

**OLD MASTERS AND
NEW: ESSAYS IN
ART CRITICISM**

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Old Masters and New: Essays in Art Criticism by Kenyon Cox

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Essays in Art Criticism

BY
KENYON COX



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TO JOHN LAFARGE

who best, in our day and country, has exercised the right of the artist to speak on his art, these essays, with which he will not always agree, are respectfully inscribed by

THE AUTHOR

THE GOSPEL OF ART

WORK thou for pleasure ; paint or sing or
carve

The thing thou lovest, though the body starve.

Who works for glory misses oft the goal ;

Who works for money coins his very soul ;

Work for the work's sake, then, and it may be

That these things shall be added unto thee.

PREFACE

THESE essays, in their original form, have appeared at various times during the last twenty years, about half of them in *The Nation*, the others, with one exception, in various periodicals. In preparing them for appearance here I could do no less than submit them to a pretty thorough revision, removing everything that seemed temporary in its interest and making such additions as, in some instances, have amounted pretty nearly to re-writing. I hope that the result will be found to have more consecutiveness and to be less ill-proportioned than might perhaps be expected in a volume thus made up of scattered papers produced at wide intervals of time by one mainly engaged in other work. The book cannot, indeed, make any pretension to be a systematic history of art, although it deals, incidentally, with many more artists than those whose names figure in its chapter-headings. It is rather a series of appreciations of individual masters, though something like a general view of the course of painting since the sixteenth century may, perhaps, be made out from it. At least it has the unity of a point of view—that of a painter, seeing with his own eyes and not bound by authority—and expresses the

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feelings, the judgments, to some extent the special knowledge, of one who practises, however humbly in comparison, one of the arts of which he writes, and who may, perhaps, be supposed to have an insight into the aims and methods of his greater fellows denied to profounder intellects or more brilliant literary craftsmen.

The essays which have been least altered are the earliest ones and the latest; the latter because they express my present mind as I should now express it; the former because it seemed best to leave them their somewhat youthful tone, merely endeavouring that they shall contain no opinions which I do not still hold. The earliest of all in date, that on "The Sculptors of The Early Italian Renaissance," undoubtedly owes its existence, in part, to unconscious memory of an essay of Pater's which I had read some years before. The traces of its origin could not be removed without removing its truth, for Pater had said what I wanted to say. I can only leave it with the warning that I claim no originality for it. Indeed I care much less that any of my criticisms should be new than that they should be just, and it is likely enough that many of them will be found to coincide with those of other writers whom I may or may not have read.

The account of the earlier work of Augustus Saint Gaudens was written while that work was still fresh, and before many of his most important creations were

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so much as dreamed of. The Lincoln, the Adams Memorial, the Shaw Monument, the great Sherman Statue, (to name but a few of the works which have given him his present commanding position among living sculptors) were still in the future. With the last of these I have dealt at some length in my concluding essay. The earlier essay may possess some interest as showing how his first brilliant performances impressed a sympathetic contemporary, and I have therefore reprinted the greater part of it essentially as it was first written.

Especial thanks are due to the Century Company and to the Messrs. Putman for allowing me to use material which had already appeared in book form. Such symmetry as I have been able to attain would have been greatly marred without the essays on Baudry and Puvis de Chavannes or the general view of "Painting in the Nineteenth Century." The "Baudry" was originally written for Mr. John C. Van Dyke's "Modern French Masters," where also appeared, reprinted from the *Century Magazine*, the paper on Puvis. Both will be here found considerably altered, and, I trust, improved. The paper on nineteenth century painting was written for the *Evening Post* and afterwards appeared in "The Nineteenth Century—A Review of Progress" published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

To all the other publishers who have given me, first, the occasion to write, and afterwards the per-