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certain quick sympathy with the methods of the author for their ready and perfect apprehension. In no department of composition should style be so simply and solely a medium for thought, as in the productions of philosophy. Its foremost excellence, therefore, must be that transparency which interposes no obstacle, which conceals and alters nothing.

Poetry, burdened with no search, exulting in the tread of her imagery as it comes echoing forth in her metre, may seek the mystic light which half gives, half conceals her passion; but Science must ever walk straight onward with her lamp in her hand. The telescope with which we search out obscure and complicated phenomena should possess that perfect symmetry and adjustment of lenses which distorts not the object, nor converts into shades and colors the pure beam of light along which the revelation comes. All imperfection here is so much added to our labor, — so much subtracted from our success. A definite purpose inspires and quickens our efforts, and that which is not an instrument is an obstacle.

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ART. V. — *Modern Painters. Of Many Things.* By JOHN RUSKIN, M. A. Vol. III. New York: Wiley and Halsted. 1856.

THERE is perhaps no writer to whom America is more indebted than to John Ruskin. We have, on the one side, a materialism which tends to check the development of our higher nature; and, on the other, a spiritualism which would cast aside all outward form. Here, more than anywhere else, is needed the mediation of beauty, by which spirit and matter are blended into a living unity; by which the material loses its grossness, and the spiritual its vagueness. Works of art are too rare among us to exert a deep influence, and we are doubly grateful, therefore, to any one who will open our eyes to the beauty of the sky above us, and of the grass which we trample under our feet. We know of no

English writer who has done so much to create a true appreciation of natural beauty, and an enthusiasm for it, as Ruskin. His faults in criticism, if he has them, are concerned with works which comparatively few among us have seen, and thus can do little to pervert the taste. The reasons for his decisions are, in general, given so honestly, that it seems scarcely possible that they should mislead any. If, for instance, he loses no opportunity to speak slightly of the German philosophy, he is careful to explain in a note that he has never thought it worth his while to pay any attention to it; and to show by his remarks upon a quotation from Bunsen, that he has not the most primary notion of its first principles. If he says many hard things of Claude, he yet gives him the credit of being the first man who put the sun into the heavens; and those of us who have gazed at one of his sunsets, until all things seemed dissolved in its golden light, and we cared no more than Claude did whether windmills or castles filled the foreground of the picture, can admit this as sufficient praise for any man. If he selects Walter Scott as the truest poetic genius of modern times,—the representative of modern poetry as Dante is of mediæval,—he expresses the reasons of his preference so honestly and clearly, that all must admit that *upon these grounds* no other selection could have been made, and gives such an admirable criticism of Scott's poetry, that one loses all disposition to murmur. For ourselves we have a friend, one William Shakespeare, who has also written of landscape, and who, we thought, had some title to be considered the representative of modern poetry, whom Homer and Dante might admit as the third in their high companionship; but when we saw the principles that were to control the choice, we gave up his claims at once.

It would be strange if a writer occupying such a position as Ruskin does should not have faults; if, at once a theorizer and an artist, he did not sometimes allow his theory to be perverted by his taste, and his taste by his theory; if, writing, in the face of much opposition, professedly without system, upon subjects intermediate between the realm of philosophy and that of art, he were not sometimes dogmatic; if, after ten years' study in the same direction, he had not changed some-

what the stand-point from which he looks upon the world. Such faults, so far as they are faults, might mislead or confuse those who seek a leader whom they may follow blindly; but those who have discovered that all men have their limitations, and have learned to *call no man master*, will accept gratefully the truth that he utters, and find even in what they consider errors matter for profitable thought and study.

It is not, however, our intention at present to consider the position and merits of Ruskin, but to discuss the two questions which form the basis of the third volume of his "Modern Painters." These are brought forward most prominently in the chapters entitled "The Use of Pictures" and "The Novelty of Landscape." The questions stated in full are the following: first, What is the difference between the enjoyment which we derive from seeing an object represented in art, and that which we derive from seeing the same object as it actually exists in nature? and, secondly, What is the difference between the ancient and modern mind, by which the latter receives a pleasure from landscape of which the former had no conception, and what is the nature of this pleasure? These questions we shall consider in an order inverse to that in which they have been cited; for it seems appropriate to consider what the enjoyment derived from natural scenery actually is, before comparing it with that derived from the mere representation.

In discussing the beauty of landscape, Ruskin opens what may be considered almost a new field of study. There is no point in regard to which the philosophies have been so barren. The *Du Beau* of Cousin is not the strongest part of his system, and that which relates to natural beauty is the weakest part of the *Du Beau*; all that is said of it there is compressed into the compass of about a page. Kant in his *Urtheilskraft* gives the subject more importance; but what he says of it naturally partakes of the one-sidedness of his system. When we read his theory of the Sublime, our emotions are so similar to those which are excited by the presence of mountains and mighty cataracts, that we cannot doubt that he has caught something of their spirit; but we experience a feeling

of dissatisfaction in seeing beauty defined to be the pleasure of which the mind is conscious when it finds its own laws recognized by the outward world, apparently with no ulterior object. This is what he expresses in his brief formula, *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*. Hegel, who has done more than any one else for the science of æsthetics, yet places the enjoyment derived from the contemplation of nature so far below that which is caused by works of art, and proves so clearly that from his stand-point this must necessarily be the case, that we cannot acquit him of injustice to his theme. We are grateful, therefore, to Mr. Ruskin, for having done so much to bring this subject clearly and prominently before us.

In approaching the subject of landscape, however, we are met at once by a difficulty of which we should have taken no cognizance if Mr. Ruskin had not himself called our attention to it, and, in his somewhat awkward attempts to remove it from the path, left it more in the way than ever. The difficulty is nothing less than the question, whether there be any such thing as actual landscape; whether, if we may be allowed to use a word of which Mr. Ruskin has plainly expressed his abhorrence, what we consider as landscape is not wholly *subjective*. But we will let him express his difficulty and his manner of disposing of it in his own words. We quote from the admirable chapter entitled, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy."

