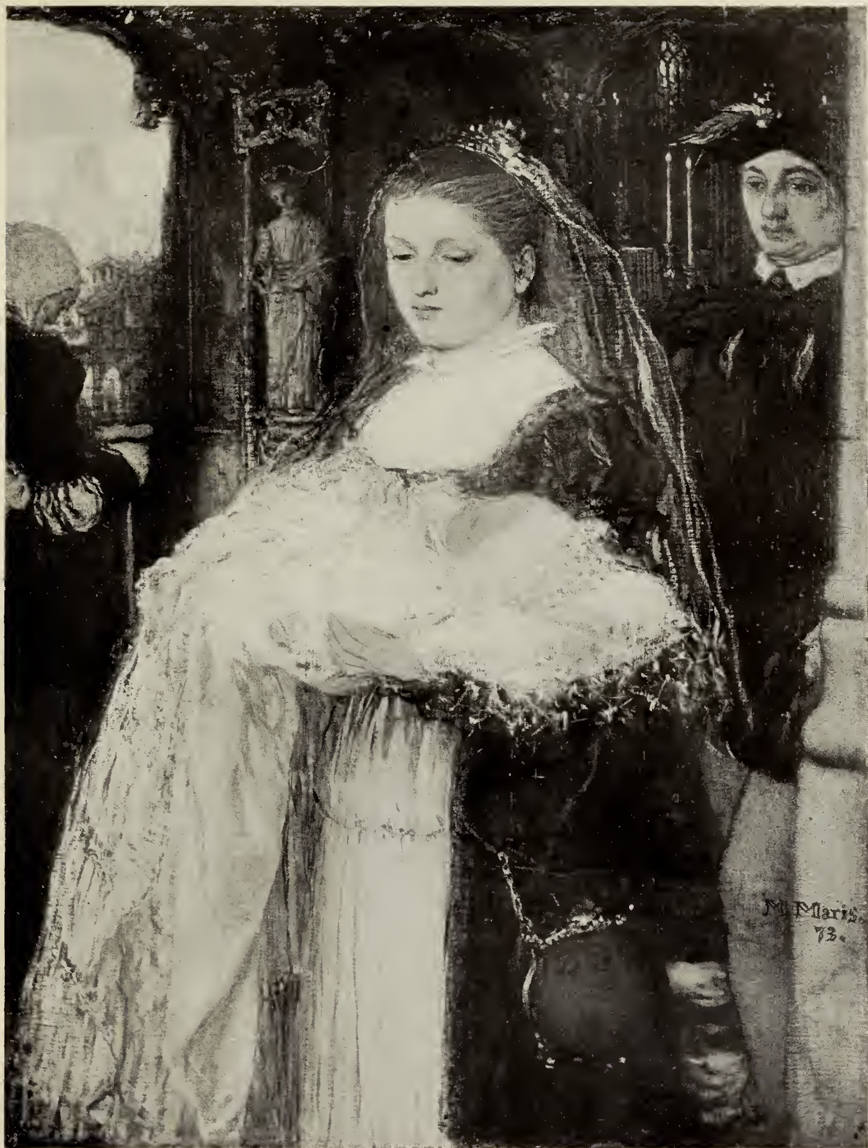


Plate XXXV*a*. — The Christening. *Matthew Maris.*

is coming." These and similar ones reveal the artist of consummate skill, endowed with a rare gift of colour, and they are held by many to be his finest efforts.

Still, to others the few pictures that he has painted since about 1880 have a fascination and a charm greater, though much more elusive, than his earlier ones possess. They are mostly in colour tones of pearly grey and delicate brown, and the drawing is much more vague. But they have a strangely suggestive power which makes them linger in the memory. "The Bride" in the Mesdag Museum belongs to this period, and the lovers dreamily strolling along "The Walk," as seen in one of the loveliest of water-colour drawings, and to these, and others of similar fantastic beauty, one turns again and again. We realize that here is something that has never before been painted with success, something that is new in art, the spirit made of more importance than the form. For as we look at these pictures, the figures, at first hardly distinguished, seem slowly to emerge from the dim background and assume the appearance of form and life;

yet so immaterial do they appear, we feel they might at any time vanish away into the mysterious realm from which they have been drawn out by the genius of the artist. For this is his period of painting the dream-land in which he lives; but it has grown more and more difficult for him to satisfy himself with his work, and his over-sensitiveness about this has resulted in his producing almost nothing in recent years.

"He is the painter of the border land between the seen and the unseen world." Dr. F. W. Gunsaulus.

Matthew Maris is an etcher of great ability, and he has made some very characteristic original plates with imaginative subjects, that are very quaint and attractive. His achievement in this line is not great in volume, but he has etched one superb plate after J. F. Millet's painting of "The Sower," and the impressions printed from it are among the most beautiful examples of the art. It is not etching in its purest form, that is, the use of the fewest possible lines to suggest the subject, as is the custom of painter-etchers such as Rembrandt, Whistler, and Seymour Haden. The object in this case is to reproduce the effect of the picture. To do this more than

See plate No. 18.

PLATE XXXVI. — The Ox Cart. *Matthew Maris.*

the line is necessary, and so Matthew Maris covers nearly the whole of the plate to secure rich, soft tones, similar to those found in a mezzotint engraving. Into this work he has put a strong personal feeling, giving his own conception of Millet's grand figure, striding across the field as the day wanes, and casting the seeds of living grain into the furrows of the dark vitalizing earth. His interpretation of this great picture into black and white is a very remarkable one, deepening the mysteriousness even of the original, and it is the finest reproductive etching that we know of.

The striking originality of Matthew Maris's paintings makes them worthy of very careful study, and we should try to approach them in a feeling of sympathy with the artist, striving to realize as far as we can the scenes he wished to paint, and the ideas and suggestions he wanted to convey to us. This is the only way. If we require more solid, substantial subjects, or more practical ideas, or more obtrusively clever brush work, we must seek elsewhere, for he will not condescend to gratify us. It is useless to attempt to get from him

what he cannot or will not give. We must just take what his views of art and his own nature allow him to paint. We may admire it, or we may simply endure it, or we may dislike it, but it *cannot be ignored;* the fact remains that there it is before us, well thought over and pondered upon in secret, wondered about, dreamed of, — what do we make of it?

Thus sitting down for a little time of quiet consideration before pictures of his different periods, we find in the first place that his work seems to belong to no school; he is one of the few painters of the world. The local and particular almost vanish, the types only remain. To get above the ordinary, and to be able to produce this aloofness from the accidents of time and place, shows the possession of one of the rarest gifts that nature can bestow upon an artist, and distinguishes him who has it from all others. The mere portraits, the catching of superficial likenesses, are things very easily done, and have a baneful effect on the great majority of pictures. The figures in these are so evidently straight from the model, and are of so little interest, that it

PLATE XXXVII. — The Dreamer. *Matthew Maris.*

makes us feel a debt of gratitude to the man who can, like the Greeks in carving their superb statues, sink the model in the memory of what he has seen, and paint from the visions that have formed themselves in his mind.

Then his technical ability is of the highest order, and his sense of colour profound. Those who consider the painter-quality of pictures as the most important, readily admit the truth of this as shown in what he did until about 1874, and his work of this period, from 1860 to 1874, is the admiration of artists. There is a directness and certainty about it, a delicate draughtsmanhip, a fine sense of composition, a beauty and richness of colouring, a uniqueness of aim and execution, that place it in a class by itself.

Having arrived at this point, Matthew Maris felt that there was something escaping him; the finer spirit of the subject, that which he wished to paint, could not be described in the somewhat set terms of expression he was then using, beautiful as they were. His art must grow and develop by getting more of the

spiritual into his work, and less of the material; form must cease to be the chief means he employs, and more must be indicated by vaguer and less distinct, yet at the same time equally effective and satisfactory methods. Looking back at his work, we find, very soon after the time of his earliest and most careful drawings, made when he was learning the technique of art, that the germ of his later ideas is to be found in his work from about 1860 onwards. This is seen mainly in the *typical* character of the faces. They are never suggestive of the portrait or the model, and there is a wondering thoughtfulness in them. They cannot reveal the mystery of their being, the riddle of existence, nor can the observer make it out, but it seems to be there, ever present and inscrutable, as in the Mona Lisa, and the Sphinx.

"Catalogue, Dutch Exhibition, 1904." Whitechapel Art Gallery.

