

**THE ROYAL ACADEMY REVIEW.  
A GUIDE TO THE EXHIBITION OF  
THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF  
ARTS, 1858; NO. 1-3**

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**VARIOUS**

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A G U I D E

TO THE

**EXHIBITION**

OF THE

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS,

1858.

CONTAINING

ORIGINAL, CRITICAL, AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTICES OF  
UPWARDS OF 300 WORKS OF ART.

BY

THE COUNCIL OF FOUR.

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1858.



## P R E F A C E .

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THE following pages have been evoked by the notoriously existing want for a critical and descriptive Review, published in a separate form, of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts.

The notices of the Exhibition which appear in the public press and magazines, are necessarily published in a detached and periodical form; and, in the majority of instances, without any order or arrangement as to the position of the pictures in the Academy Catalogue, or any guiding rule in the selection of the subjects for criticism.

Such notices are read, as they appear, with eagerness, interest, and confidence; and though obviously they are not intended as a Guide to the Exhibition, still, if the impressions and opinions they have conveyed, remain upon the visitor's mind when he inspects the subjects criticised, the pleasure and utility of his visit to the Academy must be materially enhanced.

Our aim is practically to extend the advantages of such a system, by furnishing the visitor with a companion through the Royal Academy, more physical than his own memory, which shall speak to him with all honesty and independence (like a

familiar, confidential friend) the language of criticism upon the Works of Art before him.

We need not recapitulate the dangers and difficulties of such a task. In the only other work issued, professing the same object as our own, the Preface contains so many confessions on the Author's part of personal anxiety and weakness as an art critic, that the value of the production, as an independent Review, is entirely destroyed. That we may not be subjected to the same destructive influences, which have affected the judgment of our great Pre-Raphaelite Instructor, we prefer to remain in the anonymous; with this safeguard, however, to Artists and the Public, that, no opinion herein expressed has been formed by one person alone, but is the combined judgment of

THE COUNCIL OF FOUR.

JUNE 1st, 1858.





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INTRODUCTION.

THE present Exhibition, if it does not enhance, will not diminish the reputation of the English School of Art. This is credible, considering that many of the most distinguished artists have not contributed to the adornment of the Gallery; and that the character of the Institution is sustained more by rising men than by persons of higher attainments. This is a fact that has been noticeable for some few years; and the Royal Academicians will do well to look to it, or they may be outrun by their younger brethren, who are fast gaining upon them.

Though some of the dignitaries of the Academy have furnished pictures worthy of the Institution, others have either descended into serious errors or intolerable mediocrity. Among the former are Sir Edwin Landseer, Frith, Egg, Horsley, Stanfield, Creswick, F. Grant, and Sidney Cooper. Among the latter are E. M. Ward, Cope, Hart, Charles Landseer, Jones, Witherington, and Chalon.

Maclise's gigantic intellect overflowing with fertility of invention, accuracy and grandeur of drawing, and wonderful perception and delineation of cha-

racter is missing; and the abundance of meritorious works around us fails to supply the vacuum he has left or to compensate for his absence. We miss also Sir Charles Eastlake, the President of the Royal Academy, with his learned, quiet, religious, tasteful and unaffected works, hardly appreciated by the multitude; Herbert, with his conscientious, gorgeous, but rather mediæval pictures (what has become of his large cartoon that the knowing ones promised us this year?); Dyce, with his clever and finished execution (when will he favour us with another specimen of his talent like "The Arrow of deliverance"?); Lee with his refreshing mountain streams, that we long to fish, and Frost with his consummate representation of the female figure, chaste and classic.

The leaders of the Pre-Raphaelites have not this year contributed their wild extravagancies. This is congratulatory; though we grieve to observe a tendency to this false style of painting pervades many of the works on the walls. Some of the new associates have fully justified their elevation. Among whom we may conspicuously notice Mr. Philip, who has furnished

several gorgeous and powerful representations of Spanish life; Horsley, who still progresses in his beauty of painting and power of rendering a story, and Frank Stone who is also advancing.

In slovenliness Mr. Ward carries off the palm. While in honest and careful painting Le Jeune, F. R. Pickersgill, Dobson, and Horsley excel, and set a pattern which many more honoured artists would do well to imitate.

The most attractive production is Mr. Frith's Derby day; which daily gathers a crowd of admirers.

