CONTENTS

OF THE FOLLOWING

POEM.

1. INTRODUCTION, and address.
26 A close attention to the various scenes of nature recommended; and to the several circumstances, under which they appear.
78 A facility also in copying the different parts of nature should be attained, before the young artist attempts a whole.
90 This process will also be a kind of test. No one can make any progress, whose imagination is not fired with the scenes of nature.
107 On a supposition, that the artist is enamoured with his subject; and is well versed in copying the parts of nature, he begins to
to combine, and form those parts into
the subjects of landscape. He pays his
first attention to design, or to the bringing
together of such objects, as are suited
to his subject; not mixing trivial objects
with grand scenes; but preferring the
character of his subject, whatever it may
be.

150 The different parts of his landscape must next
be studiously arranged, and put together
in a picturesque manner. This is the
work of disposition; or, as it is sometimes
called, composition. No rules can be given
for this arrangement, but the experience
of a nice eye: for the nature seldom
presents a complete composition, yet we
everywhere see in her works beautiful
arrangements of parts; which we ought
to study with great attention.

159 In general, a landscape is composed of three
parts — a foreground — a middle ground
— and a distance.

163 Yet this is not a universal rule. A balance
of parts however there should always be;
the sometimes those parts may be few.

176 It is a great error in landscape painters, to
loose the simplicity of a whole, under the
idea of giving variety.

182 Some particular scene, therefore, or leading
subject should always be chosen; to which
the parts should be subservient.

205 In balancing a landscape, a spacious foreground
will admit a small thread of distance: but the reverse is a bad propor-
tion. In every landscape there must be a
considerable foreground.

216 This theory is illustrated by the view of a
disproportioned distance.

243 An objection answered, why vast distances,
the unsupported by foregrounds, may
please in nature, and yet offend in repre-
sentation.

266 But the several parts of landscape may
be well balanced, and adjusted; yet still
without contrast in the parts, there will
be a great deficiency. At the same time
this contrast must be easy, and natural.

285 Such pictures, as are painted from fancy, are
the most pleasing efforts of genius. But
if an untoward subject be given, the artist
must endeavour to conceal, and vary the
unaccommodating parts. The foreground
he must claim as his own.

308 But if nature be the source of all beauty, it
may be objected, that imaginary views
can have little merit. — The objection has
weight, if the imaginary view be not
formed
Be swell’d to animation: Thou, to whom
Each mode of landscape, beauteous or sublime,
With every various colour, tint, and light,
It’s nice gradations, and it’s bold effects,
Are all familiar, patient hear my song,
That to thy taste and science nothing new
Presents; yet humbly hopes from thee to gain
That plaudit, which, if Nature first approve,
Then, and then only, thou wilt deign to yield. 25

First to the youthful artist I address
This leading precept: Let not inborn pride,
Presuming on thy own inventive powers,
Millicent thine eye from Nature. She must reign
Great archetype in all. Trace then with care
Her varied walks. Observe how she upheaves
The mountain’s towering brow; on it’s rough sides
How broad the shadow falls; what different hues
Invest it’s glimmering surface. Next survey
The distant lake; so seen, a shining spot:
But when approaching nearer, how it flings
It’s sweeping curves around the lofty cliffs.
Mark every shade it’s Proteus-shape assumes
From motion and from rest; and how the forms
Of tufted woods, and beetleling rocks, and towers
Of ruined castles, from the smooth expanse,
Shade anfwering shade, inverted meet the eye.
From mountains hie thee to the forefoll-scene.
Remark the form, the foliage of each tree,
And what it’s leading feature. View the oak, 45