"The word 'blue,' say certain philosophers, means the sensation of color which the human eye receives in looking at the open sky, or at a bell gentian.

"Now, say they farther, as this sensation can only be felt when the eye is turned to the object, and as, therefore, no such sensation is produced by the object when nobody looks at it, therefore the thing, when it is not looked at, is not blue; and thus (say they) there are many qualities of things which depend as much on something else as on themselves. . . . .

"From these ingenious views the step is very easy to a farther opinion, that it does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us; and that the only real truth of them is their appearance to, or effect upon, us. From which position, with a hearty

desire for mystification, and much egotism, selfishness, shallowness, and impertinence, a philosopher may easily go so far as to believe, and say, that everything in the world depends upon his seeing or thinking of it, and that nothing therefore exists but what he sees, or thinks of.

“Now to get rid of all these ambiguities and troublesome words at once, be it observed that the word ‘blue’ does *not* mean the *sensation* caused by a gentian on the human eye; but it means the *power* of producing that sensation; and this power is always there in the thing, whether we are there to experience it or not, and would remain there, though there were not left a man on the face of the earth. Precisely in the same way gunpowder has a power of exploding. It will not explode if you put no match to it. But it has always the power of so exploding, and is therefore called an explosive compound, which it very positively and assuredly is, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary.

“In like manner, a gentian does not produce the sensation of blueness, if you don't look at it. But it has always the power of doing so; its particles being everlastingly so arranged by its Maker. And, therefore, the gentian and the sky are always verily blue, whatever philosophy may say to the contrary; and if you do not see them blue when you look at them, it is not their fault, but yours.”

It will be seen from the above, that all which Mr. Ruskin claims for his blue gentian is that it has the power to produce a certain sensation in us. Its blueness is therefore merely a latent energy, which is called out only by the presence of some conscious subject. It is a mere potentiality, like the gunpowder's power of explosion, which is excited into action only by the presence of the spark. As the effect of the meeting of the subject and object is felt entirely by the former, that is, as the blue gentian excites a sensation in us while our presence produces no change upon the blue gentian, it seems to us that Mr. Ruskin's comparison would hold better, if the blue gentian were compared to the spark, and ourselves to the gunpowder. As Mr. Ruskin has left the case, we can no longer say,

“Full many a flower is born to blush unseen”;

for the blush is a mere potentiality, till the eye is present to see it. The universe of beauty, about which he is so eloquent, is

an unfilled blank, a congeries of potentialities, of undeveloped powers, of mines well laid, but perishing without effect, because no spark is applied to them. To state the difficulty in an exact formula, we say: "We cannot conceive of any object, a blue gentian for instance, except as it exists in our conception of it; this conception is made up of various sensations, which have no existence out of the subject; we cannot therefore conceive of an object without conceiving at the same time the presence of a subject." In an age less faithless than our own, this discussion would scarcely be necessary; or were it started, the mind would at once recur for its solution to the Absolute Subject, to the Divine consciousness, which embraces the universe, in which we can conceive the blue gentian equally with the arch of heaven as always beautiful, and as needing not our presence and partial partaking of this consciousness to awaken it to beauty. For the fuller discussion of this principle, and its application to the higher questions of philosophy, we refer the reader to Ferrier's "Institutes of Metaphysic."

This difficulty being removed, we have next to consider the difference between the classic and the modern mind, by which the latter derives a pleasure from landscape of which the former was incapable. We think that Mr. Ruskin has somewhat exaggerated this difference. We do not see the propriety of introducing Homer as the only witness in regard to the classic landscape, excluding all later writers. The imaginary individual, supposed to be familiar with all classic art, who sees for the first time a modern picture-gallery, is represented as saying, "Nobody ever cared about blue mountains before, or tried to paint the broken stones of old walls."

There are few specimens remaining, by which we can judge of ancient paintings. The most important of these are those of Pompeii, which are clearly as much entitled to be consulted on this question as the reliefs at Nineveh. We have ourselves seen among them a landscape more or less perfect, of which all that we definitely remember is, that the principal object was a ruin. It gave us, indeed, a singular feeling to look through this vista of ruins, and see older ruins beyond; to feel that, when these crumbling works were in their fresh-

ness, the world was already in its dotage. The importance of the fact for us at present is, chiefly, that, even in that day, men sometimes saw the beauty of ruins, and some even were found who did try "to paint the broken stones of old walls." It cannot, however, admit of a doubt, that the difference spoken of by Ruskin does exist to a greater or less degree. His main fault in assigning its cause appears to us to be, that he places it too much in outward and accidental circumstances, and does not see in it the necessary development of the mind itself.

Hegel, in his *Aesthetik*, considers art under three divisions, which he designates as Symbolic, Classic, and Romantic. The Symbolic Art was that which preceded the Grecian. Its object, like that of all art, was to represent the living, the spiritual, the divine. It was unable to embody these in any adequate form, and thus its whole course was a struggle, rather than an accomplishment. It sought, as among the Hindoos, to make the natural express the supernatural, by forcing it out of its ordinary form, and imposing upon it fantastic shapes and exaggerated proportions. The Egyptians endeavored to reach the same end by vastness of dimensions, and by various symbolic structures of which they themselves did not understand the full meaning. Chief among these latter was the Sphinx, which, with its human head and beastly body, expressed the riddle which the age was vainly striving to solve, the union of spirit and matter, of thought and form. With all their efforts, the two remained distinct, like the head and body of the Sphinx. The most stupendous and perfect works pointed beyond themselves to the thought which they were designed to express.

The Greeks solved this problem. In their art, spirit and matter were blended. They first saw their gods before them in worthy forms. In the presence of a perfect Grecian statue, we do not need to look beyond it to seek its meaning; we do not need to study it in the search for hidden depths of consciousness; it stands before us complete in itself; all is open, clear; spirit and body, thought and expression, are woven into one.