This is what Matthew Maris is striving for, and we see the spiritual side of his work growing, while the form gradually becomes less dwelt upon. Yet, as has been well said, "The more he strives to abandon material form, the more hauntingly he expresses it." And

no one but a master of all the resources that technical skill can give, could paint the suggestions of the scenes that pass before his mind in the way that he does. Their charm is elusive and indefinite, yet very real. They are a source of pleasure that is ever renewing itself, and you never seem fully to realize all that they have to disclose. Art has not produced before his time just this form of weird mystic beauty.

To have painted such brilliant pictures in his earlier years, and such ethereal conceptions of the triumph of the spirit over the world, of mind over matter, in his later works, is Matthew Maris's peculiar distinction, and no artist could have a more real or abiding claim to lasting fame.

# CHAPTER XI

## WILLIAM MARIS

Born 1844

LIKE his brothers, William Maris early showed signs of ability, and was an industrious student. He chose for his special subjects the cattle in their haunts in the soft meadows of Holland, with their willow trees and lagoon-like shallow waters, or broad rivers bordering them. In addition to this he paints his favourite ducks in their cool, shadowy homes in the streams under the green trees, and sometimes he gives us views of the River Merwerde, with boats sailing on its waters and windmills built on its banks. Some people complain that in his later work the cattle are not carefully enough drawn. This is done with an object, and not from want of knowledge or ability to draw them, for these he undoubtedly has. He studied cattle for years, in the most painstaking way, and if he wished to do so his pencil sketches abundantly prove that he could paint them with

Plate XXXVIII. — Milking Time at Abcoude. *William Maris.*

photographic accuracy. But that would destroy his object, which is to represent the landscape as a whole, bathed in atmosphere, and to get this result sacrifices have to be made. The lower truth of photographic accuracy must be dispensed with, but the whole character of the animals is always perfectly kept in view, and the way in which they are put in his pictures shows absolute knowledge of their forms and habits and perfect executive skill.

There is in fact no deficiency in the drawing, but on the contrary, though details may be wanting, the greatest attention is given to representing the essential features of the forms of the cattle, and the very weight of them as they press down the grass. It is all very boldly and skilfully done, and the real truth about them, as they appear reflecting the light and modified by the atmosphere and forming part of a country scene, is much better shown in this way than by painstaking drawing of the anatomy. It is in short the truth of the impression on the eye that is given, and that art should always present, and not the latest scientific knowledge.

"The Barbizon School." "Corot." D. C. Thomson.

Corot in a very interesting and well-known passage tells how for him the early morning and late evening, the mysterious parts of day, are the only times in which he cares to paint. When the sun is fully up, all poetical effect is gone. But William Maris selects this very time of day as for him specially desirable, and he sees mystery and poetry in the wonderful effect of the sun pouring its bright rays down on animals and pasture land. For this he is called the silvery Maris, and very remarkable are the effects he gets. It is true, as it is sometimes remarked, that he is always painting cattle and ducks. But it does not matter how many times he paints them, the pictures are always different, and no two are alike in subject and treatment. We never find him repeating himself, and there is indeed no occasion for him to do so. For the sky, the atmosphere, and the light are always changing, and as they change and nature's hues shift subtly from the mystery of dawn through noonday to the quiet of the evening, and vary with each gleam of sunshine, each shadow of darkening storm, new pictures are

Similarly Claude Monet painted more than thirty pictures of the Thames, with the Houses of Parliament in the distance, and each one is different in the treatment of the light and the atmosphere.

Plate XXXIX. — River Merwerde. *William Maris.*

formed in countless number. It is these fleeting effects that William Maris seeks, and so his subjects are endless. Though he really shows us the very meadows of Holland that he sees, yet is he an imaginative painter, and they come from his brush tinged with his own poetical sentiment. He is sometimes taken for a rigid realist, but they misunderstand him who do this. For no one could paint cattle and their grazing grounds, and the skies that overarch them, so simply, apparently, yet so suggestively, unless he were gifted with a very sympathetic imagination.

The work of William Maris has a certain family likeness, as it were, to that of his brother James. It has similar power, vigour, freshness, boldness, and fine colour, but each is individual. He does not paint the stormy skies, with tumultuous masses of clouds, that his brother delights in. His favourites are those of clear bright summer blue, and he uses in painting them innumerable shades of blue flecked over with a misty haze of almost invisible white. We learn from him that the clearest of blue Northern skies can only be

We see this also in Weissenbruch's pictures.

rendered in this way, if the artist would give the true impression of the wondrous depths of the azure vault above us. A typical William Maris sky is a creation of his own, with its airy clouds floating lightly as down in the blue expanse, phantom fleecy forms that look as if a breath would blow them away out of sight.

It must always be remembered that William Maris is a landscape painter. The soft oozy meadows into which the hoofs of the cows sink, the shallow waters near by shining white in the rays of the sun, the trees in their robes of summer green, all these are not intended as a background for the cattle merely, but are painted for their own intrinsic loveliness and importance. And very beautiful indeed are the landscapes he gives us, sparkling in colour and radiant with light and air.

He shows in his paintings something of the reticence of James Maris, but his is a less complex character than that of his more varied brother, and his nature is gentler and more sympathetic. His life seems to have little of the stress and fever of modern times. He

belongs to the earlier days Matthew Arnold tells of:

"O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily on the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife."

"The Scholar Gypsy."

In fact, strange as it may appear, his way of looking at life seems more akin to that of the Greeks of old. They did not in their art worry over the meaning of things they could not understand. A beautiful thing was a joy to them; to the artist in its production, to the observer in his contentment with simply beholding and enjoying it.

"If eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for being."

"The Rhodora." R. W. Emerson.

That was their way of looking at nature, and it is that also of William Maris. He is unlike them in showing us his own personal feelings in his pictures, which he very certainly does; but his happy and contented mental outlook belongs more to the past.

We gather, from his evident regard for living

creatures, that he would agree with Walt Whitman:

"Song of Myself."

> "I think I could turn and live with animals,
> they are so placid and self-contained,
> I stand and look at them long and long.
> They do not lie awake in the dark, and weep
> for their sins,
> Not one is dissatisfied —
> Not one is respectable, or unhappy over the
> whole earth."

Yes! William Maris has also looked at them "long and long"; and he has now, through close study, and thorough acquaintance with their every mood, the power of reproducing them on canvas, with a few broad strokes of his brush, yet giving their very anatomy and construction, *as these appear to the eye.*

When we wish to escape from the "eternal sadness" so much about us, and which perhaps finds too much expression in art, we turn with joy to William Maris and his happy and healthy ideas of life, and from his sunny pastures and cool ponds there is wafted to us a breath of refreshing country air that brings peace and comfort in its train.

Like that of his fellow-artists, his work has

PLATE XL. — A Cool Retreat. *William Maris.*

grown broader as the years have passed by; and the beauty, strength, and decision of his recent work are the result of the knowledge and skill to which he has attained, after years of earnest working in his favourite pursuit. He is to-day the first of living landscape artists who paint cattle, and it is safe to predict that he will stand in the future in the front rank of the animal painters of the world.

# CHAPTER XII

## J. H. WEISSENBRUCH

1824–1903.

THE recent death of J. H. Weissenbruch, which occurred early in 1903, has removed a well-known figure from the artistic world of Holland. His was one of those happy, cheerful natures that enjoy a simple life completely occupied with the art they love. Like Corot, he spread sunshine around him. He was bound up in his work, and was greatly loved by his fellow-artists, who looked up to him with admiration. One of them, Mr. Smissaert, writes: "Among the older generation Weissenbruch holds a prominent place; for who depicts as well as he the effect of the sun struggling through stormy clouds, or who appreciates better the value of light and shade? Who remains so young and enthusiastic? Who, indeed, but Weissenbruch, whose pictures fill us with delight, and create an impression on our minds not easily forgotten. He sees nature through the medium of his temperament,

"Dutch Painters of the Nineteenth Century." F. A. E. L. Smissaert.

which is warm and sensitive — a temperament to which all that is great and noble appeals. His whole being is deeply affected by the beauty of natural scenery, and he is in perfect harmony with what he depicts. Wherever he paints, whether in oil or water colours, it is always the same as far as beauty is concerned, and no one will dispute the fact that he is a great artist."

