

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

#### DISTRIBUTION OF THE ENGRAVINGS AND OUTLINES FOR 1849.

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

#### CRITICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE ARTICLES.

##### ALLSTON'S OUTLINES.

OUTLINES AND SKETCHES, BY WASHINGTON ALLSTON.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even in these imperfect sketches one may perceive an inkling of the subject. We have the separation south and north, and can fancy Zephor and Ithuriel, "severe in youthful beauty." And we may observe in the attitudes of these figures a swiftness of motion which would have made the parting like "flame." Observe the prompt alacrity expressed in the first figure: he seems to say "Go!" His position was a most hazardous one to draw, because it is so very near to common-place; a very little, and he, instead of angelic swiftness, would have exhibited only the military "stand-at-ease" air of a Round-head soldier at the dissolving of the Long Parliament. In all these figures and groups the drapery is peculiarly animated to heighten the effect of sudden motion. And with all this, and with a regard to beauty of form that renders the very contours of the groups pleasing to the eye, how simply and naturally is the movement of the figures and drapery given! The attitudes are those of "the unarmed youth of Heaven." (Milton intended "unarmed" to be three syllables,) and the drapery is boldly handled, and has a meaning: it is not thrown into such relations with the attitudes as it never could have fallen into; but it expresses the *previous motion*. Neither is it intended to be frittered into un- or rather *præter*—natural folds and wrinkles; it is so used that in the picture it could have been effectively massed.

A similar grand method in the employment of drapery characterizes the next drawing, the "*Sibyl*." Here also may be seen the artist's power in the management of form. The figure is feminine in the roundings of the muscles, but masculine in proportion, giving that sense of superior strength which is in accordance with our ideal of the prophetic character. How poetically chosen also is the attitude for the subject! She seems actually to see into the future. The face does not agree with our notion of a Sybil: we would have had one more dark and impassive, out of mortal sympathy. It has for us too much of the woman in it—of woman as ALLSTON saw and painted her, and as we see her in the next sketch.

The subject of this, "*Dido and Anna*," must have been more a favorite with the artist than the other. The description states that it is in umber only, but we believe it is in color—finished only as a study, however, and incomplete as to drawing. It shows the artist's familiarity with the style of the old Italians, and, at the same time, his originality and poetic force in the conception of forms expressive of delicate and tender emotion.

The next four plates are outlines of figures of angels, from his picture of "*Jacob's Dream*." This was purchased by the late Lord Egremont, a celebrated patron of the Fine Arts, in England, and is now at the seat of that family at Petworth Castle, in Cumberland. What we have remarked respecting the picturesqueness of the grouping and drapery in the figures of angels from "Gabriel setting the watch," will apply with equal force to these; yet these are in another style, expressing *lightness* and grace, but not swiftness. We have never seen any angels so *angelic* as these—none that come so near the christian idea. (For there are pagan angels.) They are not girls; nor are they quite young men: the idea of sex is taken out of them. They express all that we imagine of *angels*. They

seem to have no weight, and to move only in lines of grace. In character, they express all we can fancy of love, duty, perpetual youth.

"Trailing clouds of glory do they come  
From God, who is their home."

We have never seen any wings that seemed so serviceable, so naturally necessary to the figure as in these. And the manner in which they are used, both in single figures and in grouping, is most masterly. The central figure in Jacob's Dream, who is just alighting, with wings outspread, is a magnificent conception—original, bold, and true. With how little change it would have been intolerably stiff; as it is, what heavenly lightness! And (we know not if it were the artist's intention) how suggestive of that mysterious emblem, the centre of all our hopes, the cross on which the Saviour suffered—once the most cruel instrument of torture that the wickedness of man ever devised, now the symbol of his noblest faith.

But of all these angelic figures, there is, perhaps, none that surpasses the next after these, "*Uriel*." Certainly, Painting never came to the aid of Poetry more effectively than she did in giving to her pupil this conception. For the reader's convenience, we quote the lines from which the subject is taken:—

"He soon  
Saw within ken a glorious angel stand,  
The same whom John saw also in the sun:  
His back was turned, but not his brightness hid;  
Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar  
Circled his head, nor less his locks behind,  
Illustrious on his shoulders fledge with wings  
Lay waving round; on some great charge employed  
He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep."