It’s maffy limbs, it’s majesty of shade;
The pendent birch; the beech of many a stem;
The lighter ash; and all their changeful hues
In spring or autumn, russet, green, or grey.
Next wander by the river’s mazy bank.
See where it dimpling glides; or briskly where
It’s whirling eddies sparkle round the rock;
Or where, with headlong rage, it dashes down
Some fractured chaft, till all it’s fury spent,
It sinks to sleep, a silent flagrant pool,
Dark, tho transcendent, from the mantling shade.
Now give thy view more ample range: explore
The vast expanse of ocean; see, when calm,
What Iris-hues of purple, green, and gold,
Play on it’s glassy surface; and when vast
With storms, what depth of billowy shade, with light
Of curling foam contrasted. View the cliffs;
The lonely beacon, and the distant coast,
In mists arrayed, just heaving into sight
Above the dim horizon; where the fail
Appears conspicuous in the lengthened gleam.
With studious eye examine next the vast
Etherial concave: mark each floating cloud;
It’s form, it’s colour; and what mists of shade
It gives the scene below, pregnant with change
Perpetual, from the morning’s purple dawn,
Till the last glimmering ray of russet eve.
Mark how the sun-beam, steeped in morning-dew,
Beneath each jutting promontory flings
A darker shade; while brightened with the ray
A
Of sultry noon, not yet entirely quenched,
The evening-shadow lefts opaquely falls.
Thus stowed with fair ideas, call them forth
By practice, till thy ready pencil trace
Each form familiar; but attempt not thou
A whole, till every part be well conceived.
The tongue that awes a senate with its force,
Once lipped in syllables, or e'er it poured
It's glowing periods, warm with patriot-fire.
At length matured, stand forth for honest Fame
A candidate. Some nobler theme select
From Nature's choicest scenes; and sketch that theme
With firm, but easy line; then if my song
Assist thy power, it asks no higher meed.

Yet if, when Nature's sovereign glories meet
Thy sudden glance, no corresponding spark
Of vivid flame be kindled in thy breast;
If calmly thou canst view them, know for thee
My numbers flow not: seek some fitter guide
To lead thee, where the low mechanic toils
With patient labour for his daily hire.
But if the true genius fire thee, if thy heart
Glow, palpitate with transport, at the sight;
If emulation seize thee, to transfuse
These splendid visions on thy vivid chart;
If the big thought seem more than Art can paint;
Haste, snatch thy pencil, bounteous Nature yields
To thee her choicest flowers; and the glad Muse
Sits by assitant, aiming but to fan

The Promethean flame, conscious her rules
Can only guide, not give, the warmth divine.
First learn with objects suited to each scene
Thy landscape to adorn, if some rude view
Thy pencil culls, of lake, or mountain-range.
Where Nature walks with proud majestic step,
Give not her robe the formal folds of art,
But bid it flow with ample dignity.
Mix not the mean and trivial: is the whole
Sublime, let each accordant part be grand.
Yet if through dire necessity (for that
Alone should force the deed) some polished scene
Employ thy pallet, drest by human art,
The lawn so level, and the bank so trim,
Yet still prefer thy subject. Let the oak
Be elegant of form, that mantles o'er
Thy shaven foreground. The rough forester
Whose peeled and withered boughs, and gnarled trunk,
Have stowed the rage of many a winter's blast,
Might ill such cultured scenes adorn. Not less
Would an old Briton, rough with martial scars.
And bearing stern defiance on his brow,
Seem fitly staked at a Gallic feast.
Such apt selection of accordant forms
The muse herself requires from those her sons
Epic, or Tragic, who aspire to fame
Legitimate. On them, whose motley taste
Unites the fock, and buffkin—who produce
Kings, and buffoons in one incongruous scene,
She darts a frown indignant. Nor suppose

Thy
Thy humbler subject lends demands the aid
Of just Design, than Raphael's; tho' his art;
Give all but motion to some group divine,
While thine inglorious picture woods, and streams.

With equal rigour Disposition claims
Thy close attention. Wouldst thou learn it's laws,
Examine Nature, when combined with art,
Or simple; mark how various are her forms,
Mountains enormous, rugged rocks, clear lakes,
Castles, and bridges, aqueducts and fountains.
Of these observe, how some, united please;
While others, ill-combined, disgust the eye.
That principle, which rules these various parts,
And harmonizing all, produces one,
Is Disposition. By it's plastic pow'r
Those rough materials, which Design selects,
Are nicely balanced. Thus with friendly aid
Those principles unite: Design prevails
The general subject; Disposition calls,
And recombines, the various forms anew.

Rarely to more than three distinguished parts
Extend thy landscape: nearest to the eye
Prefect thy foreground; then the midway space;
E'er the blue distance melt in liquid air.
But tho' full oft these parts with blending tints
Are softened so, as wakes a frequent doubt
Where each begins, where ends; yet still preserve
A general balance. So when Europe's sons

Sound the alarm of war; some potent hand
(Now thine again my Albion) poises true
The scale of empire; curbs each rival power;
And checks each lawless tyrant's wild career.

Not but there are of fewer parts who form
A pleasing picture. These a forest-glade
Suffices oft; behind which, just removed,
One tuft of foliage, Waterlo, like thine,
Gives all we wish of dear variety.

