

WATTEAU

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649434022

Watteau by John W. Mollett

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JOHN W. MOLLETT

WATTEAU



ANTOINE WATTEAU. *By himself.*

21734

"The whole world without Art would be one great wilderness."

WATTEAU

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JOHN W. MOLLETT, B.A.

OFFICIER DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE, FRANCE,
AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF WILKIE,"
ETC.



LONDON :
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, FLEET STREET.

1883.

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INTRODUCTION.

WATTEAU'S WORK AND POSITION IN THE HISTORY OF ART.

FONTENELLE has a fanciful theory that the inspiration of art and letters is acted upon like a barometer by the weather.

"The eighteenth century," he says, "was distinguished with a mild sun and laughing sky, and earth covered in roses. France was a universal garden rich with the sweetest and most enervating perfumes. Then were born two delicate children destined to give spirit and colour to their age; they were Voltaire and Watteau, the representative poet and painter of the eighteenth century."

In the same spirit M. Arsène Houssaye speaks of the parallelism of art and letters.

"Poussin, Le Sueur, Champaigne, and Le Brun are a good pendant to Corneille, Molière, Boileau, and Racine. La Fontaine has no pendant, he was himself poet and painter. In the eighteenth century grandeur and simplicity meet. Voltaire, who is only poet by the lightness of his grace, was born at the same time as Watteau, with the same fire of genius, the same caprice. Marivaux, Gentil-Bernard, Crébillon-le-gai, and Boufflers are contemporaries of Van Loo, Boucher, La Tour, and Fragonard. Later on Greuze and Florian appear together; then David and Prud'hon contend nobly with Marie-Joseph Chenier and André Chenier, and thus painting and poetry advanced hand in hand in France."