Weissenbruch was born in 1824 and died in 1903. He had a strong and robust constitution and clear mental vision. He was a most entertaining companion, being a delightful talker, and having an inexhaustible fund of anecdote. As a young man he studied under Shelfhout and Van Hove. Here he learned to draw with accuracy and great detail, and we occasionally see examples now of this careful, painstaking work. After leaving his teachers, following the advice of Bosboom, he continued to work for many years in the same thorough manner, studying nature earnestly and leaving nothing undone that could add to his knowledge and experience. Later on he found himself, and left his early

formal manner. Gradually his style changed, and his brush work grew vigorous and broad. He discovered how much he could leave out, in trying to give the essentials only, to secure that simplicity and suggestiveness, the best part of every work of art. The beginner sees only detail, the artist sees the essence and suggests detail. Here it is that so many fail. They cannot see what are the essentials. Happy they who can, and are enabled to subordinate everything else, leaving out the "prose of nature and giving only the spirit and splendour."[1]

A time comes to every artist, after he has learned the technical side of his art and has become what Ruskin calls a "respectable artificer," when he must begin to give his message and thoughts to the world through the medium of his works. If he has nothing to tell,[2] he is not a living force, no matter how much admiration brilliant technique may draw.

> "You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet;[3]
> Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?"

are the words the great critic quotes for the artist who depicted the luxurious idleness

[1] "Essay on Art." Emerson.

[2] "When a friend of mine, who painted as well as any man of his school in the Paris of that day, came to Millet, to lay all this accomplishment at his feet and ask for direction, 'It is well,' said Jean François, 'and you can paint. — But what have you to say?'" "Considerations on Painting." John La Farge.

[3] "Don Juan." Canto III. Byron.

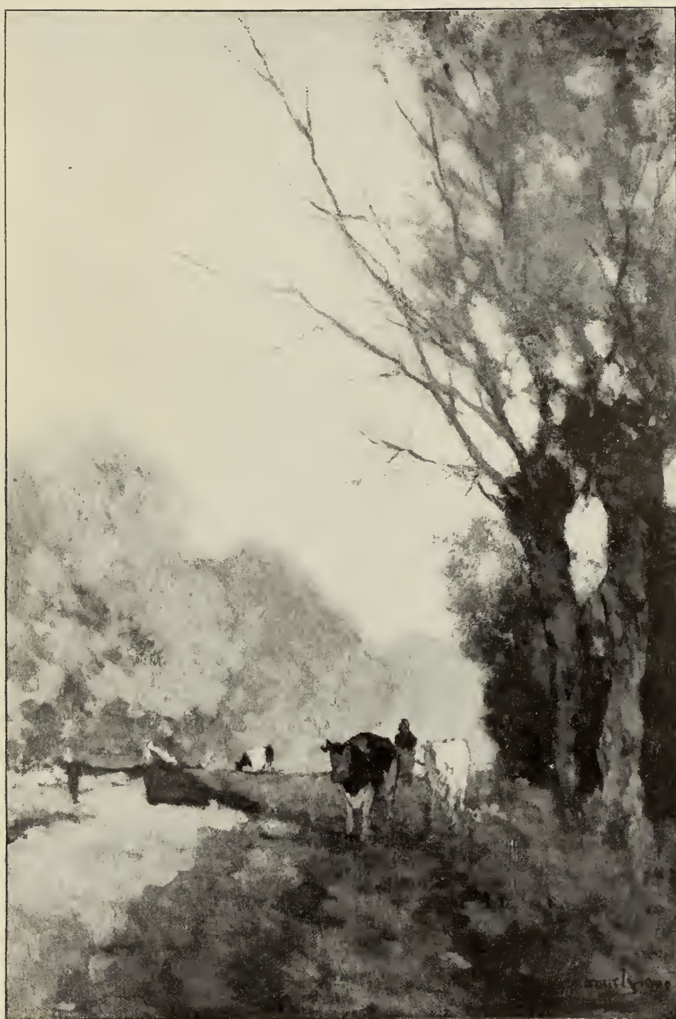

PLATE XLI. — Autumn near the Hague. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

of the Romans in their decline, with fascinating skill, but whose work had no speaking power to his fellow-men.[1] What would be thought of Corot if we only had his early tightly-painted pictures to judge from, and not his Biblis or Le Soir? What of Mauve, whose great work was in his later years? Indeed, thus does it nearly always happen with true artists. As they grow older they find that the technical perfection they sought for at first is only the language they have to use, and that the all-important matter is to use the language they have learned, to render in proper manner the big things in nature and in art as they appear to the sympathetic imagination of the artist. Filled with this idea their work grows broader and broader, though to the beholders apparently more simple,[2] through the perfect mastery of the subject. Thus it was with Weissenbruch, and, charming as his work always is, it is in his last period that his real genius is expressed. For this his whole life had been the preparation. "It took Weissenbruch," said a Dutch critic, "sixty years to learn how to paint that pic-

[1] "The Art of England." Page 102. Ruskin.

[2] "All great actions have been simple, and all great pictures are." "Essay on Art." Emerson.

ture of the Storm on the Coast of Zeeland." "How easy to do that," we are apt to exclaim, as we look at one of his simple seashore subjects, just a vast expanse of sea, sky, and shore, with a boat on the water or a figure on the sand! That is our first impression, and only after careful study do we observe the skilful composition of beautiful forms and graceful lines, in the use of which he is a master, which rivets the attention on the different important features, so that the eye does not leave the picture, but moves from one accentuated point to another, usually in an irregular ever-returning and always interesting circle. The aerial perspective, with its subtle gradations of colour, the atmospheric sky, and the absolutely right tone and true values throughout, complete the effect the painter sought to produce. This perfect tone is a thing to be noted in his work, for in it Weissenbruch excels, and his eye never fails him.

"Il est bien rare que les grands hommes soient outrés dans leur ouvrages." Journal de Eugène Delacroix.

If a picture be not a mere copy of nature, but a creation of the mind of the artist, it follows that as a work of art it must be care-

fully composed out of the materials supplied by nature. Composition is thus of primary importance to the artist and must be the foundation of the technical side of his painting. This subject is treated very fully and ably, and in very attractive style, in the book on Pictorial Composition already referred to, and to it we are indebted for the extract we give from Sir Joshua Reynolds. The author says that some of the impressionists of to-day seem to place little importance cn the matter, and he quotes one of them as follows: "Opposed to the miserable law of composition, symmetry, balance, arrangements of parts, filling up space, as though nature does not do that ten thousand times better, in her own pretty way"; and adds, "The assertion that composition is a part of nature's law, that it is done by her and well done, we are glad to hear in the same breath of invective that seeks to annihilate it." But Whistler sees farther and knows better than this impressionist, and writes in his incisive way: "The artist is bound to pick and choose and group with science the elements of his picture, that the result may be beautiful,

H. R. Poore, A. N. A.

"Ten O'Clock." Whistler.

as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he brings forth from chaos, glorious harmony. To say to the painter that nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano. That nature is always right is an assertion artistically as untrue as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. It might almost be said that nature is usually wrong, that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about the perfection of harmony worthy a picture is rare, and not common at all."

"Matthew Maris ridicules people who say that nature is everything. It is not in the visible, but in the heart and soul, that the source of power must be looked for." G. H. Marius in "Dutch Painters of the Nineteenth Century."

Anyone who had the pleasure of seeing the Whistler Exhibition in Boston, in 1904, must have been struck with the very fine composition displayed in his works. The greatest attention is paid to this and to maintaining the interest of the observer, which is not allowed to wander out of the canvas, but is held and attracted by the varied points of interest chosen and emphasized by the artist. He knows that "anything" will not make a picture. Science must be there, but must not obtrude itself. "The picture which looks most like nature to the uninitiated will probably show the most atten-

Plate XLII. — A Bend of the Canal. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

tion to the rules of the artist." Turner is reported to have said that nature gave him a great deal of trouble in painting his pictures. "It must of necessity be," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "that even works of genius, as they must have their cause, must also have their rules. Unsubstantial as these may seem, and difficult as it may be to convey them in writing, they are still seen and felt in the mind of the artist, and he works from them with as much certainty as if they were embodied upon paper."

H. R. Poore, A. N. A.

The great artists in the past discovered or adopted instinctively, as the best for the composition of their pictures, certain forms based on the triangle, as an example in Raphael's Dresden "Madonna," the circle, in Corot's "Ville d'Avray," the cross, in Guido Reni's "Crucifixion," and the curved line, in Rubens's "Descent from the Cross." In looking over any collection of the great pictures of the world, it is evident that these fundamental forms, with variations, appealed to the artistic sense of the painters, or were found out by them, for they are used in their greatest works, and their use continues to the present day.

