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THE

NEW PATH

PUBLISHED BY THE

SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT

OF

TRUTH IN ART.

"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things that shall be hereafter."

NEW YORK.

1864.

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We, the undersigned, desirous of forming an Association for the Advancement of the Cause of Truth in Art, do agree upon the following Articles of Organization; and do pledge ourselves to carry out, by every means in our power, the principles therein stated.

ARTICLE FIRST.

We hold that the primary object of Art is to observe and record truth, whether of the visible universe or of emotion. All great Art results from an earnest love of the beauty and perfectness of God's creation, and is the attempt to tell the truth about it. The greatest Art includes the widest range, recording, with equal fidelity, the aspirations of the human soul, and the humblest facts of physical Nature.

That the imagination can do its work, and free invention is possible only when the knowledge of external Nature is extended and accurate. This knowledge, moreover, with sympathy and reverence, will make happy and useful artists of those to whom imagination and inventive power are denied.

That beauty, in the vain pursuit of which generations of Artists have wasted their lives, can only be appreciated and seized by those who are trained to observe and record all truths, with equal exactness. True Art, representing Nature as she is, discovers all her beauty and records it all. The Art which seeks beauty alone, disobeying Nature's law of contrast and narrowing the Artist's mind, loses beauty and truth together.

Therefore, that the right course for young Artists is faithful and loving representation of Nature, "selecting nothing and rejecting nothing," seeking only to express the greatest possible amount of fact. It is, moreover, their duty to strive for the greatest attainable power of drawing, in view of the vast amount of good talent, of wit, knowledge and pleasant fancy, which is lost and wasted around us every day from mere want of ability to give it due expression.

We hold that, in all times of great Art, there has been a close connection between Architecture, Sculpture and Painting; that Sculpture and Painting, having been first called into being for the decoration of buildings, have found their highest perfection when habitually associated with Architecture; that Architecture derives its greatest glory from such association; therefore, that this union of the Arts is necessary for the full development of each.

We hold that it is necessary, in times when true Art is little practiced or understood, to look back to other periods for instruction and inspiration. That, in seeking for a system of Architecture suitable for such study, we shall find it only in that of the middle Ages, of which the most perfect development is known as Gothic Architecture. This Architecture demands absolutely true and con-

structive building; alone, of all the styles that have prevailed on earth, it calls for complete and faithful study of Nature for its decoration. It affords the widest possible field for every decorative Art, for Sculpture of natural forms, for Painting of every noble kind, for the rendering of noble forms and colors in glass-painting, mosaic, metal-working, pottery and furniture; and it is based upon a system of building more nearly than any other that which we at present need. The exact reproduction of mediæval work is only desirable so far as it may be necessary to regain the lost knowledge of the vital principles that controlled it. Out of the careful study and application of these principles, a true and perfect Architecture is sure to arise, adapted to all our wants, and affording the most ample field possible for the display of our artistic power.

We hold that the revival of Art in our own time, of which the principal manifestations have been in England, is full of promise for the future and consolation for the present. That the Pre-Raphaelite school is founded on principles of eternal truth. That the efforts for the restoration of the so-called Gothic Art, have been, in the main, well directed. That the hope for true Art in the future is in the complete and permanent success of this great reformation.

ARTICLE SECOND.

Our objects in forming this Association are—to secure for ourselves encouragement and mutual instruction, to assist meritorious artists who may need help, to develop latent artistic ability, especially among the class of mechanics, and to educate the public to a better understanding of the representative Arts.

To secure these objects we propose, as we have means, and opportunity shall serve:

1st. To hold meetings as often as twice a month, at such times as may be appointed. At these meetings papers shall be read on matters connected with Art; members shall exhibit works of their own, and shall make such explanation of their spirit and meaning as shall tend to the best instruction of their fellow members; an opportunity shall be afforded for free and ample discussion, formal or informal, of Art subjects, and for remarks by the members concerning matters of observation, experience, reading or thought, which they may think note-worthy.

2*d*. To buy works of Art, which may be thoroughly naturalistic and of unusual merit. To give commissions for faithful studies from Nature. To assist pecuniarily, in the above or in other ways, young men of promise who may show a resolve or desire to devote themselves to truth in Art.

3*d*. To offer prizes for open competition in the arts of Drawing and Painting, Sculpture and Architecture; and in the various branches of ornamental manufacture and design.

4*th*. To conduct or assist public exhibitions of naturalistic art.

5*th*. To conduct public lectures, whether by members of the Association, or by persons invited for the purpose.

6*th*. To conduct a journal or magazine for general circulation, containing critical notices and essays, with any matter that may tend to advance our cause; and affording the Association a convenient medium for such appeals to the public as it may be expedient to make.

ARTICLE THIRD.

The officers of this Association shall be, at first, a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary. The duty of the

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THE NEW PATH.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Society for the Advancement of TRUTH IN ART.

No. 1.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things that shall be hereafter." [May, 1863.