One peculiarity of the Exhibition is the contribution of a quantity of large portraits in oil, by three gentlemen who have hitherto distinguished themselves in a different branch of the art. We allude to Sir Wm. Ross, R.A., and Mr. Thorburn, A., the miniature painters, and Mr. Richmond, A., the crayon draftsman. This is a change to be regretted. It also excludes many meritorious works from the Gallery: because these gentlemen having the privilege of Royal Academicians and Associates—viz., the right, each to have eight pictures hanging in good positions, the extension of the size of their portraits, expels the works of younger but deserving men. And this suggests the

pressing want, increasing yearly, for additional room in the Academy to accommodate a larger number of paintings, and also to enable every picture to be so placed that it can be properly seen—a subject which we shall have occasion to notice fully in our next year's Review. At present, we may however remark, that since, principally from the want of space, as many contributions to the Exhibition are generally rejected as are exhibited, the privilege to which we have alluded, should be sparingly exercised. Sir Wm. Ross, Mr. Thorburn, and Mr. Richmond, have not been so very considerate of others. The latter has sent his full eight pictures (we should have preferred the space they occupy), and Sir Wm. Ross and Mr. Thorburn have each favoured us with seven works; and many of the production of these three gentlemen, Thorburn's and Richmond's especially, are of a large size.

And now we have enumerated the salient features of the Exhibition, it would be difficult to discover any work that by its superlative qualities rises preeminently above all the rest; so well have the powers of the different competitors been exercised.

## EAST ROOM.

The first picture requiring notice is No. 7, "*Lord Brackley and the Hon. Alfred Egerton*," by J. SANT.

A pleasing painting of two honest looking English faces.

No. 8. "*An Incident in the Life of Dante*." A. ELMORE, R.A.

"Boccaccio relates of Dante, that passing one day a doorway, at which some women were assembled, one of them remarked, 'That is the man who descends to the infernal regions and

comes away when he likes, and then writes what he has seen."

This is ably executed; but the figure of Dante is a misconception: the head and hands are much too pale. Dante is described by his biographers as a man with a dark olive complexion; and it would appear that his particularly swarthy hue and gloomy countenance frightened even the children of Italy, where fair faces are not so common as in England. Had Mr. Elmore attended to this, he would by contrast have enhanced the beauty of the women. The poet's drapery does not fall altogether naturally; but exhibits too much of the lay figure. The feet of the females are not drawn accurately: the woman at the extreme right has a ridiculously small heel, and all the feet would be improved by a little more instep. Artists do not generally pay sufficient attention to these particulars.

No. 9. "*The Rest by the Way.*" N. O. LUPTON.

A careful landscape, evidently painted on the spot; but the sky wants atmosphere. This artist obtained the Turner Medal last December.

No. 14. "*The High Altar of the Church of San Giovanni e Paolo, at Venice.*" D. ROBERTS, R.A.

Is painted with Mr. Roberts' usual skill in depicting architectural interiors; but it requires concentration. If the left hand side of the magnificent edifice were darker and more massed, greater value and distance would be given to the altar, and this fine representation would be much finer; or if the shadows in the furthest part of the building were more tender and cool, the church would look more real.

No. 15. "*Coblentz and Ehrenbreitstein, from the Moselle.*" G. C. STANFIELD, son of the Royal Academian. Mr. G. C. Stanfield is a rising artist, of whose

other works we shall have occasion to speak as we pass through the Gallery. He has only to proceed carefully in the path he has chosen, and success will certainly crown his efforts.

No. 16. "*View on the Esk, with Johnnie Armstrong's Tower—Scottish border.*" W. D. KENNEDY.

This is very woolly and mannered in colour and execution. Armstrong's Tower is not made of sufficient importance.

No. 18. "*Old Holland.*" C. STANFIELD, R.A.

England's unrivalled marine painter. His works always delight, and tempt us to visit the fickle element. "Old Holland" evinces all the cleverness of execution of Mr. Stanfield; but is not a good specimen of the artist; the clouds are opaque and the water is too solid and muddy.

No. 19. "*Scene from Thackeray's History of Henry Esmond, Esq.*" A. L. EGG, A.

The scene where Mrs. Beatrix dubs the hero knight. Mr. Egg evidently determined to exhibit a "quiet" picture, as a contrast to his powerfully exciting trilogy (No. 372); and we, therefore, have in No. 19 the representation of a scene of comedy. The figures of the knight and Beatrix are admirably drawn, and it is enough to know that the picture is Mr. Egg's to be satisfied that the colouring is in the most perfect style and taste.

No. 28. "*The Children of Henry William Eaton, Esq.*" J. SANT.

Clever, and painted with the artist's usual care.

No. 29. "*The Bluddy Tryste.*" J. N. PATON.

"'Alaik, proude Ladie, quoth the Knycht, 'I spake bote in joste; and thou hast slone the trestest lover that ever lovit woman; for never—so God me help—loved I none other bot thee.' And so he died. \* \* \* \* \* Sche streikit bin straught in the rath blama, ever making