Ibid.

Following his illustrious predecessors, we find from an examination of his paintings that Weissenbruch had a very sensitive feeling for beauty in his pictures and gave careful attention to the recognized rules of composition.

Hardly ever does he make a mistake about it. He sees instinctively beauty of line, form, colour, and subject, and this gives the feeling of poetry in his pictures. Yet so natural do his paintings seem, so unconscious of effort do they appear, that the observer remains wondering to the end whether after all the artist has not simply seen and felt it all beautiful and true, just as he shows it to us, without troubling himself about rules of art! Certainly his pictures show that Weissenbruch was a master in concealing in his work the art knowledge he undoubtedly had. And so far did he generalize the facts of experience, and leave out the non-essential elements of the scene, that he became one of the best modern examples of carrying out to an extreme degree the principles of generalization, simplicity, and perfect tone quality mentioned in Chapter V. And

consequently his pictures have a very great freedom from any suggestion of artificiality, which is very restful.

To remove so nearly completely all the appearance of art from painting, which is all art; to leave the effect of nature on the mind in its simplicity, so that we are led to think of what the artist wished us to consider, and to see, as he saw it, the essence of the beauty of the scene before him, and nothing of the labour and skill that were necessary to produce this result until we commence to analyse the picture to find out the means by which the end was reached; to do this is indeed a triumph. And to secure this result it needed the knowledge and experience of a lifetime. But great as is the ability of Weissenbruch, it is not this alone that compels our admiration, but the fact that his art is all dominated by his own personality, that he lives and speaks through his works.

"For of the soul the body form doth take, For soul is form, and doth the body make." "Hymn in Honour of Beauty." Spenser.

We have pleasure in being able to give the following fine appreciation of Weissenbruch and his work by E. F. B. Johnston, K. C., of Toronto:

"The gay side never shows itself to me. I don't know where it is. The gayest thing I know is the calm, the silence which is so sweet, either in the forest, or the cultivated land. You will admit that it is always very dreamy, and a sad dream, though often very delicious." J. F. Millet, in his Life by Alfred Sensier.

"Nature always has impressed on its face the feeling of loneliness. There is nothing so expressive of solitude as the clear, sunny, summer day. The stretch of fields bathed in sunlight; the woods casting their deep shadows ending in mystery; the peaceful blue sky above, with here and there a fleecy cloud, orphaned and alone, in the deep expanse: all these things appeal to the quiet and sympathetic side of our nature, and find a congenial resting-place in our most reflective moods. Then come the grey days and ashen skies, the big driving masses of cloud, and the gloom of approaching night. Even winter, with all its glittering whiteness, is as solemn in its grandeur as the stillness of the dark woods at midnight. These phases of nature impress us with solitary and lonely sentiments, because they are vast and almost infinite in their majesty and power, and man's physical and spiritual being becomes insignificant in their presence. To portray this feeling was Weissenbruch's mission. The solitary foot-traveller by the edge of the canal as evening approaches, the envelopment of all things in the mantle of shadow or sunshine,

the lonely tree standing out against the great background of land and sky, the boat on the mysterious and never-ending sea; these were his favourite subjects, and excited his deepest sympathy. All such scenes as these are big and simple, and the great characteristics of his works are space and simplicity. He faithfully portrayed the moods of nature, not her physical beauties or topographical character. A bit of water, land, or sky was to him as important, as beautiful, and as expressive of nature's moods as the most perfect composition. A few reeds and a glimpse of a canal made a picture; a simple meadow with a few cattle was, in his hands, a poem; a windmill and a lonely farmhouse became a passage of dreamland. He looked not for subject alone, but sought out the temperament and sympathy of his theme, and gave expression to these things with an unerring regard to technique, colour, and composition. As a painter he was real and absolutely true to nature, but his reality is that of pathos and feeling, his truth that of the heart and mind. Beyond all the artists of the last fifty years, he is the

real as well as the spiritual exponent of the beautiful, the true, and the sympathetic. His finest works are the trusted companions of our solitude, and never fail to join in the harmony of the thoughts that seek to be alone. They speak, but it is in language that perhaps few hear and fewer of us fully understand or appreciate. And as we go back to our boyhood dreams and aspirations, and the 'long, long thoughts of youth,' so we turn to our friends given to us by Weissenbruch, and cling to them when the works of men even greater than he in the eyes of the world's critics grow cold and lifeless."

"This is the way the pictures of Weissenbruch appeal to those who appreciate their beauty and tenderness of feeling. And in this sense, perhaps, no man ever attained the rank of Weissenbruch as a purely landscape painter. He quickens our sense of beauty and our highest perception of truth by his great and simple loneliness, and draws us into harmony with the fitful moods of nature's ever-varying temperament. There is no false pretence, no jarring note in his work or its

Plate XLIII. — Nieuwkoop. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

methods. The power of his pictures lies in the fact that they create in our minds sympathy with their moods and a fellow-feeling in their company. They touch some chord that lies hidden, and which answers only to the mysterious call of a power greater than itself, and yet in unison with it. Thus must Weissenbruch, as time goes on, appeal to and reach an ever-widening circle that is bounded only by the limits of thought and human joy and sadness."

Of all purely landscape painters, Weissenbruch is the most typically Dutch in his art. He never strays afield or wanders to other lands for subjects. For him it is not necessary. For round about Haarlem, the Hague, or Noorden, on the sandy shore of Scheveningen or on the flats of Zeeland, he finds material for a lifetime; warm, sunny skies, storm and rain, the great solemn sea, and the ever-changing, soft, vaporous atmosphere. These big things are the scenes he loves to paint, and here his art is at home. No one since Constable lived has painted moving skies, with clouds and storm effects, like the Dutch artists

"The best pictures are rude draughts of a few of the miraculous dots and lines and dyes, which make up the ever-changing 'landscape with figures' amidst which we dwell." "Essay on Art." Emerson.

James Maris and Weissenbruch, the former the more vigorous and robust, the latter the more tender in treatment. Weissenbruch once said: "Only let me get the sky and clouds right in my pictures, and the rest is easy. Atmosphere and light are the great sorcerers. All we want comes from above. We cannot work too hard to get the atmosphere. This is the secret of a good picture." And if one thing were selected as Weisssenbruch's special achievement in art it would be his wonderful painting of sky, sea, and land, so as to produce the effect of free, open, air-filled space. In this he seems already to be the painter of the future.

It may seem a bold thing to say to-day that Weissenbruch is one of the most original and one of the greatest purely landscape artists that Holland has ever produced. It might be easier seen to be true, however, if we could close our eyes to the glamour thrown over the past by time, if we could get away from the authority of tradition, and if we could forget the commercial value of things for a while. It is very difficult to do this, often impossible,

as the history of art has repeatedly shown in the past.

"So far as I know," wrote W. J. Stillman, "the best result of practical knowledge of art, applied to the elucidation of the principles of criticism, is in the works of Mr. Hamerton." Yet the difficulty of considering with open and unbiased mind the art that is near us is very clearly shown in Hamerton's case. With all his study of art, and practical experience of landscape painting, and generally right views, he still seemed unable to judge correctly about work that had little in common with his own careful studies of nature, and that he was not in sympathy with. Knowing that the popular thought about anything new and original in contemporary art is so nearly invariably wrong, we cannot help wondering how Hamerton could write that he had "the happiness to be quite of the popular way of thinking, when he heard people laugh at the 'Woman in White.'" Whistler pillories him in one of the most remarkable replies ever made to hostile criticism. He decides to say absolutely nothing in his own defence, but to

"Essay on The Decay of Art."

"The Gentle Art of Making Enemies." Whistler.

let the critic answer himself, and the public gather the inference that if he is right in the one case, he is also right in the others; so he republishes the remarks, and in silent sarcasm appends the following extracts from Hamerton's articles in the *Fine Arts Quaterly:*

"Corot is one of the most celebrated landscape artists in France. The first impression of an Englishman on looking at his works is that they are the sketches of an amateur; it is difficult at first sight to consider them the serious performances of an artist. I understand Corot now, and think his reputation, if not well deserved, at least easily accounted for."

"If landscape can be satisfactorily painted without either drawing or colour, Daubigny is the man to do it."

"The truth is that Edouard Frere, the Bonheurs, and many others are to the full as realistic as Courbet, but they produce beautiful pictures. It is difficult to speak of Courbet without losing patience."