The future of Art in America is not without hope if looked at from certain points of view. The artists are nearly all young men; they are not hampered by too many traditions, and they enjoy the almost inestimable advantage of having no past, no masters and no schools. Add, that they work for an unsophisticated, and, as far as Art is concerned, uneducated public, which, whatever else may stand in the way, will not be prevented by any prejudice or preconceived notions from accepting any really good work which may be set before it. These ar solid advantages, hardly possessed i such a degree by any other society, anu make a good foundation on which to build well and beautifully for the future. All the omens are favorable, and the voices of the gods speak very plainly; nothing is wanting but that the priests fulfill their office worthily.

If we examine the list of the contributors to this year's Exhibition of the Academy, we shall find it set thick with the names of the young. The old names one by one disappear, and this, not because they represent superannuated, or feeble, or dead men, but because the breath of the new dawn which has already risen on our country blows too freshly and keenly for any but the young in spirit, in hope and courage, to breathe. It would be wanting in grace to speak harshly of men, the memory of whose works is fast disappearing from the minds of the people as the works themselves are slowly leaving the walls of the Academy. They have done their work, and done it, no doubt, to the extent of their ability; our business is only to bid them "Farewell," while we turn to greet the young Americans who are to inaugurate the new day. It is no disgrace for the elders to have failed. Failure was foreordained. We cannot justly rebuke them, because, after forty years' uninterrupted labor they have given us not a single work which we care to keep, for they have worked under influences hostile to study and to the culture of Art, with no spur from within, and no friendly or sympathizing audience without. Good work has never been produced under such influences.

But for the younger men there is no such plea. The next generation may perhaps see a better time, but this is good enough. The old time was an era of political subsidence and stagnation. Hardly had we outgrown our colonial dependence; new-hatched as we were, many unseemly pieces of the old shells and straws from the nest still stuck to our feathers; the mother-hen, who did not know that she had hatched a swan, but thought us like herself, mere "tame, villatic fowl"—has even yet hardly ceased her admonitory cries and cluckings at our efforts to swim for ourselves, and, indeed, this reproach was fairly brought against us, that our literature and our Art were only copies,

and feeble copies at the best, of European originals. But, within a few years, there has been a great change; a new tide has set in; our independence on Europe has begun to be something more than a name. In literature, in religion, in education, in society, in art—we are fast sweeping into the glad new year when America shall sound the trumpet-call, and marshal her children to do her work in her own free way.

The young men, therefore, have the field to themselves, and they enter upon it untrammeled. They have not to fight the old men—these have quietly given place to the rightful masters of the soil. They cannot complain that the time is dull, and the people thick-witted and slow to learn. They ought to leap with the strength of youth into this unfenced acre and take full possession. It is theirs. Can they do it? Will they do it?

And not only are the men, whose names are beginning to make themselves heard, young men, but they are free from the weight of tradition and the tyranny of masters and schools which hinder and cramp the young artist elsewhere. As far as the people at large are concerned, if we may judge by what we hear and read, and by the pictures that are most eagerly bought, it would not be easy to under estimate their knowledge, or their power to distinguish good from bad. Nor are we prepared to believe that a whole people anywhere or at any time has been thoroughly informed, or instinctively right in its judgments in these matters. Wherever we find an interest in Art, and true perceptions in Art widely diffused through any community we shall discover on examination that it is the result of education, and has been brought about by a few men working, consciously or unconsciously, on true principles and with earnest zeal. And one reason why the older Art is as great as it unquestionably is, may be found in the fact that it had a regular and uninterrupted growth from the feeblest and rudest beginnings. The thirteenth century men had nothing of man's work behind them to awe them or make them ashamed; they worked their own will in glad unconsciousness of any standard but simple nature. They educated themselves, and their work educated the people, and what is thus true of thirteenth century, is true of the Phidian age in Greece. Now, these conditions of a childish simplicity and ignorence in matters of Art coupled with a strong and wide interest in such matters—albeit, unformed, untrained—and perceptions naturally direct and true, are nowhere to be found to-day as pure as they are in America. In England the public is not only very ignorant, but it is also by nature unsympathetic; cares nothing for pictures or statues, and has no feeling for good Art developed as yet. And of the educated the class that has shown itself able to recognize good work and willing to foster it, is in a very small minority. All the great public works prove this, and the storm of senseless but furious opposition that assails the Pre-Raphaelites—now somewhat subsiding; as, also, the way in which the old school fights the revival of the Gothic. Yet this very example of England ought to be an encouragement to us, when we see what a revolution the Pre-Raphaelites have accomplished and are accomplishing; if so much can be accomplished in England, where tradition and prejudice are in the very air, what may not be done here in our free land by persistent study in the right way, and by slow but steady education of the people. Our artists have only to work faithfully and con-

scientously, and they will find the public teachable and responsive.

