NOTES BY MR. RUSKIN. PART I: ON HIS DRAWINGS BY TH LATE J. M. W. TURNER, R. A.; PART II: ON HIS OWN HANDIWORK, ILLUSTRATIVE OF TURNER. BEING EXHIBITED AT THE FINE ARTS SOCIETY'S GALLERIES, 148, BOND STREET, 1878

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649658688

Notes by Mr. Ruskin. Part I: On His Drawings by Th Late J. M. W. Turner, R. A.; Part II: On His Own Handiwork, Illustrative of Turner. Being Exhibited at the Fine Arts Society's Galleries, 148, Bond Street, 1878 by John Ruskin

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JOHN RUSKIN

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ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF THESE NOTES

HAS BEEN ISSUED BY

THE FINE ART SOCIETY,

AND CAN BE INSPECTED 'AT THEIR GALLERIES,

148, NEW BOND STREET,

LONDON.

PRICE :

BUT FEW COPIES REMAIN UNSOLD.

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PART I.

ON HIS DRAWINGS BY THE LATE

J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

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PART II.

ON HIS OWN HANDIWORK

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148, New Bond Street.

1878.



CRISWICK PRESS :-- CHARLES WHITTINGHAM, TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE

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INTRODUCTION.

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THE following main facts respecting the tenour of Turner's life and work may be depended upon, and should be kept in mind, as they are evidenced by, or illustrate, the pieces of his art here shown.

He was born on St. George's Day in 1775. He produced no work of importance till he was past twenty ;--working constantly, from the day he could hold a pencil, in steady studentship, with gradually increasing intelligence, and, fortunately for him, rightly His true master was Dr. Munro:guided skill. to the practical teaching of that first patron, and the wise simplicity of the method of water-colour study in which he was disciplined by him, and companioned by Girtin, the healthy and constant development of the youth's power is primarily to be attributed. The greatness of the power itself, it is impossible to over-As in my own advancing life I learn estimate. more of the laws of noble art, I recognize faults in Turner to which once I was blind; but only as I recognize also powers which my boy's enthusiasm did but disgrace by its advocacy.

In the summer of 1797, when he was two-and-

INTRODUCTION.

twenty, he took, if not actually his first journey, certainly the first with fully prepared and cultivated faculties, into Yorkshire and Cumberland.

In the following year he exhibited ten pictures in the Royal Academy, to one of which he attached the first poetical motto he ever gave to a picture. The subject of it was "Morning among the Coniston Fells," and the lines chosen for it, these,---(Milton's):

> "Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise From hill, or steaming lake, dusky or gray, Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold, In honour to the world's great Author, rise."

As I write the words, (12th February, 1878, in the 80th year since the picture was exhibited), I raise my eyes to these Coniston Fells, and see them, at this moment imaged in their lake, in quietly reversed and perfect similitude, the sky cloudless above them, cloudless beneath, and two level lines of blue vapour drawn across their sun-lighted and russet moorlands, like an azure fesse across a golden shield.

The subjects of the other pictures exhibited in that year, 1798, had better be glanced at in order, showing as they do the strong impression made on his mind by the northern hills, and their ruins.

> WENSLEYDALE. DUNSTANBOROUGH CASTLE. KIRKSTALL ABBEY. FOUNTAINS ABBEY.