For even variety itself may pall,
If to the eye, when pausing with delight
On one fair object, it presents a mass
Of many, which disturb that eye's repose.
All hail Simplicity! To thy chaste shrine,
Beyond all other, let the artist bow.
Oft have I seen arranged, by hands that well
Could pencil Nature's parts, landscapes, that knew
No leading subject: Here a forest rove;
A river there ran dimpling; and beyond,
The portion of a lake: while rocks, and towers,
And castles intermingled, spread o'er the whole
In multiform confusion. Ancient dames
Thus oft compose of various silken shreds,
Some gaudy, patched, unmeaning, tawdry thing,
Where bucks and cherries, ships and flowers, unite
In one rich compound of absurdity.

Chuse then some principal commanding theme,
Be it lake, valley, winding stream, cascade,
Castle, or sea-port, and on that exhaust
Thy powers, and make to that all else conform.

Who
Who paints a landscape, is confined by rules,
As fixed and rigid as the tragic bard,
To unity of subject. Is the scene
A forest, nothing there, save woods and lawns
Must rise conspicuous. Episodes of hills
And lakes be far removed; all that obtrudes
On the chief theme, how beautiful foe'er
Seen as a part, disguises us in the whole.
Thus in the realms of landscape, to preserve
Proportion just is Disposition's task.
And tho' a glance of distance it allow,
Even when the foreground swells upon the sight;
Yet if the distant scenery wide extend,
The foreground must be ample: Take free scope;
Art must have space to stand on, like the Sage,
Who boasted power to shake the solid globe.
This thou must claim; and if thy distance spread
Profuse, must claim it amply: Uncombined
With foreground, distance loses power to please.

Where rising from the solid rock, appear
Those ancient battlements, their lived a knight,
Who oft surveying from his castle wall
The wide expanse before him; distance vast;
Interminable wilds; savannahs deep;
Dark woods; and village spires, and glittering streams,
Just twinkling in the sun-beam, wished the view
Transferred to canvass; and for that sage end,
Led to the spot some docile son of art,
Where his own taste unerring previous fixed
The point of amplest prospect. "Take thy stand
"Just here," he cried, "and paint me all thou seest,
"Omit..."
Rejects, or recombines: but rather say,
'Tis her chief excellence. There is, we know,
A charm unspeakable in converse free
Of lover, or of friend, when soul with soul
Mixes in social intercourse: when choice
Of phrase, and rules of rhetoric are disdained;
Yet say, adopted by the tragic bard,
If Jaffier thus with Belvidera talked,
So vague, so rudely; would not want of skill,
Selection, and arrangement, damn the scene? 260

Thy forms, tho' balanced, still perchance may want
The charm of Contrast: Sing we then 'tis power.
'Tis Beauty's purest source; it regulates
Shape, colour, light, and shade; forms every line
By opposition just; whatever is rough 265
With skill delusive counteracts by smooth;
Sinuous, or concave, by it's opposite;
Yet ever covery: should Art appear,
That art were Affectation. Then alone
We own the power of Contrast, when the lines
Unite with Nature's freedom: then alone,
When from it's careless touch each part receives
A pleasing form. The lake's contracted bounds
By contrast varied, eleganty flow;
The unwieldy mountain sinks; here, to remove
Offensive parallels, the hill deprest
Is lifted; there the heavy beech expunged
Gives place to airy pines; if two bare knolls
Rife to the right and left, a cattle here,
And there a wood, diversify their form. 280

Thrice happy he, who always can indulge
This pleasing feast of fancy; who, replete
With rich ideas, can arrange their charms
As his own genius prompts, creating thus
A novel whole. But tasteless wealth oft claims
The faithful portrait, and will fix the scene
Where Nature's lines run falsely, or refuse
To harmonize. Artift, if thus employed,
I pity thy mischance. Yet there are means
Even here to hide defects. The human form
Portrayed by Reynolds, oft abounds with grace
He saw not in his model; which nor hurts
Resemblance, nor fictitious skill betrays.
Why then, if o'er the limb uncouth he flings
The flowing velt, may not thy honest art
Veil with the foliage of some spreading oak,
Unpleasing objects, or remote, or near?
An ample licence for such needful change,
The foregrounds give thee. There both mend and make.
Whoer opposeth, tell them, 'tis the spot
Where fancy needs must sport; where, if restrained
To close resemblance, thy best art expires.
What if they plead, that from thy general rule,
That rests on Nature as the only source
Of beauty, thou revolt'lt; tell them that rule
Thou hold'lt still sacred: Nature is its source;
Yet Nature's parts fail to receive alike
The
The fair impression. View her varied range:
Each form that charms is there; yet her best forms
Must be selected. As the sculptured charms
Of the famed Venus grew, so must thou call
From various scenes such parts as best create
One perfect whole. If Nature ne'er arrayed
Her most accomplished work with grace compleat,
Think, will she waste on desert rocks, and dells,
What she denies to Woman's charming form?