These then are some of the advantages with which the new men take the field. There are others, but we will not dilate upon them now; we rather turn to see what the age has a right to demand at the hands of the artist in return for these advantages. And the first demand she makes is that they shall one and all immediately stop grumbling at the public, and try to find out just how far the neglect, indifference, and, seemingly, deliberate acceptance of poor work that they complain of is their own fault, and how much may be fairly charged to the stupidity and perverseness of the people: our word for it, they will find that there is no one to blame but themselves. Let them look upon their work, in the first place, as something more than a mere means of living. Let them try to get something out of it in the way of enjoyment, love of God's work, a desire to make others sharers in that enjoyment, something, at any rate, beside money. Or, if they will have money, let them try to give the buyers the full worth of their gold, something that shall gather its own interest of pleasure, teaching, culture year by year, as the gold he gets for the canvas or the marble will bear its percentage, and not prove a bargain that having tickled a momentary fancy shall be flung into the garret and forgotten with the whim that prompted its purchase. And this new way of looking at their work, and with the majority of our men no doubt it would be a new way, will speedily bring forth fruit in far better pictures than have ever yet been painted in America; pictures that will give us a right to rejoice in the present and to look forward with hope to the future.

And, again, let these young men from whom we hope so much, turn their backs deliberately and without ceremony upon the rubbish of the past, and if they doubt their power to discriminate between the rubbish and the good work, let them turn their backs upon the past altogether. There was once a glorious time for art, and immortal men who worked in it, but beside that they lived in another world of ideas, and in a time whose spirit can never, and ought never to return, we have little to learn from them but the general principles on which they worked, and when they have so far influenced us as to lead us to accept those principles as our only guides, they have taught us all that lies in their power; further following of them will only lead to harm. We shall become foreign to our time, affected, incapable of helping others or ourselves; the thirteenth century will have done us all the evil of which we have so long accused the sixteenth.

The new path into which the best minds of the present day summon the young to enter, is the earnest loving study of God's work of nature. This is not only taught to the artist, but to the Writer, the Poet, and the Teacher. It is the moving spirit of the age in which we live; an age greater in all essentials than any that has preceded it, second to none in the purity and strength of its religious ideas; in its love of man, which is the best fruit of its love of God; in its tolerance, its enthusiasm, its energy, and in the widespread diffusion of wealth and education, which are saving it from selfishness and dillettanteeism.

A few individuals persuaded of these things have joined themselves together in a Society, for mutual strength, and for the better dissemination of these ideas. They propose to print from month to month a journal in which

they can communicate with others who think with them, or may be led to do so. There is a need of a journal of this sort in which art can be treated with more justice and a broader criticism than it has thus far received at the hands of our public prints. Most of the writing on art which we find in the newspapers is personal, either in what it praises or what it condemns, and is apt to be feebly apologetic if moved to speak with any directness as if artists were made of more fragile clay than other men, and were to be much more daintily handled. We hold to a different view, and believe that to be a good, not to say a great artist, a man needs such powers of brain and heart as are quite inconsistent with irritability or unwillingness to hear the words of frank and generous criticism. While we mean that in these pages what we believe to be the truth shall be spoken without fear and without favor, we also aim to criticize on far higher than personal grounds, and to apply the same tests to works of painting and sculpture that all men are agreed in applying to written works of imagination and fancy.

In conclusion; it may seem that we have given expression to very high and enthusiastic hopes, which are built on very slight grounds of actual performance. There is truth in the criticism, for we cannot point to the works of any one man in proof of the revolution which we predict. But our faith is built on signs which are none the less infallible because they are as yet rather felt than seen. We believe, in short, that at length some new principles in art, few but potent, have been discovered and accepted, and that these principles, taking hold of the younger men, and gradually improving their lives and shaping their work, will in time produce pictures, statues, and buildings worthy of the age and country in which we live.

OUR "ARTICLES" EXAMINED.

An Essay Read before the Association, at the Regular Meeting, Tuesday, March 17th, 1863.

BY RUSSELL STURGIS, JR.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Association,

We have agreed upon and signed certain Articles of organization, expressing our convictions and our wishes in regard to Art. We signed them, it is safe to say with a full sense that we were committing ourselves, positively, to declarations which we must be prepared to positively maintain. We are, it seems, substantially in accord, as regards the great principles which should govern the Arts. We are in accord as regards the principles that are to govern our future action. The declarations of our First Article are to be considered as no longer debatable among us, they are to be expounded to inquirers, defended against assailants, and consulted as the basis of future inquiry and discussion.

It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should each and all examine closely into the exact meaning of every sentence of our confession of faith; that we may ascertain if we do indeed all mean the same thing, as well as use the same words. It is the nature of men, or at least a second nature, to disagree, and to waste much independence in trite assertions of the right of every man to his own opinion. Moreover it is fashionable to look not too sharply at what words mean, and to accept a statement made in *these* words which is postively rejected if made in *those.*

Perhaps we have reformed this indifferently with us, for we profess to be radical thinkers, and those are not hastily formed opinions which are set forth in our First Article. But, in

order that two different persons may really agree in anything, they must be thoroughly informed concerning it, and must both have reviewed it in every possible light. Now it is the curse of Yankeedom to be thoroughly informed concerning *nothing*, but to pass snap judgments on everything that comes within its range of vision. It is the most scarce of American productions, complete knowledge of anything worth knowing. For complete knowledge is the result of *attentive* study and *patient* thought; while the two evil genii of our century and race are just Inattention and Impatience.

