

**THE STUDY OF BEAUTY,
AND ART IN LARGE
TOWNS, 2 PAPERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649279609

The study of beauty, and Art in large towns, 2 papers by T. C. Horsfall & John Ruskin

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

T. C. HORSFALL & JOHN RUSKIN

**THE STUDY OF BEAUTY,
AND ART IN LARGE
TOWNS, 2 PAPERS**

214.

THE
STUDY OF BEAUTY,
AND
ART IN LARGE TOWNS.

TWO PAPERS
BY
T. C. HORSFALL,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY
JOHN RUSKIN, D.C.L., LL.D.,
HONORARY STUDENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, AND HONORARY
FELLOW OF CORPUS-CHRISTI COLLEGE.

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1883.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

26115

e.

13.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE been asked by Mr. Horsfall to write a few words of introduction to the following papers. The trust is a frank one, for our friendship has been long and intimate enough to assure their author that my feelings, and even practical convictions in many respects differ from his, and in some, relating especially to the subjects here treated of, are even opposed to his; so that my private letters (which, to speak truth, he never attends to a word of) are little more than a series of exhortations to him to sing—once for all—the beautiful Cavalier ditty of “Farewell, Manchester,” and pour the dew of his artistic benevolence on less recusant ground. Nevertheless, as assuredly he knows much more of his own town than I do, and as his mind is evidently made up to do the best he can for it, the only thing left for me to do is to help him all I can in the hard task he has set himself—or, if I can't help, at least to bear witness to the goodness of the seed he has

set himself to sow among thorns. For indeed, the principles on which he is working are altogether true and sound; and the definitions and defence of them, in this pamphlet, are among the most important pieces of Art teaching which I have ever met with in recent English literature,—in past Art-literature, there cannot of course be anything parallel to them, since the difficulties to be met and mischiefs to be dealt with are wholly of to-day. And in all the practical suggestions and recommendations given in the following pages I not only concur, but am myself much aided as I read them, in the giving form to my own plans for the museum at Sheffield; nor do I doubt that they will at once commend themselves to every intelligent and candid reader. But, to my own mind, the statements of principle on which these recommendations are based are far the more valuable part of the writings, for these are true and serviceable for all time, and in all places: while in simplicity and lucidity they are far beyond any usually to be found in essays on Art, and the political significance of the laws thus defined is really I believe here for the first time rightly grasped and illustrated.

Of these, however, the one whose root is deepest

and range widest will be denied by many readers, and doubted by others, so that it may be well to say a word or two farther in its interpretation and defence—the saying, namely, at page 22, that “faith cannot dwell in hideous towns,” and that “familiarity with beauty is a most powerful aid to belief.” This is a curious saying, in front of the fact that the primary force of infidelity in the Renaissance times was its pursuit of carnal beauty, and that nowadays (at least so far as my own experience reaches,) more faith may be found in the back streets of most cities than in the fine ones. Nevertheless the saying is wholly true; first, because carnal beauty is not true beauty; secondly, because, rightly judged, the fine streets of most modern towns are more hideous than the back ones; lastly, and this is the point on which I must enlarge, because universally the first condition to the believing there is Order in Heaven, is the Sight of Order upon Earth; Order, that is to say, not the result of physical law, but of some spiritual power prevailing over it, as, to take instances from my own old and favourite subject,—the ordering of the clouds in a beautiful sunset, which corresponds to a painter’s invention of them; or the ordering of the colours on a bird’s wing, or of the radiations of

a crystal of hoarfrost or of sapphire, concerning any of which matters, men, so called of science, are necessarily and for ever silent, because the distribution of colours in spectra and the relation of planes in crystals are final and causeless facts, *orders*, that is to say, not *laws*. And more than this, the infidel temper which is incapable of perceiving this spiritual beauty has an instant and constant tendency to delight in the reverse of it, so that practically its investigation is always, by preference, of forms of death or disease; and every state of disorder and dissolution,—the affectionate analysis of vice in modern novels being a part of the same science. And, to keep to my own special field of study—the order of clouds,—there is a grotesquely notable example of the connection between infidelity and the sense of ugliness in a paper in the last *Contemporary Review*, in which an able writer, who signs Vernon Lee but whose personal view or purpose remains to the close of the essay inscrutable, has rendered with considerable acuteness and animation the course of a dialogue between one of the common modern men about town who are the parasites of their own cigars, and two more or less weak and foolish friends of hesitatingly adverse instincts: the three of them,

however, practically assuming their own wisdom to be the highest yet attained by the human race ; and their only diversion on the mountainous heights of it being by the aspect of a so-called—"preposterous" sunset—described in the following terms :—

A brilliant light, which seemed to sink out of the landscape all its reds and yellows, and with them all life ; bleaching the yellowing cornfields and brown heath ; but burnishing into demoniac energy of colour the pastures and oak woods, brilliant against the dark sky as if filled with green fire.

Along the roadside the poppies, which an ordinary sunset makes flame, were quite extinguished, like burnt-out embers ; the yellow hearts of the daisies were quite lost, merged into their shining white petals. And, striking against the windows of the old black and white chequered farm (a ghastly skeleton in this light), it made them not flare,—nay, not redden in the faintest degree, but reflect a brilliant speck of white light. Everything was unsubstantial, yet not as in a mist ; nay, rather substantial, but flat, as if cut out of paper and pasted on, the black branches and green leaves, the livid, glaring houses, with roofs of dead, scarce perceptible red (as when an iron turning white-hot from red-hot in the stithy grows also dull and dim).

"It looks like the eve of the coming of Antichrist, as described in mediæval hymns," remarked Vere : "the sun, before setting never more to rise, sucking all life out of the earth, leaving it but a mound of livid cinders, barren and crumbling, through which the buried nations will easily break their way when they arise."

As I have above said, I do not discern the purpose of the writer of this paper ; but it would be impossible to illustrate more clearly this chronic insanity of infidel thought which makes all nature

spectral; while, with exactly correspondent and reflective power, whatever *is* dreadful or disordered in external things, reproduces itself in disease of the human mind affected by them.

The correspondent relations of beauty to morality are illustrated in the following pages in a way which leaves little to be desired; and scarcely any room for dissent; but I have marked for my own future reference the following passages, of which I think it will further the usefulness of the book that the reader should initially observe the contents and connection.

1 (p. 15, line 6-10). Our idea of beauty in all things depends on what we believe they ought to be, and do.

2 (p. 17, line 8-17). Pleasure is most to be found in safe and pure ways: and the greatest happiness of life is to have a great many *little* happinesses.

3 (p. 24, line 10-30). The wonder, and sorrow, that in a country possessing an Established Church, no book exists which can be put into the hands of youth to show them the best things that can be done in life, and prevent their wasting it.

4 (p. 28, line 21-36). There is every reason to