

**PETER PAUL
RUBENS, HIS LIFE
AND GENIUS**

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Peter Paul Rubens, His Life and Genius by Gustav Friedrich Waagen & Robert R. Noel

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GUSTAV FRIEDRICH WAAGEN & ROBERT R. NOEL

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RUBENS, HIS LIFE
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PETER PAUL RUBENS,

HIS LIFE AND GENIUS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

DR. WAAGEN,

PROFESSOR OF THE FINE ARTS AND DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL
GALLERY AT BERLIN, AUTHOR OF "ART AND ARTISTS IN ENGLAND."

BY

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE LORD FRANCIS EGERTON,

This Translation

OF

DR. WAAGEN'S ESSAY

ON

THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF RUBENS

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

BY THE EDITOR.

THE Author of the following Essay, Dr. Waagen of Berlin, is already favourably known in this country by his work on "Art and Artists in England." In Germany he has the highest reputation, not only as a learned *virtuoso*, skilled in technical connoisseurship, but as an accomplished scholar, and an enlightened and philosophical critic on all subjects connected with art.

The Essay on Rubens appeared originally in Von Raumer's "Historisches Taschenbuch," for 1833, under the title "Ueber den Maler, Petrus Paulus Rubens;" but Dr. Waagen has since made considerable manuscript

emendations and additions, which have been incorporated with the text, and it is now published for the first time in an enlarged and corrected form. Dr. Waagen's visit to England enabled him to add a variety of criticisms on celebrated pictures now in this country, which will be especially interesting to the English reader. The translation will be found most faithful to the sense and spirit of the original. The Editor has ventured to add a few notes of no value whatever to the artist or the connoisseur, but not perhaps without interest and amusement for the mere amateur. Some pictures have been added to the specimens noticed in the text, always keeping in view that the object of the work was to give a catalogue of the pictures of Rubens, only so far as they illustrated certain general principles.

Neither our English artists nor our English public are as yet accustomed to that *many-sided* and elevated spirit in criticism with which the Germans have long been familiar : we have among us good judges, excellent artists ; and if not richer in the possession of renowned works of art than our continental neighbours, it is our peculiar advantage as a people, that

such works are more generally diffused through the country and among individuals, than in any other European state. Yet what is the general feeling for art in this country? What shall be said of that torrent of shallow conventional verbiage which is poured upon us from day to day and from year to year, and which calls itself *criticism*? True, there are worthy exceptions to this sweeping censure:* but, on the whole, the present state of criticism and patronage in this country, the one being dispensed by newspapers, the other by booksellers, may be pronounced fatal to the diffusion of any high and general principles in art, or in the taste for art. To know *what* a picture represents, and with what degree of propriety and success it is represented, may be sufficient critical skill for the consideration of nine-tenths of the pictures which yearly cover the walls of our Academy; but to enable us to appreciate the creations of genius, and to reap all the pleasure and improvement which art can bestow, we must go far higher and far deeper.

Dr. Waagen begins by repudiating the common

* The critiques on art, for instance, which appear from time to time in the Athenæum, are written in a finer spirit than is usual.