

**A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION  
OF A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL  
DRAWINGS AND SKETCHES BY THE OLD  
MASTERS OF THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF  
EUROPE, FROM THE REVIVAL OF ART IN  
ITALY IN THE XIII<sup>TH</sup> TO THE XIX<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

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A Brief Chronological Description of a Collection of Original Drawings and Sketches by the Old Masters of the Different Schools of Europe, from the Revival of Art in Italy in the XIIIth to the XIXth Century by Mr. William Mayor

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A Brief Chronological Description

OF A COLLECTION OF

# ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

AND SKETCHES

BY

THE OLD MASTERS

OF THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF EUROPE,

*From the Revival of Art in Italy in the XIIIth to the XIXth  
Century;*

FORMED BY THE LATE

MR. WILLIAM MAYOR,

Of *Dayswater Hill, London,*

THE RESULT OF UPWARDS OF FIFTY YEARS' EXPERIENCE AND  
RESEARCH.

LONDON.

—  
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## PREFACE.

**T**HAT drawings and sketches have been held in estimation from the earliest period numerous examples still existing in the possession of Continental museums and private families sufficiently attest. And as art progressed, and England began to waken to its importance, having no native produce of our own, royal and noble persons soon began to exchange their wealth to obtain in return a property that, while it affords delight to the possessor, imparts information to the beholder. It was by these means that Henry VII. first became acquainted with the works of Maubeuze and Torrigiano, and that his son Henry sought to induce Raffaele and other eminent men to come to this country.

The first collector who systematically got together the drawings and sketches of the great masters was Giorgio Vasari, the friend and pupil of Michael Angelo, consequently the contemporary of many of the eminent men upon whose works we now look with so much respect and admiration. His collection consisted of several volumes, which he often refers to in his *Lives of the Painters*. They were preserved with great care, and the ornamental borders with which he mounted them are not esteemed as the least valuable of his designs. Vasari's example was followed by the Italian nobility and gentry;\* hence it is that our

\* Cardinal Leopold collected many thousand examples from the age of Cimabue to his own time, preserved in Florence in about one hundred volumes.

kings, dukes, lords, and gentry, brought to England so many fine examples.

The same desire to possess these masterpieces—these stepping-stones to excellence and grammar of art—that influenced the Italian nobility had its counterpart in Henry VIII., to whom we are indebted for so many fine drawings by Holbein remaining in this country; and it is something to our credit that it was in England, whose climate to the end of the eighteenth century was said to be prejudicial to the growth of art, he learnt painting in water colours.

The first collection of drawings of a miscellaneous character made here was that formed by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, part of which was sold when the Earl left England, many of them passing into the collection of Charles I. After the death of the King the important collection he possessed was sold; and among the buyers of his drawings was one foreigner in particular, a wealthy man, of good taste and judgment, viz. M. Everard Jabach, a Parisian banker, who bought very largely and carried them to Paris, where, in the Rue St. Méry, he had formed a vast assemblage of the choicest description of works of art. After a lapse of seventeen years, in consequence of his affairs becoming embarrassed, he proposed to the King (Louis XIV.) to sell his collection. The monarch consulted with his Minister Colbert, and decided to purchase the drawings by the old masters and the pictures, leaving it to him to arrange the terms. After the affair was concluded they became the property of the Crown, and were conveyed to the Louvre, where they have since remained.

Other collectors soon arose in France, and pre-eminent among them was M. Crozat's, whose collection consisted of 19,000 examples, many of them small and slight, but, as Richardson said, 'All were good.' Many of them he purchased from the Marquis Antuldi, who inherited them from his ancestors, who had them direct from the artists. A large portion of this collection, including many fine Raffaelles, was purchased by the Empress of Russia, and are now in the Hermitage. Another large purchaser was the custodian of the collection, M. Mariette, at whose death they were sold by auction. An interesting catalogue of this sale,



with drawings on the margin of the choicest pieces, is in the collection of the Earl of Ellesmere.

The taste for drawings by the great masters created by the King and the Earl of Arundel seems never to have been lost in England. Sir Peter Lely formed a collection, to which he subsequently added by purchase the remaining half of the Arundel collection, and at his death the sale by auction produced 184*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* Philip Henry Lankrink, who assisted Lely by painting the backgrounds to his pictures, bought more largely at the sale than he could afford to pay for, and they were resold during his lifetime; but the greatest purchaser was William Gibson, the artist, who added by this opportunity very largely to his collection. Rubens had previously collected many drawings of the Italian school, but as he mostly wrought upon them, they have to a certain extent lost their individuality, and merged into examples by his hand. Vandyke occasionally did the same.