Leaving the terminology of the *Aesthetik*, we may perhaps



make our meaning clearer by stating that the highest point attainable by Grecian art was self-repose. This may be exhibited under three aspects. It may be the repose of inaction; repose maintained under the most severe and doubtful conflict, or even defeat; and the repose of triumph. These three forms are exhibited in the three greatest works of Grecian art that have come down to us,—the Venus de' Medici, the Laocoön, and the Vatican Apollo. In the Apollo we see exhibited the unmingled glory of triumph. The Python has just fallen by his arrow; he still holds the bow in his extended hand, which is just descending, while the drapery hanging from the arm, in a manner which this motion alone could account for, gives a marvellous grace and lightness to the whole figure. He casts upon his prostrate foe a look of divine scorn, from before which one almost shrinks; yet there is nothing earthly in it, nothing which mars the beauty of the face or disturbs its sublime serenity; he has passed through the most terrible ordeal, and henceforth he has nothing to dread. He stands thus the personification of undying youth, unfading beauty, and resistless strength.

In the Laocoön we have exhibited a similar self-repose in circumstances of suffering and conflict. The Apollo is a god, for thus only can be represented the unmingled glory of triumph; while the strength of suffering is the prerogative of man alone. The old Laocoön stands in the terrible embrace of the serpents which the gods have sent upon him; thus he has no hope from the Olympian senate, for he is their victim; none from men, for they look upon him as accursed. To such a struggle there can be but one issue. Yet there is no terror nor shrinking. He grasps the serpents firmly in his hands; the coils of one seem half unloosed; we know that they will soon close again in the embrace of death; but we see it without trouble, for we feel that his true personality is beyond their reach.

The Venus, however, is the representative of a larger class of the works of Grecian art, of forms, divine and human, of the most perfect beauty, and in comparative repose, not because above disturbance, but because removed from it. Yet even in this quietness there is often a depth and a might, as

in the awful front of Jove, the calmness of whose mighty brow we feel that all the shock of contending gods and men would not be powerful enough to ruffle. By works of this class, also, it was sought to express the peace of the departed; as in the old Etruscan tombs, where, upon urns whose sides are covered with representations of conflict, recline the images of the dead in the attitude of "revellers at a feast," while from above a Medusa's head looks coldly down upon this banqueting-hall of the shades.

We have referred to these well-known examples, to illustrate the fact, that in Classic Art every work was complete in itself. It made no apologies; it asked no favors; it returned no thanks. There was grief; but it was like that of Niobe, cold and tearless, seeking no sympathy, and needing none. There was death; but it was like that of the Gaul of the Capitol, without the reproaches of conscience, and without hope or fear for the future. There was nothing of a twofold nature about any of these works. The mind never held back, never rose above, and never outran, the body. Heart and soul were all in the act, whatever it might be. There is no appearance of a concentration of thought or look upon any outward object, by any effort of the will; there is no appearance of thought or look wandering abroad in search of any object to occupy them. There is no aspiration, no longing, no regret. There is in all, as has been said, a self-repose, a self-sufficiency. This in nearly all cases gives an air of cheerfulness to them, although, as has been well remarked, there is in them a tinge of sadness, though faint, as if it were a shadow of the overhanging fate. In Classic Art there was no contradiction between the universal and the individual. Each work represented the perfect type of the universal, unmarred by any individual fault or peculiarity. The universal thus manifested itself with a joyous freedom, conscious of no limitation, and in this sense infinite. Every work is thus not merely actual, but ideal; for the actual and the ideal are one.

Each product of Grecian art was, as we have seen, a unit. But the union thus inaugurated was to be broken. Hegel has well remarked, that in the Classic Art the divine, the human, and the material formed a perfect unity, while in the

Romantic Art each of these elements was left to develop itself separately. He has not, however, we think, brought forward with sufficient clearness the negative moment in the separation. This was, as it appears to us, the consciousness of sin. Of this, as we understand it, the Greek had no conception. He therefore stood in such joyous self-confidence, looking forward and backward without doubt or anxiety. It was thus that the divine and the human flowed naturally into the same type, and the material exhibited both in their full perfection. The consciousness of sin brought terrible discord into this harmony. Man saw himself estranged from God, and bound to the earthly. He abjured the earthly that he might become reconciled to the Divine. Thus for an instant was he an orphan and homeless.

The first struggle was for reconciliation with God. The union of the human and the divine, which in the Grecian thought and art had been a simple blending of natures, became replaced by the union of love; a love more intense because the result of reconciliation, of an atonement. The spirit which had before been so completely one with the body, now spurned the fellowship and withdrew into itself. It cared not that the body was subjected to all suffering, — that it was shrunken by hunger, that it was burned by the sun of the desert, that it was distorted and scarred by the instruments of torture. All these torments it joyfully inflicted upon the flesh, that thus it might become more free from it. The world was a scene of trial and temptation. Among the Greeks the soul had been at one with the world, but now there was a breach between the two. This was no longer the soul's home; here it was a stranger seeking for a better country, that is, a heavenly.

All of this was represented in Christian art. Its negative element was sin; its positive element, love. If we had space for a systematic study of the subject, it would be interesting to follow the arrangement adopted by Hegel in his *Aesthetik* for the exhibition of the manner in which this love was represented by the Christian painters. First, we should study the representation of the object of love itself in its simple universality, God the Father. His pure spirituality, however, can-

not be represented adequately in any bodily form. The figure of an old man, however full of love and dignity it may be, we feel at once to be unworthy of it, if not actually blasphemous, as it is apt to strike Protestants who see it for the first time. The face and form of Christ are more within the sphere of art; yet even here it is difficult, or even impossible, for the painter to represent the union of the divine and human in a manner that shall correspond at all with our conceptions. This is most easily done in the child Christ, where the lofty qualities which are demanded can be exhibited in greater distinctness, in opposition to the simplicity of childhood. In the *Ecce Homo*, also, where the negative element of suffering is strongly exhibited, the divine qualities of the spirit, and its infinite love, may be brought out in greater relief, as the painter sometimes represents the sun by darkening the surrounding sky and the landscape. This love is however more perfectly exhibited as reflected in the disciples and the saints, and especially in the Madonna. In her, the object of love is not something beyond the sensuous, and invisible, as is the case in many paintings of the saints, where the upturned eyes appear to see or to seek something unseen by us; but the love and its object are both before us.

