

ideal. Not until twenty dynasties had reigned was there an approximation to this condition in Egypt. War scenes on a large scale then first appeared, showing multitudes of figures, still with conventional defects of drawing, but exhibiting considerable spirit. This was not until about the thirteenth century, B.C. Rawlinson says—"It would seem that the acmé of art was coincident with the decline in morals." For art's sake we must regard this as a *non sequitur*. In succeeding reigns art in all branches almost totally disappeared, and in B.C. 527 Cambyses, the Persian, conquered Egypt. In B.C. 322 the country fell under Greek sway, so remaining until it became a Roman province about the time of the Christian era, and distinctive Egyptian art in all walks ceased.

We have deferred remark till now regarding what, on the surface, would strike as the most remarkable contradiction between Egyptian pictorial and glyptic art. From time as early as can be followed, or about the fourth dynasty, sculpture in the round was executed with skill, form and proportion being preserved in all intended points of view, while pictorial designs were of the most rudimentary. In other words, sculpture in the round was the outcome of mathematical calculation, while pictures, whether done by the brush or in *cavo relievio* with the stylus, were the work of the upholsterer. Further to vary the simile, architecture, of which sculpture was a component part, was the ambition of kings; ornamentation the trade of dealers. The two products were the issue of different grades of mind, and were addressed to different eyes. The structure of society was at first autocratic, and afterwards, to a great extent, hieratic. Learning was confined to the highest social class. Architects, usually of princely or priestly rank, stood high above all other masters of applied erudition, and to the designs of these highly educated men Egypt is indebted for her architectural celebrity. They had the grasp to perceive that sculpture was not a mere ornamental accessory of architecture, but the completion of its thought. For this reason we have in Egyptian statuary a grandeur, poise, and dignity that offer a humiliating rebuke to the feeble lines of the brush. As early as the fourth dynasty, already referred to, nobles affected portrait-statues at a time when painted portraits were unknown. To sculpture we owe the long series of Egyptian kings, necessarily executed with a fidelity that would make their features recognised by the common people, yet retaining individual expression and a general air befitting kings. Whether life-size, heroic, or colossal, the same qualities are preserved, and even in composite colossi as the sphinx. The study is interesting, but the subject of this paper is pictorial, not glyptic.

As regards the other peoples of remote antiquity, the same observations apply. Until MM. Rassam and Sarzec's recent discoveries of life-size statues showing much skill in design, or probable date as early as Egypt had any to rival them, materials were scarce on which to form a just impression on Akkado-Babylonian art. Diodorus says the walls of Nebuchadnezzar's great palace were ornamented with coloured pictures of hunting scenes. Designs on clay cylinders of King Sargon's time, B.C. 3800, show less conventionalism than those of early Egyptian, but are less smooth in execution. Some impressed vignettes and engraved gems certainly show greater

play of fancy than cotemporary Egyptian, but nothing as yet justifies the belief that an appreciation of the merits of pictorial design was ever conspicuous as a characteristic of the public. Assyrian pictography (using that convenient term in a wide sense), discloses an advance on the part of the designers over their predecessors the Babylonians, yet still falling into like errors of drawing as the Egyptian. The human-headed colossi, with which archaeological museums have made us moderns familiar, show much of the reserved strength of the sphinx, but copies of ordinary life are almost all flat and squat. The sentiment addressed by the sculptured colossi was that of awe, and, doubtless, excited it, but it does not follow that a pleasant æsthetic sensation was universally diffused by coloured wall paintings. Persian art showed further advance. Taking as an illustration a photograph from Persepolis of a procession bringing gifts to Cyrus, about B.C. 525, well-drawn figures of the camel and the humped ox are proportionate to the stature of their attendants, the human figures—still in profile, and with both feet flat on the ground—being, with one or two exceptions, no longer wooden, but having diversity of outline and expression. It is hard to refuse them the rank of artistic. A general taste for such art might well have been general among the luxurious and sensuous public of the Persian capital, but it was a taste that had blossomed from roots which had been slowly growing through the preceding twenty centuries. In India and the farther East pictorial representation, though older than historic time, had never greatly outgrown the conventional stiffness of early efforts.