So that we have a task before us, if we mean to be of one mind in our work. We have to sift and winnow most thoroughly every one of our theories. We have to follow up our assumptions and beliefs, to their logical results. We have to explore all the side issues, to meet and lay all the spectral contradictions that crowd them, to consider the arguments on the other side, to see how our opinions stand time and wear, and whether they fit all cases alike. This is our duty to each other and to the cause.

Good friends, I am sure none of us will ever wind up or avoid a discussion with the old formulas for ignorance, "Matter of opinion, I suppose." "Let's agree to disagree," and the like. For we know that these things that we care about are *not* matters of opinion. Either that figure is rightly drawn, or it isn't. Either Smith acts Shylock well, or he doesn't. If you and I disagree about these questions, it is because one of us is wrong, perhaps both. Let us, if we wish to act like rational creatures, try to find out where between—or outside—of us the truth may lie.

"But," says some hesitant, not a member of this Association, "*Can* all men think just alike?" No, madam or sir, there are certainly different kinds of minds, and the Radical Reformer who dreads only stagnation, and the so-called conservative who fears nothing so much as change, can never view anything with the same eyes. But, if they are honestly truth seeking, each can apprehend the other's views, and discover how much of truth they may contain. The Radical can certainly respect one who deprecates change until it is proved to be for the better. The conservative can certainly admire one who refers all things to his ideal standard of right, and who fearlessly tears down and builds up, in his efforts to conform to it. And, if there be indeed one truth, both of these truth-seekers can find it, and the two will then agree, or be of one mind, while still viewing all things from their different stand-points. It is *not* the difference of minds that causes hopeless and intolerant difference in opinions, it is want of knowledge, want of attention, or want of brains. The famous shield was cause of quarrel only because the parties were uninformed and fearfully illogical, when they took pains to look into the matter, they found that both were wrong because only half right. And thereafter they were fully agreed as to what the shield was made of.

An old miracle Play, quoted by Longfellow in the Golden Legend, represents Justice and Mercy before the Throne of God, stating each her case, the one suing for man's pardon and salvation, the other showing the impossibility of this, consistently with herself. But, do you suppose Justice and Mercy *disagreed*, all this time? Not so; Conservative Justice was probably glad of the existence and influence of Radical Mercy; Mercy assuredly believed in Justice.

Be sure, good friends, we shall know when the millennium comes, because then we shall all agree. Our duties will be different and our views different; and one will care the most for this work, and another for that; even as in Heaven there are cherubim who *know*, and seraphim who *love*, and "Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers," as well: but when God's kingdom is come we shall believe and understand alike, that we may work together and not in opposition.

To help along such a millennium as this is a part of our business. So I want that we should know, each of us, what we all think about these Art matters, small and great. And so I want to see our whole First Article pulled to pieces and examined, enlarged upon and carried out. If I find tweedledum there, and you find tweedledee, let us see if they are inconsistent, if so,

let us start from the common ground of *tweedle*, and argue the case.

So I, to make a beginning, take up to-night the architectural clauses of that First Article, to say what may be made of them.

"We hold," says the Article, in our name, "that, in all times of great Art, there has been a close connection between Architecture, Sculpture and Painting; that Sculpture and Painting, having been first called into being for the Decoration of Buildings, have found their highest perfection when habitually associated with Architecture; that Architecture derives its greatest glory from such association; therefore, that this union of the Arts is necessary for the full development of each."

It follows that, whenever this state of things does not exist, then is no time of great Art. It does not follow that it must always be a time of great Art when this state of things *does* exist; that depends on the power and truth displayed in each Art, and on the subtlety and grasp displayed in their association; but never mind that, now; let us be content with boldly declaring all Art not answering our description the reverse of great. So shall we narrow the field and simplify our future inquiries.

Let us look back to see what past ages have done. The field is a wide one, the material exhaustless, the research most interesting. Great as is the temptation to linger, and study, and explore in every province and every decade, still we may be able to crowd into an evening or two so much of ascertained fact and safe conclusion as may elucidate the too concise statements of our creed.

Afar back, amid the darkness of the ancient world, we see, dimly enough, great civilizations arise. One after another they flourished and fell, living for us only in their arts. But farther back than early Egypt we can see nothing, unless we recognize a ghost which calls itself China, and may be a fiction of the brain; and which, like its modern double, we can afford to disregard at present. Egypt, then, is the earliest producer of Art. Common consent seems to have crowned her the grandest as well. Karnack and Luxor are the stateliest names in the history of Art. There is no dispute about Egypt's surpassing grandeur.

Her monarchs and priests were lords of uncounted laborers, lords of life and death. They were possessed of resources of mechanical ingenuity which are wonderful even to us in our days of steam and lightning. Labor, and materials, and transportation were theirs at command, and a kingdom's revenues were theirs to reward genius, and to lavish in gold and precious adornments. They reared temples of unparalleled greatness, they piled into artificial mountains the huge blocks brought from distant quarries; they built corridors and courts of such monoliths as, singly, would be the wonder of European cities, and obelisks that, singly, *are* so, they set up by the score, on very slight pretexts indeed. They seem to have carved and polished the everlasting granite as readily as if it had been marble. They had, then, everything that could make mere building glorious. Were they content so? We should have been proud. We *are* proud of mere building, though our most herculean efforts have only produced work that would be third rate in Egypt, third rate, even, of Architecture proper, leaving out of our comparison such formless masses as kingly caprice heaped for its monument, and ranking first the Hall at Karnack and its like—if its like exist or have existed.