On the dicta of the leaders of the classical school in France,* their countrymen rejected

"Modern Painters." Preface to Second Edition. John Ruskin.

* "He therefore who would maintain the cause of contemporary excellence against that of elder time must have almost every class of men arrayed against him."

"It should always be remembered that any given generation has just the same chance of producing some individual mind of first rate calibre, as any of its predecessors; and that if such a mind should arise, the chances are that with the assistance of experience and example, it would in its particular and chosen path do greater things than had been before done."

"In pure perfection of technique, colouring, and composition

PLATE XLIV. — Early Morning in Holland. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

Delacroix, Millet, Corot, and Manet. Constable met with similar lack of appreciation in England, and a painting of Whistler's was hissed when exhibited in London. In every age there are the same kind of people claiming authority in art matters, who are on the side of tradition and a past phase of art. Time alone is the true arbiter, and the final opinion of the public will be right.

"The men who dare admire things in advance of the rest of the world are not common." J. F. Millet. Sensier's Life.

In comparing a painter of to-day with artists of other times, it must be remembered that in many ways the art of painting improves as each generation passes. It is not a lost art, like the manufacture of Limoges enamel, or the stained glass of the Middle Ages, or the coloured porcelain of China. On the contrary, each new school has given its quota of knowledge and discovery. Constable, Turner, Corot, and Manet have added to the living ideas of the world. In a recent lecture, George

"He has conceived meanly of the resources of man, who believes that the best age of production is past." "Essay on Art." Emerson.

the art that has already been achieved may be imitated, but never surpassed. Modern Art must strike out from the old and assert its individual right to live. The new is not revealed to those whose eyes are fastened in worship upon the old. The artist of to-day must work with his face turned toward the dawn, steadfastly believing that his dream will come true before the setting of the sun."

"Paragraphs from the Studio of a Recluse." Albert P. Ryder, A. N. A.

Clausen, A. R. A., said: "Turner was the first to paint colour in the shadows as well as in the light"; and "though from some of the work of the modern impressionists we might turn with more respect to the older painters, still something has been gained, and we could not go back again to brown shadows and degraded tones." And Mr. Poore writes: "Masterful composition of many figures has never been surpassed in certain examples of the old masters; but in the case of portrait composition of two figures, it is worthy of note how far beyond the older are the later masters; or in the grouping of landscape elements, or in the arrangement of figures or animals in landscape, how a finer sense in such arrangement has come to art." So it gradually comes about that the equipment and knowledge of the modern artist are greater than ever before.

"Pictorial Composition."

Granting that each be possessed of the true artistic temperament, a great artist of to-day should be able to express the thoughts that inspire him more fully and completely than one of two centuries ago. And we may truly say that men of genius *have* appeared in recent

"We have then but to wait until, with the mark of the gods upon him, there come among us again the chosen, who shall continue what has gone before." "Ten O'Clock." Whistler.

times, and that no such landscape work as that of Anton Mauve, James Maris, J. H. Weissenbruch, and William Maris has ever before been seen in Holland. They all paint the homely country scenery and the people engaged in their ordinary occupations, and wonderfully beautiful works are produced from these simple materials. Everything in their pictures is seen to be surrounded with atmosphere and to dwell in space, and their constant aim is to translate the sunshine, striking in brilliant light on trees or cattle, or diffused over the whole landscape. Their art is intensely modern, original, and racy of the soil; strong, broad, vigorous, suggestive, and full of deep feeling, and it has the power of enabling others to feel the spirit that moved the artist. Mauve, James Maris, and William Maris introduce the human element largely into their pictures, and cattle and animals, as they appear in the daily life of the peasant, are prominent objects of interest in their works. But Weissenbruch, whose aim, in his later works, is to give that large feeling of wind-blown or calm and quiet air-containing space which enfolds

"All great painters have been great only in their rendering of what they have seen and felt from early childhood. No man ever painted well anything but what he has early and long felt, and early and long loved." "Modern Painters." Vol. I. Page 121. Ruskin.

"Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." "Tintern Abbey." Wordsworth.

everything, depends almost entirely upon the simple seashore or country scene he is painting to produce the effect he desires and is so successful in obtaining, and in pure landscape he has carried the art to its latest expression.

"The Renaissance."

Writing about the Renaissance, Walter Pater says: "There are a few great painters, like Michelangelo or Leonardo, whose work has become a force in general culture, partly for this very reason, that they have absorbed into themselves all lesser workmen. But besides these there is a number of artists who have a distinct faculty of their own, by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere. These, too, must be interpreted by those who have felt their charms." Those who get a peculiar quality of pleasure from Weissenbruch would fain interpret his charm. Surely we have in him one of those rare subjective painters of whom we have been speaking, fully equipped technically; one whose emotions are keenly excited by the beauties of nature, and whose sensitive and poetic temperament enables him to communicate to us the feelings and moods

"Nature always wears the colours of the Spirit." "Essay on Nature." Emerson.

that possessed him; one who seeks for sympathetic appreciation and understanding. For there is a loneliness, a mystery and poetry about his work, a personal element of sympathy with nature and a knowledge of all her moods, that creates a bond of union with him. He was a child of nature, and this kindly mother taught him her own truth and simplicity, and made him one of her intimates.

> "To him who in the love of nature holds
> Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
> A various language."

"Thanatopsis." Bryant.

Such communings had he, and various and beautiful is the language he uses. It may not be given to every one to see this. The words of the poet are true, "L'amour seul voit avec des yeux." But those that fall under his influence, especially those who live with his pictures, and feel the intense solitude and silence they depict, the vastness of nature, the littleness of humanity, and the weary labours of man, become devoted followers and grow very fond of the artist and his work. They realize that a poet-painter of gentle soul and lofty ideal dwelt here a while, and, after

a long and happy life, with his knowledge and capacity growing to the end, passed away with eye undimmed and power unabated. They feel that his work will live, his fame increase, and his name take rank among the masters.

> "Loftily lying — leave him,
> Still loftier than the world suspects."

PLATE XLV. — Nearly Home. *J. H. Weissenbruch.*

# APPENDIX

The opinions expressed by John Ruskin on various artists, referred to in Chapter III:

"Now it is evident that in Rembrandt's system the colours are all wrong from beginning to end."

"Modern Painters." Vol. IV. Page 42.

"Vulgarity, dulness, or impiety will indeed always express themselves through art in brown and gray, as in Rembrandt."

Vol. III. Page 263.

"There appears no exertion of mind in any of his (Ruysdael's) works. They are good furniture pictures, unworthy of praise, and undeserving of blame."

Vol. I. Page 340.

"One work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life."

Vol. I. Page 348.

"The collectors of Gerard Dows and Hobbemas may be passed by with a smile."

Vol. III. Page 19.

"I was compelled to do harsh justice upon him, because Mr. Leslie has suffered his personal regard for Constable so far to prevail, as to bring him forward as a great artist, compar-

Vol. III. Page 343. Appendix.

able in some kind with Turner. As Constable's reputation was, even before this, most mischievous in giving countenance to the blotting and blundering of modernism, I saw myself obliged, though unwillingly, to carry the suggested comparison thoroughly out."

Vol. I. Page 382.

"Let us refresh ourselves for a moment by looking at the truth. We need not go to Turner, we will go to the man who, next to him, is unquestionably the greatest master of foliage in Europe, J. D. Harding."

"Art of England." 1884. Page 220.

"You may paint a modern French emotional landscape with a pail of whitewash and a pot of gas-tar in ten minutes at the outside. The skill of a good plasterer is really all that is required — the rather that in the modern idea of solemn symmetry you always make the bottom of your picture, as much as you can, like the top. You put some seven or eight strokes of plaster for your sky, to begin with, then you put in a row of bushes with the gas-tar; you put three or more streaks of white to intimate the presence of a pool of water — and if you finish off with a log . . . your picture will lead the talk of the town."

"Whose writing is Art, whose Art is unworthy his writing." Whistler.