The world had long wagged before there came a general diffusion (that is to say, appreciation of and pleasure in) the visible presentment of ideas through the medium of line and colour, and longer before the rules for such presentment were formulated into what deserves to be called, by pre-eminence, art; not, indeed, until some time, long or short—centuries probably—before Apelles, about 350 B.C., exhibited his picture of Anadyomene in the Academy at Athens. The demand for paintings was great, the fancy price of fifty talents, equal to £12,000 sterling having been offered at least once for a specimen on the easel of Protogenes. No conventional daub or defective drawing would pass where the whole populace were connoisseurs of the human form, from witnessing it constantly in its proportions and attitudes in the gymnasium. Here, then, only in Greece, we have the required conditions. A people sufficiently numerous, keenly sensitive to impressions, with eye cultured to accuracy, the ranks of life so little removed from each other politically that one idea pervaded all with equal intensity, and one impression diffused itself through all. Therefore, in a country that had alike the natural elements of beauty and severity, and socially, a people vivacious and cultured, the standard of taste was uniform, universal, and of the highest. Hence art was born of the Hellenic Athens.

So far, then, from a taste for the pictorial being native to primeval man, we find that not until the sciences had made large strides did the first principles of representation dawn on the mind. Had taste for art in itself been inherent in the men of the caves—i.e., common to humanity—it must have developed under the favourable conditions of Egyptian civiliza-

tion. Thus is another venerable superstition as to man's inherent qualities set aside.—J. Hunter-Duvar, in *The Reliquary*.

THE POETRY OF D. G. ROSSETTI.

If Rossetti had never written a line of poetry we could well imagine some discriminating critic exclaiming, as he wandered through a collection of the artist's pictures, "If Rossetti had only been a poet!" Yet now that he has been a poet, and a very considerable poet too—for we have Mr. Ruskin telling us that he is, in his opinion, greater as a poet than as a painter—there are not a few persons who turn away from his poetry with disappointment, and, in order to justify the original and dignified conception which they had formed of him in his dual character, take refuge in the recollection of the influence he exercised upon his friends, upon contemporary art, and through art upon the life of the nation.

It is no ordinary character that Mr. Holman Hunt draws for us when he describes this poet-painter at work in his studio, or amongst those intimates to whom he so rigidly confined his acquaintance. "A young man of decidedly foreign aspect, about five feet seven and a quarter inches in height, with long brown hair touching his shoulders, not taking care to walk erect, but rolling carelessly as he slouched along, pouting with parting lips, staring with dreamy eyes, not looking directly at any point but gazing listlessly about. . . ." But this "apparently careless and defiant youth" would prove on closer acquaintance "courteous, gentle and winsome, generous in compliment, rich in interest in the pursuits of others." Under the trials of studio work, we are told—and, indeed, can well believe—he manifested at times an "uncontrollable temper"; but "when his work did not oppress his spirits, when his soul was not tormented by some unhappy angel-model—frightened out of its wits in turn by his fiery impatience—he could not restrain at his then happy memory of divine poetry." At such times he would chant in a voice "rich and full of passion" . . . now in the "*lingua Toscana*" and again in that of the "*well of English undefiled*."

At the time of the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Rossetti had, according to his friend Mr. Hunt, "a greater acquaintance with the poetic literature of Europe than, perhaps, any living man." Moreover, he was essentially a "proselytizer." Himself steeped in poetry, he wished to give a poetic form to the life of his contemporaries. Failing in this, he resolutely excluded from his sympathies all that in the life of the age appeared to interfere with this ideal life. A man who thought that "people had no right to be different from the people of Dante's time," and considered the pattern of a curtain or the form of a chair a matter of greater importance to mankind than the Evolution Hypothesis or the doctrine of Conservation of Energy, must certainly be credited with a highly artistic temperament, but more than this is required to make a poet. Undoubtedly a personality more essentially "poetic" than that of Rossetti has seldom or never been presented to the world. But for the composition of great poetry a personality is not enough. Byron had that, but Matthew Arnold does not therefore include him among the "glorious class of the best." These are endowed with an extended range of vision and a