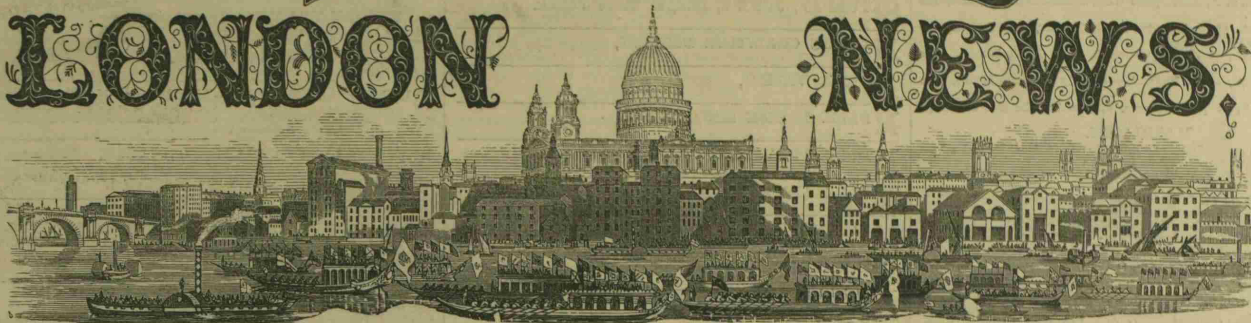


# THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



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## ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

## THE PORTRAITS, ETC.

The portraits do not swarm throughout the exhibition quite so thickly as on former occasions, yet at least half of them have little merit as works of art, and can have little interest to the general public, and it is to be feared that they usurp the place of rejected pictures with more valid claims. When the Academy was founded portraiture was the only form of art that afforded the means of living; now the demand for incident pictures and landscapes is probably tenfold greater than for portraits. The Academy, notwithstanding, continues to maintain a staff of portraitists within its ranks quite out of proportion with the number of representatives of other departments, and to the nearly entire exclusion of the landscapists. There is, of course, scarcely anything, if there be anything, in art higher than the portraits which the old masters have left us. But how many portraits in this exhibition deserve to be regarded as "pictures" in the sense that every portrait should be? As it is, several of the best portraits at Burlington House are by artists who have brought to portraiture experience gained in other departments.

We have already reviewed the portraits by Mr. Millais, whose early works we all know were 's' subject pictures.' Mr. Watts has we believe, rightly or wrongly, always regarded portraiture as a mere *detachment* from these historical and allegorical designs, the aim at idealisation in which has doubtless imparted some of their rare dignity and gravity to his portraits, without in the slightest diminishing their individuality. There are, indeed, no heads in the exhibition at once more individualised and artistic than those of General Sabine (188) and Mr. F. W. Walker (193). It is this combination of artistic elevation with realistic fidelity which constitutes the portraiture that will live. What a pity it is, however, that Mr. Watts persists in working in a key of colour so low and impure, and which time will soon render still more heavy and opaque! Mr. Orchardson takes us by surprise this year with two vividly forcible and artistically-coloured unnamed portraits of a brunette (70) in black velvet trimmed with fur, and an elderly gentleman with a shrewd kindly face in smoking dishabille (359). The touch might be more descriptive and less mannered, and more detail in the modelling might be desiderated. The greys required to express receding passages might, however, with the artist's looseness of handling, have destroyed the breadth of local flesh-colour in full daylight to which the pictures owe their singularly telling effect. A contrast in some respects to these portraits is furnished in the learned draughtsmanship, thoroughly complete modelling, and utter absence of all trick of Mr. Lehmunn's half-length of Robert Browning, the poet (90), which, for the perfection of the qualities we have named and the interest of the subject is one of the most noteworthy portraits of the year. Mr. Ouseley maintains his ground as one of our most rising portrait-painters by the strength and fidelity of his characterisation; but there is a tendency to hardness and blackness which should be guarded against. As likenesses, however, his Charles Darwin (155), H. S. Marks, A.R.A. (29), and H. D. Pochin, the eminent chemist, before his retorts watching some experiment, could hardly be surpassed. Mr. Storey's sense of female grace and sweetness is principally shown this year in portraiture, notably in the half-length of Mrs. Finch, leaning with folded arms on a garden balcony (21), and "The Whip Hand" (1160), a pretty, laughing modern Di Vernon endeavouring to hold back a powerful hound by her whip passed round his collar. A natural, unaffected "motive" for a family group is presented in Mr. Calthrop's picture, as it may with perfect propriety be called, of the "Daughters of Edward Chace, Esq." (285), seated about the breakfast-table. The truthful daylight effect is also excellent. The extraordinarily elaborate finish and the pure colouring which have distinguished small portraits of elderly ladies by Mr. Sandys reappear on the scale of life in the very remarkable half-length of Mrs. Brand (1212). The artist has been exceptionally fortunate in his sitters, and the kindly, amiable expression and silvery hair are so perfectly relieved by the soft black and white crape of the mourning that one wonders at the needless and distracting introduction of vivid red and yellow flowers around the head in the background. Mr. Archer is almost equally happy in his adult male and female and his child portraits—witness the Professor Blackie, with his keen, thin features and long white hair, the figure appropriately plaided, and posed in a Highland glen; "A Lady with a Moorish Shawl" (5)—graceful, and containing pleasant passages of colour, but hard in the contours; and naive, pretty, bright-eyed "Little Miss Primrose" (297).