"He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright  
Ere he drew nigh his radiant visage turn'd,  
Admonish'd by his ear, and straight was known  
The Archangel Uriel, one of the seven,  
Who, in God's presence, nearest to this throne,  
Stand ready at command, and ere his eyes  
'That run through all the Heavens, or down to earth,  
Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,  
O'er sea and land:"

"Which now for once beguill'd  
Uriel, though regent of the sun, and held  
The sharpest sighted spirit of all in Heaven."

We conceive the moment the artist has chosen to be that in which the Archangel first perceives the approach of Satan, in the disguise of a cherub; when "his radiant visage turn'd." The attitude is one not common or easy to draw; but how full of expression! It must require no less than the hypocrisy of the Devil to face such a look and air. Yet there is duty and reverence mingled with the loftiness and courage, and so much of generous nobleness, that we do not wonder he should have been deceived, though accounted the "sharpest sighted spirit of all in Heaven." The picture from which the drawing was made is, we believe, in England. It is remarkable for an invention of the artist, in producing a dazzling white light, by decomposing the spectrum, and painting the separate rays in narrow pointed lines; leaving the eye to recompose them in looking from a distance.

Equally remarkable for truth of conception, though in a widely different vein of fancy, is the next sketch, "*Heliodorus*," from the book of Maccabees, in the Apocrypha. Nothing can surpass the fiendishness of the horse: he literally "paws at him with his fore feet." He seems animated by a diabolical intelligence; and he shows in his ungracefulness an intensity of purpose that is absolutely appalling.

The next sketch, "*Fairies on the Seashore*," disappearing at sunrise, just indicates the artist's intention in the use of color.

The next, "*Titania's Court*," was his favorite, and he intended to finish it after he had completed his "*Belshazzar*." With his power of color, it would, no doubt, have been a great work. But we do not think his fairies so good as his angels. They are too *human*, have too much gentleness and affection, too little of the quaint and grotesque. They seem out of their element, dancing there by the fountain in the moonlight, and as if they would be more appropriate to a quiet parlor. Considered, however, as studies in the art of using form and grouping to convey an idea of delicate gracefulness, they display a wonderful command of the shapes of beauty, they are in "form and moving" most "express and admirable."

The "*Girl in Male Attire*" is the least interesting of the series, and hardly exhibits enough to justify its publication.

The "*Ship in a Squall*" is from a sketch in white chalk on dark canvas—a mode of drawing difficult to practice, as only the strongest lights are used, and, in a manner, the reverse of that in which they are usually employed, but capable, as this sketch shows, of the happiest effects. The motion of the waves is here particularly grand and true to the actual. They are coming towards us, and they have a broad, lazy, sprawling effect, which we recognize as original, and yet a copy of one of the commonest effects in nature.

A gentleman who was intimately connected with ALLSTON in his lifetime, and who has lately edited his Lectures on Painting and his Poems, has communicated a few particulars respecting these sketches, of which we have availed ourselves without a formal acknowledgment. His remark upon this sketch, however, may be quoted as the opinion of one competent to judge. He says:

"The ship in a thunderstorm he once finished, and I am probably the only person that ever saw it. Some bad varnish he had put on destroyed it. The engraving is *comme il faut*, but the original is the best *sea* I ever saw off the ocean."

Of the two remaining drawings, the "*Prodigal Son*" is a just conception of an uninteresting subject; and the "*Prometheus*" is rendered with a force that we can only characterize as sublime. Every muscle in this figure speaks of mortal agony. The choice of the attitude, requiring the whole to be foreshortened, the bare Caucasian desolation of the rock, the position in which the upturned face is obliged to be seen—everything, in short, in this sketch, speaks the work of a burning fancy—one that conceived with as much directness, intensity, and strength, as grace and elegance. Those who are apt to suppose the practice of art a mere amusement of delicate and fanciful minds, would do well to observe this unmistakable manly vigor. This sketch alone, had the artist never drawn another line, would have stamped him a great master of expression: he might have been said to have done for Prometheus what Prometheus did for his men of clay,—given him a vital spark, stolen from Heaven.