Without following further or more minutely this arrangement, we will contemplate two or three individual works, which, in their contrast with our examples from classic art, may serve to illustrate the different spirit of the two forms of art. Instead of the Apollo of the Vatican, we will contemplate the Transfiguration by Raphael; instead of the Laocoon, the *Ecce Homo*; instead of the Venus, the Madonna of Dresden.

As the triumphant repose of the Apollo is heightened by the suggestion of the negative moment of struggle through which he has passed, the same element is introduced to heighten the triumphant joy in the Transfiguration. It is exhibited as raised above earthly struggle and pain. Below, in the foreground, surrounded by his mother and the disciples, is the demoniac boy with his wild gestures and maniac eyes. The eye, however, tarries not there, nor with the three who lie upon the hill behind, overwhelmed with the glory, knowing

not what they say; but is turned upward, where, between Moses and Elias, hovers the Christ. His robes seem woven from the clouds, yet stand out from among them, bright and glorious; a divine spirit pervades even the floating garments and hair, giving to all an ethereal lightness; while from the face beams a glory and a godlikeness which artist had never caught before; it is no longer the triumph of manly strength and self-stability, but it is the higher divinity beaming through. All that can detract from the perfection of this work is that the negative moment is not seen at once to have any vital and necessary connection with the positive. In the Apollo the conflict hinted at is the ground and occasion of the present triumph. In the Etruscan urns the conflicts represented upon the side had been passed through in order to attain to the perfect rest which is exhibited above them. Whether in the Transfiguration the symbolical connection, which can be traced by a little study, is sufficient to obviate this objection, we cannot say.

In the Laocoön there is a self-control and self-concentration for resistance, but this is all. There is no look of joy and triumph from eyes which,

“Like angels, sing on in a separate glory.”

In the *Ecce Homo*, on the contrary, while the body is suffering, the spirit seems to dwell aloft in an atmosphere of love, filled with peace and more than resignation. So we see martyrs bound to the stake, or pierced with darts, their faces filled, not with endurance, but with joy. There are in the Catacombs, on tombstones of martyrs, figures of doves, not calmly nestling, like those in the Columbarium, — a place whose very name is suggestive of peace, and of the prayer of the Psalmist, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest,” — but with branches of palm in their mouths, like glad tidings from brighter lands.

In works less influenced by conflict, present or past, where the figure assumes its more ordinary state, this, owing to the superiority which the mind now asserts over the body, will represent the finer and deeper emotions of the soul. While the form of the Venus, of which we have spoken, is of such

marvellous beauty, its face is so weak in its expression, that some have seriously doubted whether the head was chiselled by the same artist, and was part of the same work. The connection, however, in which it was found with the other fragments, and the nicety with which it fitted them, leave little room for such doubts. But they may serve to make clearer our views of the change which has taken place in art; for where the classic artist stopped, the Christian began. The Madonna of Dresden is closely draped, even to the neck; but above is the face full of all womanly beauty. This is striking for its simple calmness; not the calmness of the early German paintings, which is like that of a being raised above the distraction of earthly feelings, but a calmness made up of the fulness and equipoise of all these feelings; for if it has not the raptured heavenward gaze of the Madonnas of Guido, nor that look of happy love which in some of Raphael's other works the mother turns upon the child, nor that of anxious, trembling affection, which Sassoferrato was wont to paint, it is because it unites them all. There is love in the tender pressure of the Christ-child to her bosom; there is reverence in the depths of those dark, half-tearful eyes, which at least make those that look at them half-tearful; there is a joy that lies too deep for smiles; and all of these are united in an expression of awed and thoughtful wondering,—over the past, with its mysteries and its holy gladness,—over the future, strange and sublime, to which all things are pointing,—over the infinite love that fills her breast, and the divine child that rests on her bosom.

It will be seen from these examples, that in the Romantic Art there is no longer that beautiful harmony and equipoise between the soul and the body, the outward and the inward, the idea and its expression, which we found in the Classic Art. The soul draws back into itself out from the material. The material stands before us, not for itself merely, but in order to reveal to us something higher. It hence admits of distortion and deformity, as in the case of the demoniac boy in the Transfiguration, of martyrs flayed and otherwise tormented, of demons, and the like. All then that is required of the outward is that it shall be more or less natural; that it shall be

real enough to furnish a solid basis for the spiritual superstructure. It thus can follow its own course, undisturbed by the more inward and essential element. But the part that it plays will necessarily grow continually more important. The naturalness which was at first only a secondary consideration, being a matter in which almost infinite progress may be made, will call more and more attention to itself, in its development, until it comes to be the leading object. This we find to have been to a great degree the course of the art of painting. The material, which was at first designed merely to reveal the spiritual, at length asserts its independent existence, and challenges labor and admiration for itself alone. This is not the place to decide when the central point was reached and passed; whether Raphael stands upon the beautiful summit, or upon its downward slope; it is sufficient for us that the summit was reached and passed. Neither does it fall within our purpose to follow the development of the principle of individuality in art. The individual spirit was, as we have seen, set free from its connection with the divine, and left, like the outward nature, to develop itself according to its own laws, until, as in the drama for instance, no shade of character, sinful or holy, is considered unworthy of representation. The connection between the universal and the individual is broken, and caprice and peculiarities have free range. This point, however, is merely referred to in order to give completeness to our sketch, and we will pursue it no further.

We have seen that, in the mediæval art, landscape, or, more generally, the outward nature, existed merely as a foundation, or medium, for the spiritual; we have now to consider more particularly the relation in which the outward world stands to the more modern mind. We have already seen that, with the introduction of Christianity, the harmony between the soul and the world was broken. To understand more perfectly the nature of this breach, let us look more closely at the different points of view from which the classic and the modern mind regard nature.