But they were not content. Their vast buildings were, by themselves, only half the desired result, or less than half. They were the media, as well, on which those bookless sages, worshippers and historians loved to inscribe their thoughts. Every column is roughened with carving, every slab hidden with painting. The capitals blossom with the lotus, carved as it grew in their river, and painted in colors that yet endure; or, they are modelled after the bell of the water-lily, and sheathed with its green, overlapping calyx leaves; or, the shaft itself being a bundle of Nile reeds, the capital shows how they flower at the top, and how the whole bulges out under superincumbent weight. The avenues leading to the great temples are guarded by rows of granite lions, and, just as real to the Egyptian mind, half-human or half-godlike sphinxes. Wonderfully real lions, too; you can

pat their heads, in the British Museum, if you dare; life-like they are, and lion-like, beyond anything that sculpture has done elsewhere, in spite of their uncompromising material, and the conventional treatment it has made necessary. Then, the flowers of Egyptian land and water, reptiles, birds and beasts, sometimes as hieroglyphic writing, sometimes as religious symbolism, cover walls and columns; nay, even themselves, their kings and heroes, their priests and their gods are enduringly pictured for us to see. Everywhere is the exhaustless record, how it was with them. Hunting, and war, and triumphal procession are there, and indoor life, and palace and domestic interiors, and the story of Egyptian lives from day to day. And all this, not only of persons forgotten to fame or unknown to us, but of the kings and leaders who appear in sacred and profane history, their names written where every one can read them who knows "the letters and the language."

The temptation spoken of above has come. We have glanced curiously and lovingly at the Egyptian palace courts. How can we leave them without examination and study? How unsatisfactory are hints and echoes of such a world as this we are considering! How much to be desired is opportunity for careful and minute investigation.

But it cannot be. We have to cross the sea and the desert, and find a scarce newer civilization exhumed on the Euphrates and Tigris. Scarce newer, I said, but that is only relatively true. Between Karnack and Khorsabad there was time enough elapsed to make the Assyrians modern in comparison. But when Xenophon and his ten thousand were on their famous retreat, they passed over the plain of Nineveh and knew nothing of the great city that had then passed away from earth, while the Egyptian art existed still, though in a feebler fashion. Can I be blamed for calling that civilization scarce newer than the Egyptian?

The architecture of Nineveh and Babylon has been brought once more to light by fearless and diligent Englishmen, during the last forty years. There was no mountainous solidity about this Assyrian work. Barbarian conquerors could only shatter and deface, and time could only cover with grass or with heaped sand the palaces of the Pharaohs; but the great Assyrians cities were laid waste with fire and sword, were levelled with the ground, disappeared beneath the heaped up earth, and were forgotten of men. These Asiatics, therefore, sought a different splendor from that created by their African forerunners and contemporaries. But walk through the corriders of the British Museum, and you will see that the two agreed in one thing. They must needs carve and paint wherever a flat surface could be found; and set up colossal figures for gateways and avenues; and reproduce everywhere their life and their surroundings. You have all seen the slabs at the Historical Society's rooms, and the engravings of similar sculptures in Layard's book. These were the wainscoting of palace halls, and the facing of the walls of palace courts. Around the courts they were high and thick, having in low relief colossal figures of divinities and their ministers, and of kings who built or enlarged the edifice. Within, and where protected by roofs, there was a great variety, single figures, groups, and whole histories in bas relief, from life size to miniature, all flat sculpture on slabs of alabaster embrowned with age, and looking wonderfully like delicate drawings in sepia. Here are battles, the victorious Assyrians pursuing and slaughtering the discomfited enemy, birds of prey hovering over the field; sometimes the flight and pursuit rages along the river bank, the dead falling, and the survivors driven into the water, where are growing the reeds and lilies as they grow to-day on the banks of the Tigris, and where are swimming the ancestors of the fish that Rich and Layard broiled for their breakfasts. Here is the siege of a city, the towers rising on a river bank, the walls battlemented and crowded with bowmen and soldiers, who resist vigorously an attack by escalade. Here is a lion hunt; one lion, pierced by a dozen javelins, drags his hind legs after him hopelessly, for one of the spears has pierced his loins; another is dying, his head bowed between his fore-legs, the blood pouring from his mouth; one attacks the chariot in which sits the king, they thrust him back with

spears; another has torn down a horse, the rider barely escaping; and at last the hunt is over and the servants bear away the bodies of dead lions, eight or ten men staggering under the weight of each.

The spirit and dash of these representations is quite beyond description. The plainness of the story, told with such unmanageable means as bas-relief on a colorless surface, is marvellous. I cannot now dwell on the subject longer, nor is there time to point out the admirable use of these as decorative as well as historical sculpture. We must leave Assyria as hastily as we left Egypt.

