

**THE
CONSERVATION
OF PICTURES**

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The conservation of pictures by Manfred Holyoake

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MANFRED HOLYOAKE

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ICTURES;

BY
MANFRED HOLYOAKE,
(MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED ARTS' INSTITUTE).



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RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
TO
RICHARD WESTMACOTT, R.A., F.R.S.,
PRESIDENT
OF
THE ASSOCIATED ARTS' INSTITUTE:
AS A CONTRIBUTION IN THE INTEREST OF ART,
WHICH, IN ITS WIDEST SENSE,
IT IS THE
HOPE AND AIM OF THE MEMBERS TO ADVANCE:
BY
MANFRED HOLYOAKE,

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PREFACE.

At this time when the Fine Arts are making unexpected progress, Pictures are multiplying, and every year greater sums are being given for them, the importance of their preservation renders necessary whatever information, experience, art or science can give to the public upon them. This small book is an effort in aid of that object.

The discussions in Parliament which, not only recur with greater frequency than formerly, but are sustained by a greater number of speakers; some of whom continue their criticisms through the press, show that the whole question of the Restoration, or to use the wider term, which the progress of art justifies—the Conservation of Pictures, is one which few persons have studied as a whole, probably because still fewer writers have tried to state it, than from any want of the candour of enquiry on the part of those opposed to it.

The diversity of opinion which exists as to the possibility of an Art of Restoration, and the incompleteness of

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- VI. OIL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC COPIES
- VII. THE COMMERCIAL IDEA OF RESTORATION
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LIMITS OF PICTURE RESTORATION.

CHAPTER I.

IT would be useless to discuss the subjects of this book with any strictness of appropriate order, until the mind of the general reader, who may look into it, is disabused of a prejudice against the subject which it is almost impossible he has not acquired. The general public have been impressed with the idea—and even the selecter public of Art, more or less, share the persuasion—that the conservation of pictures is impossible. They have been told upon the high authority of connoisseurs, who are in every sense entitled to be heard upon the subject, that picture restoration is in reality the art of picture destruction. Disappointed themselves, and no doubt in many cases justly disgusted, with the destruction which has been wrought on works of Art by ignorance, unskilfulness, and presumption, they have come to distrust every effort which intelligence and experience may make, to arrest the decay of damaged paintings. And

they have diffused abroad an opinion that the dilapidations of time and accident, are less to be dreaded than the operators who profess to mitigate these evils. And an impression prevails, that nothing can be done but to leave these misfortunes alone, and as Shakespeare has said, in view of other inevitable results, to "let determined things to destiny, hold unbewailed their way." These persons believe that the restoration of pictures is some wild and indefinite art—if art that can be called which is supposed to have no certainty in its procedure and no boundary to its operations—and there is no prospect that any interest can be felt, or even passing attention given to a subject which these pages are designed to explain, except by satisfying such readers that there are limits to restoration—limits defined by knowledge and judgment—limits which have been ascertained by research and fixed by experience—within which every operation is certain and every result an advantage.

The most barren details of what those limits are, and how they are discerned and determined, will be information to many; and possibly afford satisfaction to the scruples of all who reflect upon them.

As to the Picture Restorers, it may be supposed, that as things go, there are good and bad in this as in every other profession. But at least as much mischief has been caused by the caprice and want of knowledge on the part of some owners, as by ignorant wilfulness on the