The styles of the Academician portraits are so well known that an attempt to analyse them anew would be superfluous. The President, despite his recent illness and advancing years, has rarely, if ever, been more felicitous than in his full-length of Colonel Pease (256). The individuality of the head, the manly, easy bearing; the manner in which the difficulty of dealing with the grey uniform (of the East York Rifle Volunteers) is overcome by the warm, transparent brown tones chosen for the background, are alike admirable. Equally happy in choice of occupation and general treatment is the full-length of Mr. J. Whyte Melville (212) equipped in the uniform of the famous St. Andrew's Golf Club. Mr. Sant's large group, in the Great Room, of three young ladies in white (portraits, we believe, of the artist's daughters), engaged over the letters brought by "The Early Post" (191), is unusually broad, brilliant, and powerful. As a painter par excellence of young people and children Mr. Sant is favourably represented in other portraits and groups, all distinguished, like "The Early Post," by invention in the selection of novel and appropriate incidents and accessories (see Nos. 480, 486, and 1175). We can mention Mr. Wells' lifeless and uninteresting hunting-piece, "November Morning at Birdsall House, Yorkshire" (112), only to wonder why this huge testimonial canvas was not hung somewhere above the line, to make room for a few of the many rejected pictures of merit and interest. "The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P." (183), far more worthy of the artist, though he has done better. Mr. Richmond makes a reappearance, in every way welcome, with his half-length of "Sir Moses Montefiore" (200); and Mr. Knight's "James Tyler, Esq." (209), is a fair sample of his later works.

We must perforce content ourselves by adding that among the male portraits of merit and interest are a faithful characteristic bust of the Rev. John Stoughton, the eminent Non-conformist (426), by Sydney Hodges; "The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P." (517) by L. Dickenson—a literal photographic likeness, rather unpleasant in colour; Dr. Percy, first Bishop of Melbourne (437), by H. Weigall; the Hon. Mr. Mervyn (835), by A. Savile Lumley—characteristic and effective; David Smith (224), whole-length, by J. Macnee; "Lieut.-Colonel Wigram" (886), by T. G. Wigram; together with hunting-pieces by C. Lutyens (112) and J. Pearce (836), and a pleasing child group (234) by C. Baerle. And we have to invite attention to the following among the female portraits—An interesting group, the fidelity of which is self-evident, of Madame Lind-Goldschmidt and her daughter (46), by Miss Ribbing, a Danish artist; Mrs. J. Dickinson (230), by C. E. Hallé, very sweet, but so drcamily sweet as to be

dangerously near validity; "Miss Margaret Stuart Wortley" (317), by A. Stuart Wortley, remarkable as a success in portraiture equal to that which the young artist achieved last year in a life-sized in the Lecture-Room, which deservedly attracted much attention. We must here make an *anomaly*, parenthetically, to Miss Stuart Wortley for omitting to mention, among the male portraits, her nicely painted head of the Right Hon. Stuart Wortley (341). Mrs. George Augustus Sala (395), by A. Bacani, has a nice air of truth and refinement, if the taste in colour is unnecessarily reserved; "Isabel" (615), by Val. Princep, a half-length of a young lady for as the Hawthorn-blossoms she carries; "Bessy, Daughter of P. H. Holland, Esq." (143), a very well-painted head by Miss F. Sothern; and Mrs. Keane (440), by E. N. Eddis.