Neither can we, without taking time from researches more important, give even such a cursory glance at the architecture of Persepolis and Babylon—nor at that of the Hindus, Copts, and Nubians. An examination would show us that in all of them the same peculiarity is found; that none of these so-called half-civilized nations were content with their architecture until the best painting and sculpture they were capable of, or their circumstances would allow, was grafted upon it. As far as we have been able to ascertain, they had no painting or sculpture other than this. But this they always had, and seem to have been unable to live without, as buildings were raised for worship or magnificence, so they were decorated, as a matter of course, for beauty, for display, or for record. Without such adornment no building was raised of more importance than the rude huts of the people. And they were not unadorned, for bright colors were used as regularly then as drab and dust color are now, and the constant presence of religious emblems and imagery brought something beyond mere needfulness into every tent and house.

Now, as we cross the sea to Europe, we shall stand where all agree in sending us, where we shall be on common ground with conservatives and radicals, where we are sure of sympathizing with all who have a ray of care for the Arts or love for nature.

The Greeks, very early began to hew out an Art of their own, from the traditions and customs of Egypt and Nubia. The connection is perfectly traceable, and the spirit of the work at first very similar. But, being so situated that the study of the human form became easy to them, being soon directed in this path by the uprising among them of great and truthful men, all their exertions were toward this one end. Everything favored the development among them of a perfect school of sculpture. The Egyptians, limited to granite and coarse grained sand-stone, following a system of art requiring the execution of the Artist's conception to be by inferior brains and untrained hands, made all their work deliberately, rightly, conventional. No delicate form can be cut in granite, it will sooner break off. No great thought of one man's conceiving can be cut in stone by another, certainly not by a mere hewer of stone; it is only nineteenth century sculptors that attempt it. So the Egyptians tried for no perfect rendering of the forms of nature, nor did the Assyrians. But the Greeks soon made the attempt, at first with curious results enough. Those of us who have visited Munich remember the sculptures from Egina, the treasures of the Glyptothek. They are very near the perfect thing. We can easily see that the next step was to complete an entire knowledge of the human form, to the throne prepared for the coming of Phidias. And yet, compared with the severe conventionalism of the Egyptians, they seem weak and painful; the attempt is at *realization*, and so far it has failed. But we are sure to come out right, we Greeks, for we have given up everything else for this, we propose to study the outward form of man until we can carve it perfectly, and we have here a perfectly suitable material for the purpose.

And it is even so. Perfection was at hand. The time of Pericles came, the Parthenon was built, and all Athens adorned with life-like sculpture of gods and heroes. If human art has ever surpassed in faultlessness the sculpture of the Parthenon Pediments and frieze, it is only in the Torso of the Belvidere. At the Free Academy of this city you will see admirable casts of the "Theseus" and "Ilissus," of three of the Metopes, and a large portion of the Panathenaic frieze. Look your fill, for work is never done twice, never again will such sculpture be produced by man. The art that consists

in carving the human body culminated in Greece, under the Roman sway, and has been seen no more by man.

This sculpture being producible only by the most able and most cultivated men, who gave their work uniformly a finish as perfect as would accord with its distance from the eye, the Greeks soon learned to demand in everything the same perfect workmanship. The consequence was, that all other and inferior natural forms were almost disregarded in their ornamentation. For the great men, having perfect knowledge through daily sight in the circus, and, to all intents, in the streets and market-places of the glorious farm of man, and that, in a perfection of health and development of which our only idea is derivable from these Greek sculptures that represent it, would not spend their strength in the portraiture of any less noble work of nature, and the lesser men, the workmen, were incapable of perfect finish and spirited portraiture at the same time. That is an universally applicable law. Had the Egyptians insisted on faultless workmanship, they must have been content with lifeless copying. The Greeks chose accordingly, and kept to their choice; so, all the lovely plants of lovely Greece were conventionalized into meaningless ornaments for borders and hems, or flat patterns of uniform color, the temples of the best period being almost bare of carved ornament, other than human sculpture; and the acanthus and honeysuckle ornaments of a later time, being no more like the natural leaves than just enough to hint at their origin. The Parthenon, as a building, is an absolutely naked, undecorated marble shed, subtle in proportion, delicate in outline, all discordancies ruled out, everything done that could be done with flutings and triglyphs. But all was a frame for human sculpture. Colossal figures fill the pediments, forming religious or historical record. Groups in high relief crowd the squares above the columns on the outside. Broad bands of flat sculpture surround the cella walls within the colonnade.

And their painting, so far as associated with architecture, was used only to set off the sculpture, or to serve some useful or symbolical purpose.

The Art, then, of the civilized Athenian differs from that of the barbarous Assyrian, in being narrower in range but perfect in development. How far this exceptional, work of theirs tended to produce or resulted from their peculiar traits of character, it would be interesting to inquire, but it is now beyond our purpose.

To be continued.

A LETTER FROM MR. RUSKIN.