## FROM THE ESSAY ON "THE DECAY OF ART," IN "THE OLD ROME AND THE NEW." BY W. J. STILLMAN.

There are two distinct forms of so-called art, of which the elder and true form, the subjective, is an art of expression, whereof the vital quality is that it shall convey, not the facts and actual phenomena which constitute the anatomy of nature, but the emotions and impressions of the artist, in which all the visible forms are but the symbols of language in which the artist, without any restriction of realistic fidelity, shall show forth what he considers artistic truth or ideal beauty in any of its related forms of positive or negative. The other form, objective or realistic art, which is entirely the development of the naturalistic spirit, depends, for its relative value and standing, upon the fidelity which it shows to natural phenomena; it is the art, if it be art, of facts and physics, of the anatomist, the geologist, the botanist, and the portraitist. The former of these has fallen into decay,

but *en passant* I will call attention to the fact which explains itself, that the noblest technique has arisen in the art of expression, and that, for certain forms of it, we have to seek the highest in antique or renaissance art. The supreme artist is the idealist, and the imitator of nature is the artist only in a lower and secondary sense. The distinction is radical, and extreme illustrations will be found in J. F. Millet and Meissonier, the former the most subtle and masterly example of the pure Greek method of approaching art, the latter the extreme manifestation of the purely modern spirit, realism reduced to its last expression. That element in art which makes it such is not its fidelity to nature but its personality, the way in which the artist arranges, subordinates, harmonizes the material which he borrows or invents; in the majesty or sweetness of his composition, the harmony and pathos or splendour of his colour; all those things which in poetry, in music, give rank as poet or musician. The law is the same in all the arts; it is always the subjective element which determines the place of the artist. Art

is simply the harmonic expression of human emotion. Where there is no emotion there is no art, except in that secondary sense which relates to the primary as the letter to the spirit. All the great schools of painting and sculpture have been purely subjective in their origin and development. The moment the subjective method which was its life gave way to the objective or scientific method, the art began to go down. The moment of completest triumph, in which art seemed to have added to its proper charm that of the realistic fidelity which wins the universal applause, was that in which decline began. This was the epoch of Praxiteles and Scopas, of Titian and Raphael; and when, finally, at Bologna, the academy model took the place of the ideal, there was no longer any hope of any school of art. The reason for this it is not difficult to state. The genuine creative or ideal art is only possible where there is full liberty to embody distinct conceptions which are creations; and here the mental conception must be so clear in the mind of the artist that it serves the mental vision as the type of which

the work of art is the visible embodiment. But when constant and concurrent reference to the model is kept up this is not possible, and the slightest indication of the model shown in design is immediately destructive of this supreme quality of art. There can be no doubt that the Greek sculptors never worked directly from nature. We know the same to be true of Michael Angelo, and in all the work of the great painters of the Italian schools we find unmistakable indications that they did not work before nature. Not only is this the immutable law of all great art, but I maintain that the scientific study of nature, whether as anatomy, geology, or botany, is obnoxious in a high degree to the development of the great qualities of design. Beauty is purely a visible and therefore superficial quality. The Greeks had no knowledge of anatomy, or of the use of the muscular system. Down to the last of the great schools, that of Rembrandt, Teniers, and Rubens, the deference to nature, except in portraiture, never went further than to make sketches from nature in which the essential qualities

only were recorded, using nature as a vehicle for their ideals of composition and colour. Turner, who attained the highest expression of subjective art of his time, possibly of all time, was in no period of his career a student of nature in the modern acceptation of that term. Then the art died, as the Greek and Italian schools had died, from a method of study initiated by portraiture, and the sudden recognition of an interest in nature never felt before by the general mind. When the modern landscape and genre painter brought into painting a clear unconventional way of seeing nature, and uncompromising fidelity in rendering facts requiring neither knowledge of, nor feeling for, art in its public, or poetic insight in its painter, it brought into existence what is commonly supposed to be a rational art, but which is, in reality, the negation of art. That the inspiration, however, is not extinct we see in Delacroix, J. F. Millet, Watts, Burne Jones, and Rossetti. To know nature and employ her terms for the expression of the artist's ideal is a widely different thing from the imitation of her forms and facts. The former

is an education; it awakens a kinship to all great thought, and all great thinkers: the latter narrows and dwarfs the intellect and exterminates the imagination.

FROM THE ESSAY ON "LANDSCAPE," IN "ESSAYS SPECULATIVE AND SUGGESTIVE." BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

It is an error to suppose that the ancients were insensible to the charm and beauty of external nature. The Greek way of regarding nature differed widely from ours, and encouraged a different order of artistic symbolism. In their religion they deified the powers of the universe under concrete forms of human personality. When they gazed upon sky, earth, and sea, the image of an idealized man or woman intervened between their imaginative reason and the natural object, Pan, Fauns, Tritons, Naiads, etc. Haunted by such conceptions, the poet and the artist could not look on nature as we do. The Latin religion remained more abstract in its character, more rigid and utilitarian, less poetical and picturesque. Their gods and goddesses intervened with no legendary charm of human fate and passion between the Latin mind and landscape. Accordingly we find

in the Latin poets a feeling akin to our own, when they came close to nature in her solitudes. The deep and solemn passion of Lucretius, the pathos of Virgil, their common love for the Saturnian earth, their sense of things and thoughts too deep for tears, sounded in Latin poetry a note we do not hear among the Hellenes. There is in their verse the mystery, the awe, the feeling after an indwelling deity, the communion with nature as nature, which we are accustomed to call modern. In the decline of the Latin and Greek languages, we find scenery being treated with some degree of appreciation, and nature is used as a background to humanity. This nascent feeling for landscape had no opportunity of attaining to independence during the first eight centuries which succeeded to the downfall of the Empire. Christianity introduced a vehemently hostile spirit, which in its reactionary fervour opposed God to nature. Man's one business was to work out his salvation, and to wean his heart from the enjoyment of terrestrial delights. Beauty came to be regarded as a snare. Literature and the

plastic arts decayed. Architecture, the most abstract and utilitarian of the fine arts, bridged over the long tract of æsthetical vacuity between the death of Claudian and the rebirth of poetry in Provence. Renan observes that the most important product of the Middle Ages was a sentiment of the infinite. Everything had been swept away except the self-conscious spirit of man and the transcendent reality of God, the earth on which man dwelt, and the heavens to cover it over with a canopy. Infinity and fact, both shadowy, unreal, and unimaginable. What would happen should theology relax her grasp upon the intellect, and men once more begin to gaze around with curious delight on their terrestrial dwelling-place? But an intermediate stage of long duration had to be traversed. To this we give the name of Renaissance. In it the intellect of man came painfully and gladly to new life through the discovery of itself and nature, until, with Dante, a new spirit is awake in the world. It was not until the seventeenth century that landscape attained to independence. Five great painters initialled this new

departure in the arts, Rubens, Claude, the two Poussins, and Salvator Rosa. Before their appearance landscape painting had here and there been practised with great ability and sense of beauty on both sides of the Alps, by Van Eyck, Durer, Titian, Giorgione, Tintoretto, Raphael, and da Vinci. But it had not occurred to masters of the sixteenth century that landscape might be treated as an object in itself. The importance of these five artists is that they emancipated landscape from its traditional dependence upon human motives, and proved that nature in herself is worthy of our sympathy and admiration. However critics may be inclined to estimate the value of their work, this at least is incontestable. The relation between the human motive and the landscape is reversed. The figures are carelessly sketched in. Man takes his position as a portion of the world, not as the being for whom the earth and heavens were created. Contemporaneous in date, or somewhat later than these men, the Dutch contributed even more to the emancipation of art. They frankly ignored the old tradition

of historical motives in landscape. The aspects of the earth and sea and sky, the common occupations of mankind upon the fields or in their dwellings, proved for them sufficient sources of inspiration. Dutch painting filled the seventeenth and a portion of the eighteenth century with powerful production. It delivered art from the pedantry of humanism, and anticipated the European revolt against classical canons of perfection. Still, the first essentially modern enthusiasm for nature came with the English Norfolk school which culminated in Turner. Now, in the work of the landscape painters, spirit still speaks to spirit; the spirit of the artist who perceives, interprets, and preserves the beauty of earth, sea, and sky, to the spirit of men ready to receive it. What we owe to these hierophants of nature is incalculable. They are continually training our eyes to see, our minds to understand the world. They show how sympathy, emotion, passion, thought, may be associated with inanimate things — for a masterpiece of landscape painting, like a symphony in music, is penetrated with the maker's thought

and feeling. Having passed through the artist's intellect, the scene becomes transfigured into a symbol of what the artist felt. His subjectivity inheres in it for ever after.

## FROM THE ESSAY ON "REALISM AND IDEALISM," IN "ESSAYS SPECULATIVE AND SUGGESTIVE." BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS.