In Christian philosophy mind and matter are distinct and irreconcilable. The one is eternal, connected with the invisible and the spiritual; the other is gross and transitory. The

forms of earth may ravish and exalt the soul by their beauty; the lower inhabitants of earth may exhibit instincts, which amount almost to reason; yet between them and the spirit which the former so deeply move, and the latter so plainly shadow forth, there is a gulf which speculation rarely attempts to cross. Among the early Grecian philosophers, on the other hand, matter was eternal and everlasting. They occupied themselves with seeking after the common essence of things; and whether they believed that this was water, or air, or number, or fire, mind and matter were only different forms of the same element. When Zeno, the Eleatic, looking into the blue of heaven, exclaimed, "God is one and alone," the individual of the spiritual and that of the material world were absorbed alike into the unbroken repose of this divine oneness.

In the physical sciences we find indications of the same tendency. To the ancients the laws and limits of things were loose and flowing. When they saw water becoming interchangeably solid, liquid, and gaseous; all things dissolving into flame, and thus passing into the atmosphere, and, as they believed, up to the stars; or the green trees and beautiful flowers springing from the dark earth, — no change of things was too extravagant for them to believe. Modern investigators, on the contrary, finding beneath all these mutable forms the same unvarying atoms, perceive that there is no change in the universe, all that appears such being the result of combination and counterpoise; and thus is the breach between mind and matter for ever made broader. To the ancients, too, this world was the unmoved centre of all things; and strange indeed, and sad, must it have been, when first the earth was, in the thoughts of men, loosed from its eternal moorings, and turned adrift upon the infinite space. The very foundation of things must have seemed shaken; man must have felt himself a homeless and ceaseless wanderer in the universe.

In religion this distinction is still more strongly marked. The Christian, finding this gulf between himself and the things which surround him, seeks ever to make it wider; to enter into closer communion with the Infinite Spirit whom he adores, and to prepare himself for a future of purely spirit-



ual joy. The classic divinities were, on the other hand, either heroes or the powers of nature deified, and stand the ideal of perfected manhood. With the eternal Fate, the most spiritual conception of the Greek, the moving power of both worlds, he had no sympathy nor communion; but must only resist its power as long, or yield to it as gracefully, as he might. His future was but the shadow of his present. Over the fields of asphodel he urged his steed; or there held converse with the friends whom he had most loved on earth. The ancient ascetic sought by bodily privations, not, like the Christian, to withdraw his spirit from the pleasures of the world, or to atone for sin, but, by destroying his useless desires, to fit himself for a more tranquil life upon earth. Indeed, of that burden of sin and accountability under which the Christian toils on so heavily, and which, by the continual struggle it occasions, ever widens, as it originally caused, the breach between him and the world, the ancient Greek had no conception, but walked erect and joyous on the earth. While to the modern, and especially to the early Christian, this is a place of weary pilgrimage, it was his bright and beautiful home. Gifted with a sense of the beautiful, of which others had little notion, all the forms and voices of nature thrilled him with joy. If he could not conceive of the divine, unless as embodied in the material; neither could he of the material, unless as pervaded and elevated by the divine. The earth was a goddess. Each tree and stream sheltered its divinity. The stars, with the sun and moon, were bright with the presence of the gods. The entrails of beasts and the flight of birds, no less than the courses of the stars, uttered the voice of Fate; for all were alike full of the divine life that throbbed, scarcely concealed, beneath them. The strife between the soul and the body not as yet begun, both moved on together to an equal perfection of development. Thus has Greece become the storehouse of the most perfect bodily forms, and of the highest works of intellectual achievement for all ages. Look, for instance, at the Grecian philosophers, their healthy lives stretching out to seventy, eighty, or almost one hundred years; at Pythagoras, with his almost superhuman beauty; at Æschylus, whose wounds received in battle for

his country were his honor and defence; at Sophocles, winning the prizes of the arena with the crown of his poetic triumph yet upon his brow.

It has been before stated, that, at the decline of the classic period, the harmony between God, man, and nature was broken. We have already seen how the principle of love solved the opposition between God and man, and produced a higher and more blessed union than could have existed before. We have now to consider how the principle of beauty has bridged the gulf between man and nature; for with the manner in which philosophy has closed, or has sought to close, this breach, we have at present no concern.

The Greek was, as has been said, one with nature. He was the result of the same natural workings which had produced the trees and the mountains. Certain races or families claimed, it is true, descent from the gods; but the gods themselves were hardly to be distinguished from those same natural forces. The Greek, then, not regarding nature as something utterly distinct from himself, could look upon it only as inferior to himself. The modern mind, being in general separated from it, by all the infinitude of its own nature and destiny, — seeing not so much inferiority in the same scale as total unlikeness, except as being the work of the same Creator, — can study it freely and without restraint. The modern stands ever against nature, and can enjoy its beauties, as the Greek, who stood in the very midst of it, could not.

We will illustrate this by examples. Hegel, who occupied, in the respect referred to, somewhat the same position with the Greek, proves that from his stand-point the beauty of nature is inferior to that of art, because it expresses less perfectly the idea and the unity of life. On the other hand, the Jews, who stood over against nature, somewhat as the moderns do, and regarded it as something with which they had little or no essential and vital connection, yet enjoyed its simple beauty much more than the Greeks appear to have done. This is finely illustrated by Ruskin, in his Edinburgh Lectures, by a reference to the twenty-third Psalm, in which David manifests a sympathy with nature which a

Greek would have considered as derogatory to his humanity. Nothing of the kind can be more beautiful than the fellow-feeling that is shown by the Psalmist with the simple enjoyments of his flocks: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."