It is with great pleasure that we publish the following letter from Mr. Ruskin. It was written in reply to one from a gentleman in this city asking Mr. Ruskin's authority to deny certain reports relative to alleged changes in his opinions, which had been for some time industriously circulated among us. It might have seemed that these stories, although retailed with the most unblushing impudence, and finished, *ad unguem*, with abundant details of time and place, would have borne their own refutation on their face, for they reported nothing less than an entire change of views, and renunciation of old opinions, accompanied with the most poignant regrets for the delusions into which the author of Modern Painters had led so many well-meaning people. But, was it Heine who said that "whatever crop fails, the crop of fools never fails?" Whoever said it, it has proved true in this case, and enough have believed these silly stories to make it worth while to obtain Mr. Ruskin's denial of them under his own signature.

The first hint of these tales appeared in a letter written from London to the Commercial Advertiser, and published in the issue of that journal of July 6th, 1861. The letter is dated, London, June 23, 1861, and is signed "Ward." It is a worthless compound of ignorance and shallow criticism, quite on a level with the other productions of the same pen, which, under the signature "G. W. N.," so long did discredit to

one of our most excellent newspapers. We quote so much of the letter to the Commercial as relates to Mr. Ruskin, "Ward," is speaking of the Royal Academy Exhibition.

"A number of what are called Pre-Raphaelite pictures have been admitted by the Committee. Why those absurd caricatures of nature are given this title has always been a mystery to me, although I am familiar with the theories and explanations given. Ruskin, while showing me one of this school upon the wall of his dressing-room, confessed that he did not look at it with the same idea which had at first attracted and perhaps blinded him. The truth is that trans-Atlantic art-lovers will never understand why Ruskin has favored in a measure this school, until they see the feeble, childish, unreal condition of art here. The sect called the Pre-Raphaelites are distinct from the mass, because they are earnest, conscientious to a fault, and seem impelled with the deepest sentiment, and most genuine feeling. The Huguenot by Millais, which is familiar to your readers, is one of the best illustrations of my meaning."

Shortly after these letters ceased to be published, probably owing to the return of the author from England, reports of other and more important conversations of his with Mr. Ruskin began to be widely circulated. These stories all ran to the same tune, viz.: that Mr. Ruskin had made no secret of his hearty regret for all that he had ever written about Turner, for this good reason among others, that by his writings he had so raised the price of Turner's works, that it was now utterly out of his power to procure one for himself! that his views had thoroughly changed with regard to Claude, and that he now saw that he had been blinded by prejudice in what he had written against him; that he would give all he is worth if he could take back every word that he has written; &c., &c., &c.

We have no desire to pursue this accomplished purveyor of fiction further, we only wonder if the time will ever come when editors of newspapers will think it worth while to examine with the same care into the fitness of those who undertake to write about art for their columns, that they use in the selection of the men who are to prepare the money article, write the reviews of current literature, or the leaders upon public matters. When they do, writers like "Ward" will find their occupation gone, and one of the delicate wires by which they make their puppet, the public, dance to whatever tune the speculation of the hour demands, broken beyond mending.—But to the letter;

Geneva, February 16th, 1863.

My Dear Sir:—I regret that your letter did not reach me till yesterday, owing to my absence from England.

It is seldom that falsehoods are so direct, pure, and foundationless as those which you have given me this opportunity of contradicting. Every year of my life shows me some higher and more secret power in Turner; and deepens my contempt for Claude.

I believe, at this moment the Pre-Raphaelite school of painting, (centred in England, but with branches in other countries,) to be the only vital and true school of painting in Europe; and its English leader, Dante G. Rossetti, to be, without any compare, the greatest of English painters now living.

Make any use of this letter, and of these statements, that you please; but permit me to express my regret that they should be necessary. Either my works are entirely worthless, or they are, at least in some measure, what they profess to be throughout, demonstrations, or illustrations of truths: not expressions of opinion. If I have not shown that Turner is greater than Claude, (quite infinitely greater,) my life has been wasted. And if I have, inquiries as to my opinions, present or past, are surely irrelevant. Whether I have or not, the facts are ascertainable, (else there is no art of painting;) and the question is not what any one thinks, but what is the truth of the matter. Believe me, my dear sir, yours, very truly,

J. Ruskin.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TRUTH IN ART.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh of January, in the present year, a number of persons met at 32 Waverly Place, in the city of New York. Believing in the overwhelming power of the Truth, especially in Art, they had for some time seen the necessity of a united effort to revive true Art in America, and had assembled at this time to take counsel together, and if thought proper to organize an Association for the better promotion of the end just stated.

A meeting was organized and the usual formality of electing a temporary chairman and secretary gone through with. The objects and ends of such a society were informally discussed and the views of those present were freely expressed. The result was that a Committee was appointed to prepare a form of organization, containing a statement of principles embracing the ideas that had been expressed and generally approved by the assembled company, and to report at the next meeting.

Several meetings were subsequently held, at which the whole subject was discussed, and at length, on the eighteenth of February, the Articles of organization were reported complete, unanimously adopted, and signed by all the persons present. The Association thus became permanently organized and proceeded to elect officers.

The Articles covered the whole ground—Firstly, defining the principles upon which are based all right Art. Secondly, stating what they propose to do to carry out those principles, and, Thirdly, the form of organization, and discipline.

