

## THE ARTIST.

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THE pursuits of art, like those of literature, have their flowers, their fruits, and, it may be added, their thorns. Like the spring, they are full of hope and blossom: but, like the spring, they are subject to blights and nipping frosts; so that the summer fruits fall short of the fair maturity which might have been expected from the culture and toil bestowed upon the plant of promise. And even when the fruits of art are cherished and ripened by the sun of encouragement or the hotbeds of patronage, there is a bitter mixed up with their sweets, or a thorn springing up with their growth.

But, to wave metaphor, nothing can be more delightful than the pursuit of art; for few things are more productive of pleasure and advantage

than the cultivation of that knowledge which is essential to the practice of it. The pleasure and advantage are so obvious, that to point them out (at least to the intelligent) would almost be an insult to the understanding.

But there is a reverse to this picture.—The devotedness with which the votaries of art cling to their favourite study is liable to so many rude shocks, is attended by so many privations, often from the free air and common light of heaven, but more especially arising from neglect and the various contingencies attending the developement of talent,—that it is not wonderful the frame should be shaken, and the mind at length alienated or rendered incapable of enjoying pleasures that dawned upon the first efforts in art. Those who see nothing but the results of the painter's skill, who hear nothing but the praises (often exaggerated) that are bestowed upon his works, catch only at the information given by sight or hearsay, and imagine the path to be that of pleasure, or of contentment at least. Neglect, however, is sometimes overcome by perseverance, and op-

position by toil and industry; but the sorest evils of all are the remarks of the ignorant and the sarcasms of the critic :—

Whate'er may be the painter's merit,—  
 Though Raphael's genius he inherit,  
 Though all the skill of all the tribe  
 To aid his pencil should subscribe,  
 He will not, in the critic's view,  
 Be any thing while he is new.  
 Alive! his works are all a blunder;  
 But dead—all join in praise and wonder:  
 His forms are melted into grace,  
 And none a blemish now can trace;  
 His colours, though with time they're fled,  
 Leave fancied beauties in their stead;  
 Death gives a sanction to his name,  
 And hands him o'er to future fame!

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Imagination, too, can preach  
 Of something even out of reach,—  
 Can prate of miracles in art  
 That only in the fancy start.

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The painter still must bear the lash,  
 E'en though the terms be "vile!" or "trash!"  
 And this, too, blurted in his face  
 By some pretender of the race



Of connoisseurs, who having found  
 Through fortune some advantage-ground,  
 Some smattering of virtu or taste,  
 And, fearing it should run to waste,  
 Deals out his blunders by the dozens—  
 The wonder of his country cousins.

These are some of the drawbacks on the profession :—

But yet there is in art the power  
 To give to life its sweetest hour ;  
 To show the charms on Nature's face,  
 To fix the forms of truth and grace.  
 And whether on Creation rude,  
 Or rock, or desert solitude,—  
 O'er ocean, cloud, or tranquil sky,  
 The painter throws a heedful eye ;  
 And not a shrub, a flower, a tree,  
 But holds some latent mystery,  
 To which the artist's skill alone  
 Can give substantial form and tone.

Yes! and while the elasticity of his mind remains, he can draw pleasure from stores ever at hand. His imagination can range the wilds of his own creation, and see no bounds to the power of his art. Seduced by the delusive nature of his employment, Time glides imperceptibly away, while he paints him at rest; and

the insidious foe to life marks, in the ardour of his pursuit and the intensesness of his application, the seeds of destruction, and, in the flame that lights up his genius, the consumer of his days.

R. D.

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