A more precise notion of the difference between the classic and modern enjoyment of landscape may be found in the distinction which has been exhibited between the Classic and the Romantic Art. The Classic or Plastic Art could rest contented with nothing short of a complete embodiment of the spirit; the material with which it was connected must be completely moulded by it, and made the highest and only adequate expression of it. This can be found nowhere but in the human form, and not even in this, until it has become purified from all that is accidental and lifeless. The modern mind conceives of a spiritual reality, which even the human form cannot perfectly exhibit; of an infinity which is something more than the complete and unhindered realization of an idea, or embodiment of an individual spirit, however little it may be marred by individual peculiarities. We have already seen how, even in the most perfect work of Christian art, the thought to be expressed always hovers above it, refusing to be identified completely with it, or rather overflows it, because it cannot be contained in it. This expression of the inexpressible, this bodying forth of the infinite, is what the modern mind is ever striving after, and longing for. It is this longing that has upheaved the massive dome of St. Peter's, and the roofs and towers of the mediæval churches, and which above all strove for manifestation in that miracle of Cologne, which the Middle Age left half completed, as a musician might break off in the midst of some rapturous strain in which he sought to pour forth his full soul, and dash his instrument aside, feeling how inadequate is even the loftiest form or expression to exhibit the spiritual and the formless. The modern mind sees all about it cramped and limited, and finds the truest response to its longings in the contemplation of nature. In the presence of the forest, of the far-reaching landscape, or of soaring mountains, it sees manifestations of the absolute life, which are free from all the limi-

tations that cramp it everywhere beside. The trees, the flowers, the blue sky, are all expressions of this life ; they have no articulate voice, they utter no precise thought, have no determined individuality ; but yet they are embodiments of this inner vitality. This sounds to us in the voices of the birds ; it breathes upon us in the breeze ; it glances forth upon us in the quick eyes of the squirrel, before he disappears again among the leaves ; it sports about us in the insects that float in the sunlight, in the fish that ripple the shaded brook. If we take any one of these animated forms, the squirrel, for instance, to our homes, its beauty is in a great degree lost. It is no longer a manifestation of the universal life, but merely of its own little individuality. We see all its limitations ; it twirls its cage for exercise ; it has its fears, its petty pleasures, and its many wants. So Emerson, in his beautiful poem, "Each and All," brings home the shell whose beauty had charmed him by the sea, but finds that it

"Had left its beauty on the shore,  
With the sun, and the sand, and the wild uproar."

Thus, in like manner, the sparrow, whose notes, as he heard them in the forest, had seemed to him a voice from heaven,

"sings the song, but it pleases not now,  
For I did not bring home the river and sky :  
He sang to my ear, they sang to my eye."

A bird, however, whose joyous song seems to imply an inward depth of which we can form no conception, and a plant that never comes to any distinct utterance or *outrance* of itself, excepting in its flower, which adds only more of the mystery of beauty to its being, can never become completely individualized to us. There is a striking difference, also, between the manner in which we regard our domestic animals in general, and those that still enjoy the freedom of the forest. For the former we feel a love, it may be, which is yet mingled with a tinge of pity, increasing with the love ; the latter form an important element of beauty.

We can now understand better than before the difference between the Classic and the Romantic enjoyment of nature.

That the Greeks did enjoy nature, their whole mythology is a witness. It also shows how they enjoyed it. They could be content with nothing vague. They felt the power of natural beauty, but they could not rest till they had given to this power a determinate shape. Where moderns see the divine in nature, they saw divinities. Suppose that a modern artist, for instance, has to give a representation of the Nile; he will paint the river with its shores covered with the vegetation peculiar to them, while the Pyramids and the Sphinx loom up in the background. How the classic artist represented it, the noble statue in the Vatican shows us.

We understand also better than before why the nations whose art has been called Symbolical should share something of the Romantic enjoyment of landscape. It was before stated that the Symbolic art is that which preceded the Grecian. If we include literature under the term Art, then the term Symbolic must be applied also to the entire range of Oriental poetry. It is not meant that symbolism reigns exclusively there, or that it does not exist in the midst of the art of all times and nations; but in the one case it is prominent enough to be regarded as the type, in the other it is not so. In the principal nations, whose art does not, in general, go beyond the symbolic, we find traces of a view of nature very unlike that of the Greeks. We see them piling the formless masses to stupendous heights, or hewing them into gigantic or monstrous proportions, and in their poetry heaping all the riches of the world together to express that which is inexpressible. In the universe about them they discern the same struggle; that too seems pressing onward to some mighty end. Nature stands before them, the great symbol. They see, as we, all parts of it, united to form a perfect whole; but this whole, they, like us, can neither grasp nor understand. While the Greeks made marble images of rivers, and worshipped dainty water-nymphs, they find in the Ganges and the Lotus objects of reverence, and much of the later Eastern poetry is full of the fragrance of roses and the music of nightingales.

We have thus examined, so far as our limits permit us, one of the two great questions which underlie the third volume of

the "Modern Painters," and which that work has done much to bring before us in a correct light. The fault of the work is, as has been already intimated, that it makes its solution depend upon causes which are too accidental and temporary, such as the artificialness of the preceding centuries.

We now approach the second question, with which all the first ten chapters of the volume have a close connection. It is stated in general terms, the Relation of Art to Nature. Our inquiries will take of necessity a somewhat broad sweep, for it would be impossible to prove the correctness of a solution of the question in regard to one of the arts,—that of painting, for instance,—without showing at the same time its application to other arts.

It is remarked by Ruskin, in one of his earlier works, that every painting must be, in some way, open to the infinite. This he illustrates by the need felt of a radiant distance in landscapes, and of some opening into the free air in representations of apartments, by the necessity of curves and gradation in every beautiful form, and the like. The remark is true, and is applicable to the beautiful wherever found. It appears to us, however, to admit of an application broader and deeper than any that has been referred to, which underlies them all, and which furnishes the most perfect line of distinction between the several departments of art, and equally between the entire realm of art and that of nature. Every object of nature, the most delicate flower, for example, is on the one side an individual, defined in outline and color; but on the other, it is open to the universal life,—its whole being is pervaded by it. It is this that swells its petals and gives the brightness to their coloring. After we have plucked it, and while it is withering in our hand, even the slow ebbing of its life shows that it is still connected with the great ocean from which it was derived. If we now consider an artificial flower, one of wax, for instance, we shall find that outwardly it is no more an individual than the other; its form is not more sharply defined, nor its colors more distinct. But the very fact of their permanence shows that it is unconnected with the ebb and flow of the infinite sea of life. The same is equally true