We cannot do justice to the first of the Articles without giving it entire. It says:

"We hold that the primary object of Art is to observe and record truth, whether of the visible universe or of emotion. All great Art results from an earnest love of the beauty and perfectness of God's creation, and is the attempt to tell the truth about it. The greatest Art includes the widest range, recording, with equal fidelity, the aspirations of the human soul, and the humblest facts of physical Nature.

"That the imagination can do its work, and free invention is possible only when the knowledge of external Nature is extended and accurate. This knowledge, moreover, with sympathy and reverence, will make happy and useful artists of those to whom imagination and inventive power are denied.

"That beauty, in the vain pursuit of which generations of Artists have wasted their lives, can only be appreciated and seized by those who are trained to observe and record all truths, with equal exactness. True Art, representing Nature as she is, discovers all her beauty, and records it all. The art which seeks beauty alone, disobeying Nature's law of contrast and narrowing the Artist's mind, loses beauty and truth together.

"Therefore, that the right course for young Artists is faithful and loving representations of Nature, "selecting nothing and rejecting nothing," seeking only to express the greatest possible amount of fact. It is moreover, their duty to strive for the greatest attainable power of drawing, in view of the vast amount of good talent, of wit, knowledge and pleasant fancy, which is lost and wasted around us every day from mere want of ability to give it due expression.

"We hold that in all times of great Art, there has been a close connection between Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting; that Sculpture and Painting, having been first called into being for the decoration of buildings, have found their highest perfection when habitually associated with Architecture; that Architecture derives its greatest glory from such association; therefore, that this union of the Arts is necessary for the full development of each.

"We hold that It is necessary, in times when true Art is little practised or understood, to look back to other periods for instruction and inspiration. That, in seeking for a system of Architecture suitable for such study, we shall find it only in that of the middle Ages, of which the most perfect development is known as Gothic Architecture. This Architecture demands absolutely true and constructive building; alone, of all the styles that have prevailed on earth, it calls for complete

and faithful study of Nature for its decoration. It affords the widest possible field for every decorative Art, for Sculpture of natural forms, for Painting of every noble kind, for the rendering of noble forms and colors in glass-painting, mosaic, metal-working, pottery and furniture; and it is based upon a system of building more nearly than any other that which we at present need. The exact reproduction of mediœval work is only desirable so far as it may be necessary to regain the lost knowledge of the vital principles that controlled it. Out of the careful study and application of these principles, a true and perfect Architecture is sure to arise, adapted to all our wants, and affording the most ample field possible for the display of our artistic power.

"We hold that the revival of Art in our own time, of which the principal manifestations have been in England, is full of promise for the future and consolation for the present. That the Pre-Raphaelite school is founded on principles of eternal truth. That the efforts for the restoration of the so-called Gothic Art, have been, in the main, well directed. That the hope for true Art in the future is in the complete and permanent success of this great reformation."

The second Article, after stating that the objects in forming the Association are to secure encouragement and mutual instruction, to assist meritorious artists who may need help, to develop latent artistic ability, especially among the class of mechanics, and to educate the public to a better understanding of the representative Arts, goes on to say that, to secure these objects they propose, as they have means, and opportunity shall serve:

First, to hold meetings at which papers shall be read on matters connected with Art, and at which members may exhibit their works and indulge in such free discussion and criticism as shall tend to their mutual advantage. Also for the discussion, formal or informal, of Art subjects, and for remarks by the members concerning matters of observation, experience, reading or thought, which they may think noteworthy.

They propose, secondly to buy works of Art which they may approve, and to give commissions to deserving and faithful students for truthful studies from Nature. Also to assist pecuniarily young men of promise who may show a desire to study Art rightly.

Thirdly, to offer prizes for open competition in the arts of Drawing and Painting, Sculpture and Architecture; and in the various branches of ornamental manufacture and design.

Fourthly, to conduct or assist public exhibitions of naturalistic Art.

Fifthly, to conduct public lectures, whether by members of the Association, or by persons invited for the purpose, and

Sixthly, to conduct a journal or magazine for general circulation, containing critical notices and essays, with any matter that may tend to advance the cause, and affording the Association a convenient medium for such appeals to the public as it may be expedient to make.

The remainder of the Articles relate mainly to the details of the organization which are of little or no interest to the public. Among other things they maintain that in order to keep up a high standard of excellence in the work of its members, the Association assumes authority to criticise such works, and the members agree to assent to such criticism.

Since the meeting at which the Articles were adopted was held, the Association has met regularly, and has already entered into the performance of those duties to which they stand pledged.

This, the first number of THE NEW PATH will tell its own story. It will be sustained by individual effort as long as power remains to do so, but should the public assist it by generous patronage it may yet be able to accomplish even more than its projectors ever imagined.

THE NEW PATH will be issued monthly. The Subscription price will be one dollar a year. Subscriptions will be received by any of the members or by the editor. Single copies are ten cents, and can be had of members or at the rooms of the Association, 32 Waverly Place, New York.

All crmmunications to be addressed to CLARENCE COOK, *Editor*, 97 East 29th St., New York.

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