

HINTS TO STUDENTS AND AMATEURS

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Hints to students and amateurs by Louise Jopling

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LOUISE JOPLING

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AND AMATEURS**



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BY
LOUISE JOPLING, R.B.A.

WITH THE PREFACE BY
SIR WILLIAM BLAKE RICHMOND, K.C.B., R.A.

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TO
Her Majesty
Queen Alexandra,

BY WHOSE
GRACIOUS PERMISSION THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

THIS is a charming little book. Brightly written, poignant with enthusiasm, and full of excellent teaching, it is sure to fulfil its purpose : to stimulate the amateur, and encourage the art student novice to serious study, hard, and, perhaps sometimes, dry work.

Reading it reminded me pleasantly of my youth, when all the problems with which it deals were so new to one, when the veil was not drawn, and the limitations were undiscovered. For it seemed so sweet and easy then ; each item of progress pointed to a decade, and it seems centuries since the passionate longing for more knowledge, more system, more "light," drew one on and on with an almost fantastic glitter of possible planets to explore, and fresh stars to discover. This is one of the charms of Mrs. Jopling's book : it is so fresh ; not in the least pedantic or puzzling, or remote ; there is not an alarming page or a discouraging sentence, and yet the noble art of delineation, drawing, and painting, and the accessories to them, are treated reverently as of importance, and not dismissed as things with which "genius" has no need. Genius being one of the most deadly pitfalls to the right development of the artistic temperament, which, apt to be over emotional, unrestrained, and vagarious, needs *travaux forcés* to preserve, anyhow, a little sanity. Yes ! True ! But not real, only sham genius is such, and though it may be perhaps too much to claim for genius that it is the power of taking pains, we may safely, I think, conclude that genius, without taking pains, is not unlikely to end in mental break-up.

Of course ! there is no receipt for the Artist, for his making, everyone knows that ; but there are traditions

of practice which only the foolish will think it advisable to throw aside, that their tiresome, wearying "ego" may shriek discordantly, or shock abominably, or advertise by productions of monstrosities or "freaks." A very dangerous fashion, a sign of decadence, and one which this healthy, sensible book may tend to arrest in the minds of young people too apt to catch at floating stars thinking they are planets.

The title is very modest, "Hints to Students and Amateurs." The book contains much more than that; it may be a reminder even to the older practitioner of his earlier ideals, perhaps sincerer moments than these are of his cleverer days when experience has made things too easy, or to seem so anyhow; perhaps, too, it may make him put on his pinafore and begin again. Anyhow, it made me feel like that.

Yes! Craftsmanship is more than half of art, much more than half. How much more durable is the fine craftsman's work than the illiterate experimenter's in a last "squib" or sham thunder made by fireworks.

It is the insistence of good craftsmanship which appeals from every page of Mrs. Jopling's book that makes it valuable, especially at this moment of "synthetic" rubbish.

Someone once wrote: "Stars appear dim behind fireworks." True! But happily we know that the *stars are there*, and presently the fireworks, their glare and smell of powder and chemicals, will go, and we shall see the stars again, and enjoy the sweet scent of flowers, and be the purer and the better for both; perhaps contrast comes in. Anyhow the great masters, more than stars, the planets in our system, are there, and likely to remain; their methods, too, are respected, their vision applauded, their intelligence undisputed. Thank Heaven there is nothing "new" in Mrs. Jopling's book; indeed, it is delightfully old-fashioned and "commonplace," but so is the Latin Grammar, and so is it that two and two make four, and black is not white; and so is "you must learn to walk before you can run." All admirable truisms, which dexterous