of the waxen representations of human forms; they are individualized on all sides, outwardly by form and color, and inwardly by being closed to the universal life. We imagine that no person of refined and cultivated taste, even without reasoning on the subject, can look upon them without a feeling of dissatisfaction and constraint. This is independent of any want of perfectness either in material or in execution. Their form may be moulded as beautifully as that of the Medicean Venus; their coloring may be as perfect as that of the Venus of Titian; but both will be debased by the union, and the works will still stand on one of the lowest steps of art. Could we now fill it with life, or could we remove either of its individualizing limits, whether of form or color, so as to leave it undetermined in that direction, and there open to the infinite, it would at once take a much higher stand as a work of art, and our feelings of dissatisfaction and constraint in looking upon it would be superseded. This is what is done in the complementary arts of painting and sculpture. In sculpture we have the actual and material form, but the coloring is wanting, is *undetermined*. The work is thus in one direction undefined, that is, is left open to the infinitude of color, and we can gaze upon it as a work of the highest art, and an object of perfect beauty. We do not mean that this feeling of satisfaction results from our freedom to fill the vacancy with imaginary colors; should we do this, the undetermined would become for us determined, and the high beauty would be lost. In painting, on the other hand, we have the colors destitute of any actual material and rounded form. It is true, that the color, so far as it is made up of light and shade, suggests an idea of shape; but we never, in looking upon a painting, lose the feeling that the color only is there; that it is unmaterialized, not united to actual form, and thus undefined in that direction. Should we lose this feeling, the effect would not be different from that experienced in looking upon the object of which the painting is a copy. The fact, however, that a form is suggested, although not actually given and determined, by the coloring of a picture, might, perhaps, convey the impression that painting is less truly open to the infinite than sculpture, and thus stands upon a lower step of

art; but it would be incorrect to reason from this alone, without regard to the contents of the work. The mental states expressed by sculpture have relation to the outward. The highest purely subjective state which it is capable of representing is that of self-repose. Thus nothing is attempted which cannot be fully exhibited. The form is the perfect embodiment of the idea which fills it. Painting, however, by the aid of delicate shades of color, and above all by the expression of the eye, is fitted to attempt something loftier. It seeks to bring to light the hidden recesses of the soul, which can never be fully revealed. Painting, therefore, as it increases in perfection, instead of becoming, like sculpture, more and more the full manifestation of the idea which it embodies, becomes less and less so. We gaze into the dark eyes of the Dresden Madonna, and strive in vain to penetrate the full mystery of the soul which would reveal itself through them. But of this element of indeterminateness in figure-painting, and of the openings into the infinite in landscape-painting, of which Ruskin has written, it is not our intention to speak further. We merely refer to them, to prevent the drawing of any false conclusions in regard to the respective merits of the arts from the principles laid down; and especially to preclude any doubts with regard to those principles from the false conclusions to which they might appear to lead. The infinite, indeed, in art, as well as in nature, is continually looking out upon us, and often where we least expect it; but we are merely considering that form of it which each art reserves for itself, by which it is prevented from ever falling into utter materialism, and by which it is distinguished from all other arts on the one hand, and from nature on the other.

Although the principle of which we are speaking may not always be the immediate criterion by which we judge of the respective merits of the arts, yet we may often explain by it the different degrees of pleasure we receive from them. We think that the same unsatisfied feeling of which we have spoken as being experienced in the presence of wax figures, also arises, in the same class of minds, from the representations of the theatre. Charles Lamb has strongly and beautifully expressed this feeling, in speaking of the different effect



produced by reading the plays of Shakespeare, and by witnessing their representation. As we read, the characters have an undefined majesty, the palaces an unlimited splendor; when we see them upon the stage, all has become finite. There is not even the freedom and satisfaction which the life of the performers might be supposed to give, as the life of the flower gives beauty to it; for they appear as the representatives, not of their own existence, but of a borrowed and assumed being. They have cast aside as far as possible their own life, and the strange life which they have taken on is limited and soon exhausted, and that not by flowing back into the infinite sea of life, for from that it has become disconnected.

In the opera a new element is introduced, that of music, which makes from the finite drama a way of escape into the infinite. Music addresses itself to one sense alone, that of hearing; it can therefore become easily defined upon one side only, and nothing can be entirely determined by the determination of but one of its sides. The only way, then, by which music can become wholly finite, is by taking into itself a definite content, as when it merely imitates any of the voices of nature. In this last case, both, like color and actual form, become debased by the union. The sound imitated has lost its vitality; for it is no longer an utterance of nature. The music which imitates has become debased; for it has bound itself to the finite. It might appear, at first sight, that all vocal music, that of the opera for example, by becoming the expression of a definite thought or feeling, has lost, in like manner, its indeterminateness. But the harmony and melody of music are different from either thought or passion. An idea or emotion may, indeed, be conveyed by them, but it is as a ship is borne upon the sea, which yet stretches immeasurably below and around it.\* The Grecian theatre

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\* We may thus perceive how little reason there is for ridiculing any one for professing to enjoy an opera, while he may not understand the language in which it is performed. Who would ask for the words of a symphony of Beethoven? Or of what value is a *libretto* in listening to an overture, which is merely the music of the whole opera, condensed as it were into a few moments of exquisite pleasure? And if this can be enjoyed without a translation, why not also when it is expanded into that whole?

avoided the difficulty into which that of the present day has fallen, by the introduction of this element of music. The limits of the human in stature, voice, and expression also were broken through, and the divine element was introduced in the conduct of the play. The early English theatre also avoided the same difficulty, in some measure, by leaving the scenes undetermined, or only indicated by the rudest stage furniture.