Riley formed a large collection, which Richardson inherited by marriage with a relative of the artist.

Talman, son of the architect, formed his collection chiefly during a residence in Italy.

Howard had several fine drawings, now at Chatsworth.

Jervais was another who, with wealth and opportunity, formed a splendid collection, which was sold in 1741. Richardson's sale of 4749 examples extended over eighteen days, many of them being purchased by his son-in-law Hudson; and Reynolds, the pupil of Hudson, in like manner bought a great many specimens at Hudson's sale. Sir Joshua's drawings were sold by auction after his death, and many were bought by and added to the collection of Benjamin West, whose collection again in turn came to the hammer.

Cosway and Otley formed collections, the latter having purchased at Florence the drawings consigned there by Vicars. It may not be out of place to remark, that the Chevalier Vicars, for his excellent judgment, was employed by the French Government during the invasion of Italy, to select such pictures as he considered worthy of the French nation. This gave him introduction to all the collections, public and private; and as drawings and

sketches were not included in his instructions, he contrived to do considerable business in this way upon his own account. But the choicest collection ever formed was that made by Sir Thomas Lawrence at a cost of upwards 70,000*l.* It contained 5000 examples, 3500 of which were of the choicest character. Unfortunately, in an evil hour, 1500 examples, set apart as of a secondary character, or to be excluded altogether, got incorporated with them, much to the deterioration of the collection. An estimate of the value, which drawings and sketches are to the arts of a country, will be seen in the fact, that all these collections were made by the most eminent artists of the day, among them three Presidents of the Royal Academy, and that the drawings, like a heirloom, have regularly descended to our own period. Hence it is, that while many of the pictures of which they were the parents have ceased to exist, they still live and preserve a spirit and freshness, that keeps alive the reputation of their great authors.

Other collections have been formed in England, such as the Duke of Devonshire's, at Chatsworth; the collection at Windsor, which, when inherited by her Majesty, was contained in fifty volumes. Dr. Mead had a numerous collection. Charles Rogers' sale occupied nine days; Fagel's, six; that of General Morrison, to whom Mr. Kimpton had bequeathed his collection, ten days. John Burnard's collection contained 1700 examples; and Lord Spencer's sold for upwards of 1330*l.*; not to mention those of Lord Pembroke, Mr. Pond, &c.

The enterprise of taste and trade has contributed largely to the introduction of this description of works of art into England. The Padre Resta, whose portrait Carlo Maratti etched looking at a drawing, formed a fine collection, which afterwards belonged to the Bishop of Urezzo. This collection Lord Somers, when ambassador at Naples, purchased and brought to England. Benedetto Luti's collection, of nearly 1500 drawings, was bought and brought to England by Mr. Kent. Mr. Bouverie bought, from the descendants of Guerchino, the drawings that had remained in their possession since that artist's death. They are exceedingly fine, and may be known by his mark upon them—a small B. The Messrs. Woodburne purchased from the Marquis Vindé, for 5000*l.*,

the celebrated Digonville collection, as they also did that of Count Legoy's small but choice collection of 138 drawings; and the remainder of Vicars' drawings, which he had in Paris. All these they sold to Mr. Dimsdale, and at that gentleman's death they were dispersed. It will be seen that most of the fine collections have found their way to this country, and to a great extent still remain with us, locked up in private collections; for, except a few in the British Museum, they are a dead letter to the British public; and it forms a just complaint against the authorities of our public exhibitions, that while the drawings of the great masters of old form one of the leading features in the Louvre, there is hardly a solitary example to be seen publicly in England.

Mr. Mayor, who formed the present collection, has done so under very favourable opportunities. In early life his love for art caused him to place himself in the studio of Haydon, at that time considered the most prominent historical painter of the day. Here he formed a friendship with his fellow-pupils, the Landseers, W. Bewick, and George Lance; men whose works are held in the greatest estimation. His instruction under Haydon led him to see and appreciate the importance which drawings by the old masters were to one seeking information; and desiring to mature his judgment, he journeyed to the Continent.

An introduction, shortly after his return, to Sir Thomas Lawrence (who complimented him upon his discrimination, showed him a portion of his own collection, and desired to possess some of the sketches he had purchased), appears to have had its influence upon his future movements, for from that period, for half-a-century all but two years, he devoted his entire attention to this one pursuit. Thus, with an artist's education, an eye most sensitive to originality of execution, and time and means at his command, for purchasing and acquiring an acquaintance with the several masters, he became, both at home and abroad, where he spent much of his time, an authority on the subject, and unquestionably his influence was very great. As a matter of course, in forming the present collection he acquired a vast number of examples which he did not care to keep. These he disposed of, making no secret of their not belonging to his private collection.