Is there any solid foundation for the current conception of the antithesis between the Ideal and Real? Is there at bottom any antagonism between the two terms? Realism dare not separate itself from the ideal, because the ideal is a permanent factor, and the most important factor, in the reality of life. Realism forms the substratum and indispensable condition of all figurative art, sculpture, and painting. The very name figurative indicates that these arts proceed by imitation of external objects, and mainly by imitation of the human form. Now it would be absurd to contend that imitation is the worse for being veracious, for being in the right sense realistic. Nobody wants a portrait which is not like the person represented. We may want something else besides, but we demand resemblance as an indispensable quality. The figurative arts, by the law which makes them imitate, are bound at every

step of their progress to be realistic. The painter must depict each object with painstaking attention to its details. This is the beginning of his task. But he very soon discovers that he cannot imitate things exactly as they are in fact. The reason of this is that the eye and the hand of the sculptor or painter are not a photographic camera. They have neither the qualities nor the defects of a machine. In every imitative effort worthy of the name of art, the human mind has intervened; what is more, this mind has been the mind of an individual with specific aptitudes for observation, with specific predilections, with certain ways of thinking, seeing, feeling, and selecting, peculiar to himself. No two men see the same woman or the same tree. Our impressions and perceptions are necessarily coloured by those qualities which make us percipient and impressible, individualities, differing each from his neighbour in a thousand minute particulars. It is precisely at this point, at the very earliest attempt to imitate, that idealism enters simultaneously with realism into the arts. The simplest as

well as the most complex work contains this element of ideality. For when a man reproduces in art what he sees in nature, he inevitably imports himself into the product. Strive as he will to keep himself out of the imitation, the man is powerless to do so. The thing imitated has of necessity become the thing imagined. Twenty photographic cameras of equal dimensions and equal excellence will produce almost identical representations of a single model. But set twenty artists of equal skill in draughtsmanship to make studies from one model, and though the imitation may in each case be equally faithful, there will be a different intellectual quality, a different appeal to sympathy, a different order of suggestion in each of the twenty drawings. In other words, each of the twenty drawings represents the thing perceived and conceived differently. Some specific ideality has formed an unavoidable feature of each artist's work, while all have aimed at merely reproducing the objects before them. This is perhaps the simplest way of presenting the truth that realism and idealism are as inseparable as

body and soul in every product of the figurative arts.

In art it is not a machine but a mind which imitates. No draughtsman can rival the camera in bare accuracy, but every draughtsman is bound to do what the camera cannot do, by introducing a subjective quality into the reproduction. Artistic beauty is mainly a matter of selection, due to the exercise of those free mental faculties which the machine lacks. The artist observes defects in the single model; he notices in many models scattered excellences, he has before him the most perfect forms invented by his predecessors. To correct those defects, to reunite those excellences, to apply the principles of those perfected types, becomes his aim. He cannot rival nature by producing something exactly like her work, but he can create something which shall show what nature strives after.

> "That type of perfect in his mind
> Can he in nature nowhere find."

The figurative arts are thus led to what is after all their highest function, the presenta-

tion of thought and feeling in beautiful form. Such idealism is only realism in the intensest phase of veracity. The Greek sculptors are our surest teachers. They had to create images of gods and heroes, each representing in perfection some one psychological attribute of human nature. For these spiritual essences they were bound to find fit incarnation through the means available by art. The solution of this problem forced them to idealize, while their exquisite sense for the beauty, grace, and dignity of the living model kept them realistically faithful to facts in nature. We cannot, however, always expect that perfect synthesis which makes the works of Pheidias exemplary.

# INDEX


Alma Tadema, L., 116.
Amiel, 61.
"Ancient Mariner, The," 87, 88.
"Arden, Enoch," 83.
Arnold, M., 102, 103, 104, 162, 179.
"Art for Art's Sake," xvii.
"Art of England, The," 185, 206.
Artificiality, Freedom from, 118, 120, 191.
"As you like it," 90.
Augustan Age, 4.

Beethoven, Van L., 161.
"Bell Peter," 89.
Bellini, G., 9.
Blommers, B. J., 124.
Bock de, Th., 30, 125, 147.
Bosboom, J., 29, 30, 33, 110, 114, 121, 126, 127 to 134, 135, 136, 183.
"Braes of Yarrow, The," 99.
Breton, Jules, 80.
Broadway Magazine, The, 56, 57.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 87.
Browning, R., 144.
Bryant, W. C., 203.
Brymner, W., 58, 60.
Burne Jones, E., 211.
Burns, R., 98, 99.
Byron, Lord, 91, 184.

Carlyle, T., 48.
Catalogue, Edinburgh Exhibition, 112, 113.
Catalogue, Whitechapel Exhibition, 31, 172.
Caxton, W., 26.
Chatham, Earl of, 26.
Cimabue, G., 7, 26.
Claude le Lorrain, 12, 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, 151, 216.
Claudian, 215.
Clausen, G., 200.
Coleridge, S. T., 87, 102, 161.
Columbus, 26.
"Considerations on Painting," 39, 184.
Constable, J., x, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 31, 32, 44, 111 to 114, 120, 137, 195, 199, 205, 206.
Constantine, 5.
Corot, J. B. C., x, 16, 21, 22, 27, 32, 70, 80, 125, 137, 176, 182, 185, 189, 198, 199.
Courbet, G., 198.
Cowper, W., 85, 86.
Cuyp, A., 17.

"Daffodils, To," 96.
"Damozel, The Blessed," 99.
Dane, Barry, xv, xvii.
Dante, 7, 215.
Dark Ages, The, 4, 5, 6.
Daubigny, C. F., x, 21, 27, 70, 78, 198.
"Decay of Art, The" (Stillman), 61, 197, 207.
Degas, H. G. E., 22, 78.
"Dejection, Ode on," 87, 102, 103.
Delacroix, E., 20, 27, 36, 50, 67, 186, 199, 211.
Delacroix, E., Journal of, 20 50, 186.
Desdemona, 65.
"Dirge," 101.
"Dover Beach," 104.
Dow, Gerard, 205.
"Dream, The Poet's," 107.
Duccio, 7.
Dullea, Owen J., 16.
Durand, John, 24, 49.
Durer, A., 9, 26, 216.
"Durward, Quentin," 92.

Dutch Artists, Modern, xiv, xv, 27, 29, 30 to 34, 109 to 126, 151, 201.
"Dutch Artists of the Nineteenth Century," 133, 139, 163, 182, 188.

"Edinburgh Review," 68.
"Elegy in a Country Churchyard," 83.
Emerson, R. W., 1, 59, 72, 75, 101, 179, 184, 185, 195, 199, 202.
"Essay on Art" (Emerson), 72, 75, 184, 185, 195, 199.
"Essay on Beauty" (Emerson), 59.
"Essay on Nature" (Emerson), 202.
"Essay on John Ruskin" (Stillman), 60.
"Essays Classical" (Myers), 3.
"Essays Speculative and Suggestive" (Symonds), 213, 219.
Essen, Van, Jan, 124.
"Evening Post," 48.
Eyck, Van, Hubert, 8, 118, 216.
Eyck, Van, Jan, 8, 118, 216.

Forbes, J. S., 139.
Frère, E., 198.
Fromentin, E., 36, 39, 52 to 55, 79, 151.

Gabriel, P. J. C., 125.
Gainsborough, T., 26.
Generalization in Painting, 112, 118, 190.
"Gentle Art of Making Enemies, The," 51, 197.
Gericault, 20.
Giorgione, 9, 216.
Giotto, 7, 8.
Gray, Thomas, 83.
Gunsaulus, Dr. F. W., 88, 168.

Haden, Seymour F., 168.
Hals, Franz, 26.
Hamerton, P. G., 1, 2, 33, 37, 38, 41, 42, 60, 197, 198.
Hamlet, 67.
Harding, J. D., 206.
Hawthorne, N., 42.
Henley, W. E., 112, 113.
Hensbroek, Van, P. A. M. B., 133.
Herrick, R., 90, 96.
Hobbema, x, 17, 44, 205.
Holbein, 26, 118.
Hooghe de Pieter, 128.
Hove, Van, 29, 183.
Hunt, Leigh, 62.
"Hymn in Honour of Beauty," 191.

Ideal in Painting, The, ix, x, xiii, xiv, 16, 21, 36, 47, 49, 54 to 59, 64, 68, 69, 72, 74, 77, 79, 132, 140, 150, 159, 166, 172, 207 to 209, 220, 221.
"Imagination and Fancy" (Leigh Hunt), 62.
Impressionists, The French, 21.
Israels, Josef, 30, 33, 110, 114, 122, 124, 126, 131, 135 to 145, 156.
"Isles of Greece, The," 91.

