

**A LECTURE ON THE
HISTORY, PROGRESS AND
PRESENT STATE OF ART
EDUCATION IN ENGLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649295333

A lecture on the history, progress and present state of art education in England by Mr. Primrose

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MR. PRIMROSE

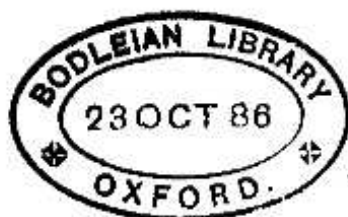
**A LECTURE ON THE
HISTORY, PROGRESS AND
PRESENT STATE OF ART
EDUCATION IN ENGLAND**

A LECTURE
ON THE
HISTORY, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE
OF
ART EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

BY THE
HON. MR. PRIMROSE,
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

London and Cambridge:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1868.

26322.e.3



*This Lecture was delivered at the Old Schools, Pound Hill,
Cambridge, on December 4, 1867.*

A LECTURE.

I HAVE experienced, I confess, not only great gratification, but also considerable surprise at having been invited to address a few words to you this evening: gratification on account of the sentiments that have been so kindly expressed towards me; surprise because I am so fully conscious how incompetent I am to do justice to however trifling a theme. The reason therefore why I consented to speak on this subject was, not that I considered myself able to cope with any authors who have ever treated of it, but because it, of all others, most deeply interests me, and is of the chiefest importance to you. And as preface I may remark that I have taken especial pains to avoid all arguments about such subjects as can be only referred to questions of propriety and taste; and that I have undertaken to trace, as far as I am able, the gradual

development of Art in this country, not to point out what I consider to be the correct and most beautiful style. I have therefore abstained from drawing any comparisons between what I might establish as indisputably right, and that which I might condemn as absolutely wrong: for I consider that it is not only difficult but even vainglorious for one man, however educated and refined his taste might be, to seek to determine by his private opinions what others are bound to admire and imitate. It is not by any contrasts, however startling, between ideal beauty and actual reality that we can expect any greater artistic feeling to be developed in this country; for that which some might condemn, others might prize, and that which one might deride, another might loudly praise; but it is by a strict adherence to all the guiding principles of Art, and an accurate investigation as to their soundness and truth, that such an object can be attained. Art depends as much upon the mind as upon the hands of those who attempt it. It is not a mere question as to what attracts the eye or rivets the attention: I have no doubt but that if it were, many would infinitely prefer the garishness of modern to the mellow tints of ancient works; but we have to consider further, when we examine a production, the poetry and sentiment

that have called it forth, or the grace that it expresses.

We shall best observe the progress of Art by the separate examination of its branches; and I shall consider, under the title of branches, all the sciences and manufactures which have received its impress. It has been truly remarked that every science has its corresponding art, because in life all our thought has an aim in action under pain of becoming sterile or fantastic. But although Art is necessary as a primary impulse and a concurrent aim to science, yet, at a certain period of advancement, it is indispensable that we should accurately separate them. Their respective domains are distinct though united. To one belongs knowledge with prevision as result; to the other, power with action as result. But as soon as Science becomes fairly constituted, it must pursue its own development without any regard to other aims than those of knowledge. With the lapse of years, many useful and beautiful arts have either become degenerated or have altogether been forgotten. No doubt in the Dark ages which followed the comprehensive Roman age and preceded the beauties of the Italian schools, few made it their object to preserve the secrets by which many of the ancient works were executed; certain it is we have altogether lost the

arts of engraving on crystals or granite which the Egyptians practised, or the art of producing those gorgeous colours which we see in old glass, such as that of the Venetians, and some specimens of which, obscured by dirt, are still remaining in the windows of King's College Chapel. Again, though till the time of Cimabue all painting was carried on through the medium of caustic or water colours, the ancient frescoes are as vivid and fresh as on the first day of their commencement, while now those which decorate the newly-built Houses of Parliament in London are already fading and peeling away. In jewelry we can also observe, on comparison with the few ancient specimens which still exist to us, how Art has so degenerated, as it becomes now more a question of solidity than of ornament. While abroad I heard of an example of this. A beautifully finished antique chain was found among the ruins of Pompeii, and shewn to the principal goldsmith at Rome, who alone, of all I have ever seen, most closely imitates and reproduces old work. This man declared it quite beyond his power to copy it, for either he had not sufficient delicacy of manipulation, or the art of executing such ornaments had completely declined. A similar reflection was a sorrowful one to Gibson the sculptor, who exclaimed, when examining a newly-discovered

bronze figure of Hercules. How melancholy it was to consider that after all his life of labour and toil he had never acquired so great and so thorough a knowledge, or attained to such a pitch of perfection, as in that before him there.

The art of enameling is another of those that have almost entirely declined since the 17th century. In England few examples remain which can shew how far this branch of art was cultivated, or what a degree of excellence it reached. The most celebrated is the jewel which from its superscription has received the name of Alfred, and which was found near Athelney Abbey. The method employed in its construction has been that which is now known as the *Cloisonné*, and it shows evidence that the Saxons had arrived at a great skill in such manufacture. Since then, however, the decadence of such work in Great Britain is most marked, and at the present day it may be said to have almost entirely ceased. At Limoges in France, on the other hand, Limousin succeeded in producing the most beautiful enamels that have ever been made, and during the 16th century this art became excessively flourishing in that country. Several methods of enameling were practised. The earliest of these, said to have been known to the Egyptians, is called the *Champlève*, by which the vitreous bodies form-