If ever an artist manifested his own character in his works, it was ALLSTON. As we turn through these beautiful and expressive groups, the memory of many years gone by rushes over us, and we seem to see him as he appeared in life. There was an indescribable charm in his

countenance and manners. He was himself picturesque. He carried in his aspect that suggestion of thoughtful beauty which colors all his works. To be with him was to be with Reynolds, Flaxman, and Coleridge, men of the past: one felt elevated by his very presence. Yet he was not a man studious to preserve a lofty dignity: his manners were not a disguise, but a natural garment that fitted his character as easily as his broad-skirted blue coat did his person. He was a true gentleman. No one who ever knew him can remember the chance that led to the acquaintance as other than one of the fortunate accidents of life; and the acquaintance with him, which his countrymen may now obtain through his works, will hereafter be so valued, that his name will never be forgotten.

G. W. P.

#### THE EXHIBITION OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY.

Is there any thing in these rooms that we have not seen before? Is there any new creation here? Is there any great thought, any beautiful idea, which had never before entered into our imaginations, but which now shines forth from these walls to be from henceforth a joy and a delight to us? Are there any fresh views of the grandeur of nature here, any earnest glances into the depths of human passion, any bright glimpses of celestial splendors—rare and soul-stirring sights which had been hidden from all the world until the eye of the artist seized them and his hand fastened them on the canvas in living color? These are the questions by which we must test the positive merits of this and every other public exhibition of works of art. We must shake off, not only the mean prejudices, but the equally mean partialities of the hour. We must forget last year's small failures and successes—look not at the men but at their works—take broader views, undergo comparisons more perilous to our self-conceit, and mount up from these lowlands into a higher and serenest atmosphere. What relation do these works sustain to all that have preceded them or that are being produced around them—to what positive rank are they entitled in the great category of Time? What story do they tell which has not been told before in more powerful and enduring language? Do they tell any story worth the hearing? These are the questions, we say, that should agitate us; and in solving them we should not fear to go back to Grecian and Mediæval days, or to bring our meagre canvases into the presence of the great masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

This standard is a high one; but ought public journalists, whose especial duty it is to watch the development of genius in this department, recommend one which is less elevated? This ordeal is severe; but we are acquainted with no other by which we may arrive at the true worth of what our artists are producing. In no country is art-criticism comprehensive enough in its aims. Everywhere are men satisfied with partial and superficial comparisons, but in America more frequently than elsewhere; because here unpleasant contrasts are not forced upon us. The masters of ancient art do not confront us at every step. Those great names are shadowy abstractions to us without the vivid reality they possess to students in galleries abroad. We are too remote from other countries

to feel the influence of those world-renowned living artists whose productions might stimulate our ambition or check our vanity. More important, therefore, is it here than in Europe that those who possess the public ear upon this subject should strive to keep the standard as high as possible—should endeavor to view every public exhibition, not in the light of the nineteenth century and of American taste alone, but with some reference to the highest results which Art is capable of producing, and has produced in past times, and among other nations.