"Job," 106.
Johnston, E. F. B., 191 to 195.
"Juan, Don," 91, 184.
Jurres, J. H., 124.

Kever, J., 124.
Khang-hi, 27.
Khayyám, Omar, 145.
Koek-Koek, 29.
Kubla Khan, 150.

"Lady of Shalott, The," 84.
"Lady of the Lake, The," 82, 93.
La Farge, John, 39, 184.
"Landscape" (Hamerton), 1, 2, 37, 41, 42, 60.
"Landscape" (Symonds), 213 to 218.
Lang, Andrew, 105, 106.
Leslie, C. R., 205.

Literature in Art, 65, 66, 67, 68.
Loch Awe, 41, 60.
Loch Katrine, 82.
"Locksley Hall," 97.
Loffelt, A. C., 163.
Logan, J., 99.
Longfellow, H. W., 102.
Lucerne, 60.
Lucretius, 214.
Luther, Martin, 26.

Manet, E., 22, 65, 199.
Maris, James, 30, 33, 64, 70, 111, 113, 114, 121, 125, 126, 137, 146 to 154, 158, 165, 177, 178, 196, 201.
Maris, Matthew, 30, 110, 114, 126, 164 to 173, 188.
Maris, Simon, 124.
Maris, William, 30, 33, 70, 110, 114, 121, 126, 135, 147, 156, 158, 160, 161, 165, 174 to 181, 201.
Maris, Jr., William, 124.
Marius, G. H., 188.
"Marmion," 94.
"Massacre of Scio," 20.
Mastenbroek, Van, J. H., 124.
Mauve, Anton, 30, 33, 70, 80, 110, 114, 121, 126, 135, 137, 148, 152, 155 to 163, 185, 201.
Meester, de, J., 139.
Meissonier, J. L. E., 117, 208.
Memlinc, 9.
"Merchant of Venice, The," 90.
Mesdag, H. W., 124.
Mesdag, Museum, 130, 157.
Metropolitan Museum, 39, 73, 140.
Meulen ter, P., 124.
Michel, E., 13.
Michelangelo, 202, 210.
Millet, J. F., 21, 27, 32, 36, 55, 73, 156, 160, 168, 169, 184, 192, 199, 208, 211.
Millet, J. F., Sensier's Life of, 55, 192, 199.
Milton, John, 82, 90, 91.
"Modern Painters" (1888), 11, 16, 38, 43 to 48, 60, 198, 201, 205, 206.
Monet, C., 22, 176.
Monticelli, 78.
Morton, F. W., 138.
"Mountain Daisy, To a," 98, 99.
Mount Pilatus, 60.
Myers, F. W. H., 3.

Napoleon, 27.
Neuhuÿs, A., 124.

Offermans, Tony, 124.
"Old Masters of Belgium and Holland, The," 39, 52, 55, 151.
Ophelia, 67.
Os Van, 156.
Othello, 65.
"Old Rome and the New, The," 70, 72, 207.

"Palingenesis," 102.
Palmer, Samuel, 16.
"Paradise Lost," 82, 91.
Pater, Walter, 202.
"Peele Castle," 49.
Pericles, 25.
Perugino, 9.
Petrarch, 7.
Pheidias, 25, 223.
"Philosophy of Art, The" (Taine), 24, 49.
"Pictorial Composition" (Poore), 63, 187, 200.
Pictorial Subjects, 65 to 68.
Pieneman, 29.
Pinturicchio, 9.
Poore, H. R., 63, 187, 189, 200.
Poussin, Gaspard, 17, 216.
Poussin, Nicolas, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 36, 44, 216.
Praxiteles, 209.
"Princess, The," 98.
Pulchri Studio, 133.

Raphael, 9, 31, 43, 80, 118, 189, 209, 216.

Realism and Idealism, 35, 36, 47, 50, 72, 207 to 209, 219 to 223.
"Realism and Idealism" (Symonds), 219 to 223.
"Religio Medici," 87.
Rembrandt, 18, 24, 26, 30, 32, 44, 52, 55, 78, 80, 139, 168, 205, 210.
Renaissance, The Italian, 7, 8, 12, 202, 215.
"Renaissance in Italy" (Symonds), 8
Renan, E., 215.
Reni, Guido, 189.
Renoir, A., 22.
"Revival of Art, The" (Stillman), 70, 72.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 26, 44, 80, 187, 189.
"Rhodora, The," 179.
Rochussen, 29.
"Rokeby," 93.
Romney, G., 26.
Rosa, Salvator, 12, 17, 216.
Rossetti, D. G., 99, 100, 101, 211.
Rousseau, T., x, 10, 21, 27.
Rubens, P. P., 13, 52, 189, 210, 216.
Ruskin, T., 11, 16, 37, 38, 43 to 48, 51, 60, 66, 92, 95, 184, 185, 198, 201, 205, 206.
Ruysdael, Van, Jacob, x, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 44, 111, 205.
Ryder, A. P., 56, 199.

"Saul" (Browning), 144.
Schelfhout, 29, 183.
Scherrewitz, J., 124.
"Scholar Gypsy, The," 179.
School, Barbizon, The, 21, 27, 31, 113, 114, 120.
School, Norfolk, The, 217.
School of 1830, The, 21, 27, 31, 113, 114, 120.
Schotel, 29.
Scopas, 209.
Scott, Sir Walter, 82, 92, 93, 94, 95.
"Scythe Song," 105, 106.
"Seasons, The," 1.
Sensier, A., 55, 192, 199.
Shakespeare, 67, 90.
Shelley, P. B., 107.
Simplicity in Painting, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 129, 159, 190, 191.
Smissaert, F. A. E. L., 182.
Smith, Gerard W., 14.
"Sofa, The," 85.
"Song of Myself," 180.
"Sower, The," 73, 168, 169.
Spenser, E., 191.
Stanfield, Clarkson, 205.
Steelinck, W., 124.
Stillman, W. J., xv, 29, 60, 61, 70, 72, 197, 207 to 212.
Stroebel, 29.
Subjective Painting, ix, x, xiii, xiv, 16, 33, 35 to 80, 109, 118, 161, 191, 195, 207, 209, 217, 218.
Subjective Poetry, 81, 85, 87, 88, 90 to 108.
"Sunset Wings," 100.
Symonds, J. A., xv, 8, 39, 213, 219.

Taine, H., 24, 29.
Technical Skill, xiii, xiv, 72 to 78, 80, 116, 117, 187.
Teniers, D., 210.
Tenkate, H., 29.
Tennyson, Lord, 83, 84, 97, 98.
"Ten O'Clock," 23, 51, 68, 109, 187, 200.
"Thanatopsis," 203.
Tholen, W. B., 124.
Thomson, D. Croal, 176.
Thomson, James, 1.
"Thoughts about Art" (Hamerton), 33.
"Thyrsis," 104.
"Tintern Abbey," 88, 201.
Tintoretto, 9, 10, 11, 26, 216.
Titian, 9, 10, 11, 80, 118, 209, 216.
Troyon, C., 21, 27.

Turner, J. M. W., x, 10, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 32, 41, 45, 48, 60, 72, 80, 120, 137, 151, 189, 199, 200, 206, 211, 217.
Turner, J. M. W., Life of, 41.

"Valley of Cauteretz, In the," 97, 98.
Vasari, G., 58.
Velasquez, 17, 24, 80.
Vinci, da, Leonardo, 58, 202, 216.
Virgil, 3, 4, 214.

Water Colour Painting, Modern, 123.
Watson, W., 64, 105.
Watteau, A., 19, 78.
Watts, G. F., 211.
Weele, Van de, H. J., 124.
Weissenbruch, J. H., 30, 33, 70, 111, 114, 122, 126, 135, 148, 152, 178, 182 to 204.
Whistler, J. M., 23, 24, 25, 50, 51, 65, 66, 67, 78, 80, 109, 168, 187, 188, 197, 199, 200, 206.
Whitman, Walt, 180.
Wordsworth, W., 48, 49, 88, 89, 95, 201.
"World, The," 89.

"Ye Banks and Braes," 98.
"Youth of Man, The," 103.
"Youth of Nature, The," 162.

Zeuxes, 58.
Zola, Emile, 58.

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