Still life painting—which was so largely practised by the old Dutch masters, and might be cultivated with great advantage by many of our artists who have yet to acquire the technical power of imitation—is very sparingly represented. We only remember to have noted throughout the exhibition a large, vigorous group of "A Heron and Ducks" (371), by O. Scholderer; a couple of flower pieces by the Misses Mutrie in their customary manner (391 and 507); two posies of peonies and daffodils (310 and 1235), painted with a rare union of delicacy and freedom by W. J. Muckley, the head master of the Manchester School of Art; a group of fruit and other objects (103), by E. Ladell, which recalls the Dutch masters in its precision, brilliancy, and elaborate mimicry; and a larger, more elaborate group of flowers, fruits, and vases (1222), beautifully painted by J. Robie.

The collection of water-colour drawings seems to us poorer than usual. Besides the contributions, already mentioned incidentally, of Messrs. Dobson, Ward, and Marks, there is little of importance, while nearly all the exhibitors of mark afford us a better opportunity for doing them justice at other galleries during the year. We may, however, write attention to the contributions of Mrs. Bishop, Leslie Ward, R. Redgrave, R. T. Waite, E. Buchman—"Native Talent," in continuation of his series of modern subjects decoratively treated; E. Bale, F. Williamson, A. Hopkins—"The Mowers," remarkable in several respects; J. J. Curnock, Miss M. S. Stillman—"Mona Lisa"; T. J. Soper, J. B. McDonald, W. R. Beverley—two skilful coast scenes; E. Clifford, R. S. Chattock, A. W. Weedon, F. G. Reynolds, Miss E. Clacy, J. W. Smith, and E. G. Dalziel. The drawings in black and white comprise admirable portraits of Theodore Martin, by S. Laurence; and of Dr. Newman, by that accomplished amateur Lady Coleridge; two or three heads, drawn with exquisite precision, by F. Sandys; and some of Du Maurier's charming designs for *Punch* and *Cornhill*. Mr. Seymour Haden has surpassed himself in his grand etching after Turner's "Calais Pier," and the etchings by P. Rajon, C. P. Slocombe, E. Edwards, and others will delight connoisseurs of this fascinating art. The admirable engravings by Mr. Barlow after works by John Phillip, which we recently reviewed, are here; so, too, are the already famous plates by Mr. T. Cousins after Reynolds's "Miss Bowles," and Millais's "New Laid Eggs," together with T. Landseer's "Baptismal Font," after his brother's picture, and engravings of more or less importance by Lumb Stocks, W. H. Simmons, J. L. Atkinson, F. Stackpole, &c. Miss A. Dixon, E. Moira, E. Taylor, and R. Easton are among those who best represent the neglected art of miniature-painting.

In architecture, Mr. E. M. Barry is conspicuous by his absence. Mr. Pearson, the new Associate, only exhibits a sketch of the interior of St. John the Evangelist, Red Lion-square, now building; and another of the records of St. Augustine's, Kilburn. Mr. R. N. Shaw has a single view of a house showing his clever adaptation of the Queen Anne style. But it is impossible within our limits to examine the architectural designs, even if we could hope to interest the general reader in their technicalities. It must suffice to mention that the following are of more general or familiar interest:—A series of sections, elevations, and views of the premeditated design for the proposed German Parliament House by Sir George Gilbert Scott; view of the American Church of St. Paul, now being erected at Rome; and a view of the memorial chapel to Bishop Wilberforce in Cuddesdon College, Oxon, by G. E. Street; some new portions of Eaton Hall, Cheshire, by A. Waterhouse; views of the new paragon at Westminster, by A. Bedborough, and of St. James's Hall, as rebuilt by W. Emden. Mr. W. Burgess convinces the lay has that "courage of his opinion" by again showing portions of the scheme for the decoration of St. Paul's which public opinion has so emphatically condemned; and there is a design for the decoration of the choir of the cathedral by Mr. Penrose.