If we regard the present collection of the National Academy from this point of observation, we shall find but little in it that is satisfactory. There is no painting here which will distinguish this year from its predecessors, or be remembered for twenty years to come. There are many works which amuse the eye by a pleasing combination of tints, or curious display of imitative skill; but we seek in vain for one which embodies in a style which is grand, and yet peculiar to its author, some great and universal truth. We will not ask for a pictorial expression of ideas, which have passed away from our every-day experiences and sympathies, the rapt piety of cloistered life, for instance, which Fra Angelico portrayed; or the power and splendor of the "Heavenly-host," in the illustration of which our own Allston incorporated the resources of his lofty imagination. We will be content with a still lower display of creative power. Is there any striking representation here of one of the controlling passions and ideas of our own time and country?—such pictures as those in which Vernet paints the military enthusiasm of the French, with a vivid energy as peculiar to himself as that sparkling gayety is to Beranger, when he sings the same thoughts in his ballads. We are unable to find such an one. We are unable to find on these walls any expression of the American courage which seeks at a day's notice a new home thousands of miles distant; of the American self-reliance which defies the wild beast and the savage, and plants a corn-field in the remote prairie; of the American generosity which gives land to the houseless exile, and bread to those who starve on the other side of the Ocean; of the chivalric respect for woman which adorns the rudest log-cabin beyond the mountains; of the sublime march of that broad column of civilized men which slowly advances year by year into the vast and silent regions of the West. There is no adequate record on the walls of the Academy of these great facts which mould our thoughts, which fill our hearts, which shape and control our every-day life.

We have stated in the above remarks, our opinion of the general character of this exhibition, regarded from a point of view upon which a public critic should seek to place himself, for some moments at least, before coming down to that lower station from which the survey is usually made. Our duty, as journalists of Art, requires that we also should examine the field from this less elevated post. If there be no displays here of poetic power, there may, nevertheless, be some advance in mechanical skill, and facts of this sort are highly important and interesting, and deserve especial mention at our hands. We will endeavor then to say a few words about the technical ability of our Artists, as illustrated by the present exhibition. There

are certain conspicuous truths to be noticed in this connection. One is the improvement of the younger men. This cannot fail to strike the most careless observer. While the elder artists are remaining stationary, these youthful competitors are advancing with unusual rapidity, and may already contest with their seniors the right of occupying the highest places in the roll. Another fact is the more decided development of talent in landscape and portraiture than in any other department. It is often said that these are the two branches of Art in which we may most successfully contend with other countries; but this national predilection has never appeared so conspicuously as in the present exhibition. Whatever merit it possesses lies certainly in these two forms of effort. In figure compositions it is lamentably deficient. We do not remember any annual display in which so few good works of this latter class have been included. We know not whether the Art-Union have purchased the greater number of such works as were produced during the past year, or what may be the cause; at any rate, the fact is as we have stated it. We have no space in our journal, this month, to notice more than a small number of pictures; and, therefore, we shall content ourselves with speaking chiefly of those men who have made the greatest improvement. Several of the older artists exhibit pleasing works, but their names are sufficient of themselves to attract attention, and the public are already fully acquainted with their styles and merits. The younger painters, as we have said, are those who have advanced of late with most rapidity; and it is to them that we intend to devote the principal part of this paper. We shall attempt but little generalization in the slight sketches we have to offer. Indeed, the lateness of the opening of the Gallery, and the early day at which it has been necessary to prepare this article for the press, have concurred to prevent our furnishing more than a few desultory remarks.

We begin, then, with Mr. Hicks. This gentleman exhibits, among other works, a head—No. 368—which, for largeness of drawing and an agreeable assemblage of rich brown and gray color, we do not often see excelled. His portrait of Dr. Johnson—No. 57—is quite striking in the strength and disposition of the masses of light and shadow, although in the latter it seems to us unpleasantly dark. We wish there were a little less crudeness in the manner in which the paint has been laid on. The other portrait shows that this change might have been made without subtracting much, if any thing, from the vigor of the effect. It would have been judicious in the Hanging Committee to have placed this work a little above the line of the eye. No. 155—a female portrait—when compared, in point of color, with the works around it, evinces much feeling in the delicate flesh tones. A *Fête champêtre*, No. 162, in the style of Diaz, the famous French colorist, by its clash of light and dark, and color, though but a sketch, gives us the full power of the palette. 212 and 239 are Italian subjects, which, in the clearness of their effects, form the key-notes of the group, of which they are respectively the centres. Mr. Hicks lays on his paint, as we have said, somewhat crudely; but from that very fact, perhaps, derives a brilliancy which is the leading trait of his present pictures.