In seeking for a confirmation of the principle of indeterminateness in architecture, we shall find that this depends for its beauty upon form; that color is rendered in it as little marked as may be. It retains, in general, merely the color of its material, as the whiteness of the marble, and the brownness of the freestone, or of the oak darkened by age. But even these are found to be a hinderance to the enjoyment of an architectural work; and when they can retire still farther into the background, it gains in nobleness of expression. It is not a mere idle sentimentality which has led painters and poets, and even inartistic tourists, into such raptures over Melrose Abbey and the Colosseum, as they are seen by moonlight. Every great work of architecture, new or old, so far as the general effect of it is concerned, can be fully enjoyed by moonlight or twilight alone. Then the eye is not prevented by minute ornament from taking in the grand proportions of the whole. It stands a mighty *Form* without color, and hence in that direction undetermined and immaterial. We can thus understand also, in part, the pleasure which a building in ruins gives us, — greater sometimes than that we should have derived from its complete beauty; for this could not equal our vague imaginings. The same effect is attempted in the interior of Gothic churches by producing a continual twilight, by means of which all color recedes into the background; and even the rays which fall crimsoned and purpled by the gorgeous staining of the window through which they have passed, as they creep forward with the changing sun, serve only to make the hue of all things more unreal and shadowy. We are here however approaching the precincts of the sublime, one mode of which consists in absolute indeterminateness, as well in form as in color; as, for instance, in the snow-covered moun-

tain, which is a mighty, unfilled outline, with nothing to help the imagination in the effort to grasp it. It is obvious that a perfect indeterminateness of color can be effected only by the actual presence of all the colors, in such proportions that all are neutralized, and thus perfect whiteness produced; or by the absence of all, the result of which is blackness; or, more generally, by some neutral tint, or its equivalent, of which we have a beautiful example in the polychromatic style of decoration. A Grecian temple, therefore, or any structure built of purely white marble, will gain less by the absence of light than a building formed of a reddish freestone, for instance, and can also dispense more easily with those strivings to represent the limitless in space, and those upward soarings above the bounds of common life, by which the churches of the Middle Age are characterized.

We have thus far considered architecture as dependent for its effect upon the proportion of its grand outlines. This is by no means its only, nor perhaps its strongest, appeal to the sense of beauty. A great part, perhaps the greatest part, of its effect is produced by its ornaments. This is a branch of architecture to which, owing to lack of wealth, or more truly, it may be, of taste, little attention has as yet been paid in our own land; but in the architectural master-works of the Old World, the grand proportions of which we have spoken serve only as a background for the paintings and carvings with which they are covered. These decorations naturally separate themselves into the two great divisions which we have named above;—paintings, with which of course are included imitations of them in mosaic, and which are confined to the *interior* of churches or other buildings; and works of sculpture, from which scarcely any part, whether within or without, is free. The remarks already made in regard to these arts would be equally applicable to them as thus employed. We will simply add in relation to architecture, that its productions enter more into the circle of nature than those of any other art. This results from their massiveness, their durability, and the fact that they form, more than any other works of art, portions of the daily life of a people. It seems almost as if they partook of the vitality of Nature, as if indeed she

"Gladly gave them place,  
Adopted them into her race,  
And granted them an equal date,  
With Andes and with Ararat."

It might seem, therefore, that there was actually less need of this indeterminateness in architecture than in any other art. We find it, however, no less strongly marked.

In our investigation we have considered beauty and art merely negatively. The undetermined, the formless, is in itself nothing, and can therefore be productive neither of pleasure nor of pain. It must, of course, be united to a definite and perfect form, the laws of which we have not attempted even to suggest.

We ourselves are made up of the same two elements, the limitless and the finite. We, more than any other earthly existences, are partakers of the universal life. The course of our lives also presents the same two great contrasts; behind, it is determined and complete; before, it stretches on into the unknown and boundless. In the common and busy hours of life, we content ourselves, with as much grace as may be, with the finite things of earth; but in the contemplation of beauty, which is the high holiday and play-time of the soul, it will, for once, breathe the free air, and see a path open for itself into the pathless. It will stand upon that line of coast where on the one side lies the firm and the actual, and on the other stretches the vague and limitless ocean. Beauty meets this longing; by the union of which we have been speaking, it satisfies the double nature of man, and becomes its counterpart. We sometimes forget that an infinite life pervades nature, and look upon it as wholly material, and destined to satisfy merely our material wants. Art awakens us from this dream, which we call reality. It presents nature to us in such a manner that we cannot degrade or materialize it, but must suffer it to address our higher nature alone.

We have thus offered a few thoughts which may assist in solving the questions which Ruskin has so well stated, but not satisfactorily answered. The particular criticisms in the book are worthy of the highest praise and the most careful study; and through the entire volume, while we do not lose

sight of the author's idiosyncrasies of opinion and sentiment, we are increasingly impressed with the large scope of his genius, the lofty earnestness of his spirit, and the nobleness of his aim and endeavor.

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ART. VI. — *Essays, Biographical and Critical; or, Studies of Character.* By HENRY T. TUCKERMAN. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, & Co. 1857. 12mo. pp. 475.

WHEN we consider the large space which Biography necessarily occupies in literature, engrossing so many of the shelves of our libraries, its always prominent position in the reading of all nations, and of late its rapid extension and encroachment upon History itself; when we look, too, at the obvious dangers and temptations attending its composition, it certainly appears that biography, as an art, defined in its range and exhibitions by critical and moral laws, has received far less attention from the world than the importance of the subject demands. In our own day, particularly, when there are more "Lives" written in proportion to the bulk of literature than ever before, there is less deference to rule, and apparently less sense of responsibility, in their preparation than ever before. Every man fortunate or unhappy enough to come into possession of a trunk full of papers relating to some departed man or woman of eminence, — nor is it always necessary that the man or woman should have departed this life, or that the eminence be unquestionable, — thinks himself *ipso facto* qualified to set up as a biographer. In many instances, it would be quite as sufficient a justification for the work, if a simple citizen, uneducated to the calling, were, on falling into possession of a stone quarry, a plantation of timber, and a chest of carpenter's tools, at once to set about the construction, with his own hands, of a church or a state-house. Nay, there would be a much greater probability of success in the case of the extempore carpenter than in that of the unqualified biographer; since the one deals with tangible material agencies, and the