## THE SCULPTURE.

That the vastly augmented demand for works of art has to some extent at length reached to sculpture is evident from the increased number of native sculptors and of foreign practitioners of this difficult art who (or at least, their works) are attracted to this country. As a natural consequence, we find greater variety and some improvement, if but slight, in the annual gatherings at the Academy.

During the year, however, English sculpture has suffered by far the greatest loss that it has ever sustained since the death of Flaxman. Long ago we formed the highest estimate of the genius of the late John Foley, despite the public apathy and Academic coolness; and before his death that estimate was shared by all competent judges, and its justice might be established even by the few works here shown by his executors. It must be gratifying to the members of the Academy now to be able to remember that the breach between them and their illustrious brother had been healed before his decease; that it was his intention to resume his former practice of exhibiting his works with theirs; and that he would probably have sent the very examples by which he is represented here for the last time. Death has been busy lately among the sculptors. Besides Mr. Foley we have had within the last few weeks to deplore the loss of Mr. A. Stevens—not, happily, before the virtual completion of his *magnus opus*, the Wellington monument for St. Paul's; of Mr. J. Bernie Phillip—see his spirited and charming group of a peasant woman with her child pick-a-back called "Homeward Bound" (1303); and of the late C. F. Fuller, of Florence—see his bust of Mdlle. Breton (1250). This present exhibition suffers, and future exhibitions are, it appears, to suffer, from the absence of Mr. Weekes, one of our soundest and best sculptors, the reason assigned being the artist's intention to open his gallery (the celebrated gallery of his master Chantrey) to the public after the fashion in Italy. Then this year we have to regret the unexplained absence of Mr. Woolner.

Mr. Foley's works are the colossal marble statue of the Prince Consort, for the University of Cambridge (1330), representing the Prince in his robes as Chancellor; the memorial bronze statue of General Stonewall Jackson, "presented by friends in Great Britain to Virginia" (1325), which the visitor will find in the Lecture-Room; and the model of the bronze seated statue of the late Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness (1305), executed for St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. We should not know which to prefer of these: the intelligence, the princely air, and easy grace, as to "the manner born," of the first; the thoroughly soldier-like carriage and physique, the sagacity

artist's future appearances with interest.

Among works of more naturalistic and realistic aim we have "Lady Macbeth" (1307), by Miss M. Grant—very creditable to the sculptress; "The Finding of Moses" (1311), by T. N. Maclean; "The Friend of the Family" (1354), by J. Bell; "Forsaken" (1299), the "Pfarrers Tochter" of Bürger kneeling frantically over her babe that she has just slain with a dagger, by A. Bruce Joy, a rising artist, who also contributes several busts; "'Tis my Mamma!" "No, mine!" (1334), a very pretty motive for a family group, by O. S. Ruddock; "Cupid and Panther" (1335), a clever version of the old theme of Love taming Brute Force, by G. Simmonds; and a spirited lifesize "Falconer" (1324), by the same. This last, however, in the elaboration of the costume, particularly in the rendering of the very threads of the worsted tights, brings us to a class of works, mostly by Italian artists, in which generally some conceit is offered to the mind; and, appropriately enough, often rendered with a vast amount of curious minute surface imitation. Sculpture is unquestionably degraded from its higher province in proportion as the eye is tickled by such means: yet one is apt to forget the real nature of the art, so great is the ability sometimes displayed in the modelling of the figure, and so extraordinarily skilful the carving of the drapery and other accessories. The most remarkable instance of this is "A Bit of Vanity" (1331), a little girl looking over her shoulder at the fall of her train, by F. Barzaghi, which is simply marvellous. Very ably wrought out within their scope are also A. Tantarini's "Maria" (1310), though the sentiment, as well as the execution, is affected; G. Monteverde's "Genie de Franklin," a winged sprite perched on the top of a tower playfully holding a lightning-conductor; P. Bernasconi's "Un diletto infantile" (1259); and E. Müller's "Innocence Triumphant" (1363), a nude female figure, kneeling like the "Venus Accroupie," clipping the wings of a Cupid—of higher character in the treatment.