

**CATALOGUE OF THE DRAWINGS
AND SKETCHES BY J. M. W.
TURNER, R. A. AT PRESENT
EXHIBITED IN THE NATIONAL
GALLERY**

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JOHN RUSKIN

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CATALOGUE
OF THE
DRAWINGS AND SKETCHES

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

AT PRESENT EXHIBITED IN THE
NATIONAL GALLERY.

REVISED, AND CAST INTO PROGRESSIVE GROUPS, WITH
EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY
JOHN RUSKIN.

GEORGE ALLEN,
SUNNYSIDE, ORPINGTON, KENT.

1881.

PREFACE.

THAT in the largest, and, I suppose, richest city of the world, the most delicate and precious water-colour drawings which its citizens possess should be kept in a cellar, under its National Gallery, in which two-thirds of them are practically invisible, even in the few bright days which London smoke leaves to summer; and in which all are exposed to irreparable injury by damp in winter, is a fact which I must leave the British citizen to explain: stating here only that neither Mr. Burton nor Mr. Eastlake are to be held responsible for such arrangement; but, essentially, the public's scorn of all art which does not amuse it; and, practically,

the members of the Royal Academy, whose primary duty it is to see that works by men who have belonged to their body, which may be educationally useful to the nation, should be rightly and sufficiently exhibited.

I have had no heart myself, during recent illness, to finish the catalogue which, for my own poor exoneration from the shame of the matter, I began last year. But in its present form it may be of some use in the coming Christmas holidays, and relieve the kindness of Mr. Oldham from unnecessary burden.

The Trustees of the National Gallery will I trust forgive my assumption that, some day or other, they may enable their keeper to remedy the evils in the existing arrangement; if not by displacing some of the pictures of inferior interest in the great galleries, at least by adding above their marble pillars and vaulted ceilings, such a dry and skylighted garret as any photographic establishment, opening a new branch, would provide itself

with in the slack of the season. Such a room would be all that could be practically desired for the Turner drawings ; and modern English indolence, if assisted in the gratification of its languid curiosity by a lift, would not, I trust, feel itself aggrieved by the otherwise salutary change.

INTRODUCTORY CLASSIFICATION.

THE confused succession of the drawings at present placed in the water-colour room of the National Gallery was a consequence of their selection at different periods, by the gradually extended permission of the Trustees, from the mass of the inferior unexhibited sketches in the possession of the nation. I think it best, in this catalogue, to place the whole series in an order which might conveniently become permanent, should the collection be eventually transferred to rooms with sufficient light to see it by: and for the present the student will find no difficulty, nor even a delay of any consequence, in finding the title of any drawing by reference to the terminal index, in which, by the number in the existing arrangement, he is referred to that in the proposed one, followed in the text.

The collection as at present seen consists of four hundred drawings, in wooden sliding frames, con-

tained in portable cabinets ; and of about half that number grouped in fixed frames originally intended for exhibition in the schools of Kensington, and in which the drawings were chosen therefore for their instructive and exemplary, more than their merely attractive, qualities. I observed, however, that the number of these partly detracted from their utility ; and have now again chosen out of them a consecutive and perfectly magistral group, of which it may safely be recommended that every student of landscape art should copy every one in succession, as he gains the power to do so.

This first or 'Scholar's' group, consists of sixty-five drawings arranged, at present, in thirty frames : but eventually, each of these drawings should be separately framed, and placed where it can be perfectly seen and easily copied.

The drawings originally exhibited at Kensington, out of which this narrower group is now selected, were for several years the only pencil and water-colour drawings by Turner accessible to the public in the National collection. I therefore included among them many samples of series which were at that time invisible, but to which, since the entire mass of drawings is now collected, it is proper that the drawings which, by their abstraction, would break the unity of subjects, should be restored. I have

therefore, in this catalogue, placed in complete order all the important local groups of sketches (in Rome, Naples, Savoy, etc.), and retained in the miscellaneous framed collection only those which could be spared without breaking the sequence of the cabinet drawings. And further, I have excluded from this framed collection some of minor importance, which it seems to me might, not only without loss, but with advantage to the concentrated power of the London examples, be spared, on loan for use in provincial Art schools.

The Kensington series of framed groups, originally numbering 153, has by these two processes of elimination been reduced in the following catalogue to one hundred, of which thirty form the above-described 'Scholar's group,' absolutely faultless and exemplary. The remainder, of various character and excellence (which, though often of far higher reach than that of the Scholar's group, is in those very highest examples not unaffected by the master's peculiar failings), I have in the following catalogue called the 'Student's group'; meaning that it is presented to the thoughtful study of the general public, and of advanced artists; but that it is only with discrimination to be copied, and only with qualification to be praised. Whereas, in the Scholar's group, there is not one example