

of, and a soup plate round their heads; that prefer to paint gondolas to goblins, and affect the society of the daughters of earth rather than the devils of Dante, even when these last are emphasized by the Satanic genius of Doré. Criticism may rest assured that pre-Raphaelism is *not* dead, much as it may wish it. Nature will stand long after a meretricious art has perished, and Truth—even a true and rational idealism—will remain with us though the opponents of the pre-Raphaelite school threaten her dissolution.

Not so very many years ago, the halls of the South Kensington Art Museum echoed with wondrous ejaculations of astonishment, and doleful predictions of the decline of painting, at the sight of certain canvasses whereon were depicted, among other things, phantom-like vessels circumvented by ghostly mists through which peered watery suns, afloat upon vapoury and uncertain tides. Much the writer of these lines, then very young and untried, puzzled over these mists, feeling, at times, inclined to cry out with the crowd, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." But, "Art is long and time is fleeting," and the mists of Turner have long been glorified and exalted by another light than his own watery suns, the insight which comes with patient thought and loving research, and close companionship with Nature, and to-day he knows that the crowd was wrong, and Turner right, and Ruskin right, and his own instinctive leanings right which prompted deeper thought and closer examination, and permitted him not to sit down in utter stagnation of mental aptitude to make another of the smirking, gibbering, self-satisfied crowd that smiled at Turner's vagaries, and went into ecstasies of well-assumed admiration at some Madonna or infant cherub of fashion whose only claim to beauty, like a

Scotch terrier's, was its ugliness. "With what do you mix your paints?" enquired a curious bystander of the colourist whose glowing tints had attracted his eye. "Brains, Sir!" was the laconic growl in response. It is the only ingredient that many do *not* use in their portraiture of life and its tremendous applications, realities and possibilities!

And now that the grand old lion is in the toils, the old battles will presumably have to be fought over again. Already we hear their menacing grumblings and mutterings, and pens are being sharpened for the conflict. Would that some sympathetic mouse could free the aged captive from the "durance vile" in which he is mentally held. Unfortunately, some of the mice will be only too busy in the other direction, blind mice, whose courage is their victim's helplessness, and whose curtailment must therefore be the office of an alien carving knife. May the blow be sure, and the edge keen. If ears and nose, proverbially long in the mouse tribe, go with the other extremity, it will not matter. One may miss a Ruskin—such men come singly—but the mouse is a prolific animal, it is not easily extirpated.

There is criticism and criticism. There is fair outspoken approval or disapproval, offering a chance for reply; and there is the straining-at-a-gnat and swallowing-a-camel method of attack, which, passing by, wittingly or unwittingly, real defects, fastens itself like the ordinary policeman always upon the wrong party. It is not a desire to be just, but a wish to degrade that animates all such criticism. Old *habitus* of Vanity Fair, who have outworn their passions, stand at the street corners and, pointing the finger of derision, cry "Behold! fit retribution for the man who outlived his use, who should have descended from God's pulpit while yet his fame was green, who was so