

GEORGE TINWORTH AND HIS WORK.

"To have become a distinguished artist without ceasing to be an artisan is a proud attainment indeed. Thirty years ago, or less, the thing would hardly have been possible; and its practicability at the present time is honourable to the age, not less than to the man, for it shows a return to nobler ideas of labour than those which universally obtained during the longer part of the nineteenth century."

The man of whom this was written is George Tinworth, and it is of his lowly origin, his early struggles, his adoption of an art-career, and of his ultimate recognition, as the most interesting figure in the world of modern art, that we wish to speak somewhat briefly in this paper.

George Tinworth was born on the 5th of November, 1843, in South London. He was the child of parents from whom, at first sight, nothing in the way of artistic proclivity could be expected. His father was a master wheelwright in a very small way of business. Mrs. Tinworth was a member of one of the smaller Nonconformist bodies, among which the study of the Bible is considered not only a duty but a delight. Tinworth grew up, therefore, in a Biblical atmosphere; the Scriptures were read to him and by him, from cover to cover, over and over, until they sank into his blood, and became part of his very nature. For the religious lines upon which his talent has developed, his mother must be considered wholly responsible. To this day the Bible remains the only book which he reads without indifference. His early experiences of life were harsh but salutary. Poverty pinched the household closely, and all through, like a jarring string in an instrument, there went the fear and horror of the head of the house who was addicted to drink. Through it all, too, went the harmonious faith of the mother, her Puritan ideal of the personal "walk with God," and the constant voluntary exercises of prayer and "expounding of the Word."

Meanwhile, this child in a dingy little Walworth shop was inspired, as spontaneously as though he had been the primitive first artist, with a craving for plastic expression of his ideas. His first attempts were made when he was a very little boy, and consisted of objects drawn upon transparent slates. A little later he began to colour engravings. At last he took to cutting butter-stamps out of wood, and even to carving timid little wooden figures. All this time he was completely ignorant of even the simple processes which are taught to children, and his father used to