And now, if on review thy chalked design,
Brought into form by Disposition's aid,
Displease not, trace thy lines with pencil free;
Add lightly too that general shade of shade,
Which suits the form and fashion of its parts.
There are who, studious of the best effects,
First sketch a slight cartoon. Such previous care
Is needful, where the Artist's fancy fails
Precisely to foresee the future whole.
This done, prepare thy palette, mix thy tints,
And call on chaste Simplicity again
To have her votary from what'ter of hue,
Discordant or abrupt, may flaunt, or glare.

Yet here to bring materials from the mine,
From vegetable dies, or animal,
And sing their various properties and powers,
The mule descends not. To mechanic rules,
To prove, and practice, which can only teach
The use of pigments, she resigns the toil.

One truth she gives, that Nature's simple loom
Weaves but with three distinct, or mingled, hues,
The vest that cloaths Creation. These are red,
Azure, and yellow. Pure and unaltered white
(If colour justly called) rejects her law,
And is by her rejected. Doth thou deem
The glossy surface of yon heifer's coat
A perfect white? Or yon vast heaving cloud
That climbs the distant hill? With cerulean brightness
Attempt to catch its tint, and thou wilt fail.

Some tinge of purple, or some yellowish brown,
Must first be blended, e'er thy toil succeed.
Pure white, great Nature wishes to expunge
From all her works; and only then admits,
When with her mantle broad of fleecy snow
She wraps them, to secure from chilling frosts;
Conscious, mean while, that what she gives to guard,
Conceals their every charm: the stole of night
Not more eclipses: yet that fable tole
May, by the skilful mixture of these hues,
Be shadewd even to dark Cimmerian gloom.

Draw then from these, as from three plenteous springs,
Thy brown, thy purple, crimson, orange, green,
Nor load thy pallet with a useless tribe
Of pigments: when commix'd with needful white,
As suits thy end, these native three suffice.
But if thou dost, still cautious keep in view
That harmony which these alone can give.
Yet still there are, who scorning all the rules
Of dull mechanic art, with random hand
Fling their unblended colours, and produce
Bolder effects by opposition's aid.

The sky, whate'er it's hue, to landscape gives
A corresponding tinge. The morning ray
Spreads it with purple light, in dew-drops steeped; 370
The evening fires it with a crimson glow.
Blows the bleak north? It sheds a cold, blue tint
On all it touches. Do light mists prevail?
A soft grey hue o'er-spreads the general scene,
And makes that scene, like beauty viewed through gauze,
More delicately lovely. Chuse thy sky; 376
But let that sky, whate'er the tint it takes,
O'er-rule thy pallet. Frequent have I seen,
In landscapes well compos'd, aerial hues
So ill-preferred, that whether cold or heat,
Tempest or calm, prevailed, was dubious all.
Not so thy pencil, Claude, the season marks:
Thou makest us pant beneath thy summer noon;
And shiver in thy cool autumnal eye.

Such are the powers of sky; and therefore Art
Selects what best is suited to the scene
It means to form: to this adapts a morn,
To that an evening ray. Light mists full oft
Give mountain-views an added dignity;
While tame impoverished scenery claims the force
Of splendid lights and shades; nor claims in vain.

Thy sky adjusted, all that is remote
First colour faintly: leaving to the last
Thy foreground. Easier 'tis, thou know'st, to spread
Thy floating foliage o'er the sky; than mix
That sky amid the branches. Venture still
On warmer tints, as distances approach
Nearer the eye: Nor fear the richest hues,
If to those hues thou giv'st the meet support
Of strong opposing shade. A canvas once
I saw, on which the artist dared to paint
A scene in Indostan; where gold, and pearl
Barbaric, flam'd on many a broided vest
Profusely splendid; yet chaste art was there,
Opposing hue to hue; each shade deep
So spread, that all with sweet accord produced
A bright, yet modest whole. Thus blend thy tints,
Be they of scarlet, orange, green, or gold,
Harmonious, till one general glow prevail
Unbroken by abrupt and hostile glare.

Let shade predominate. It makes each light
More lucid, yet destroys offensive glare.
Mark when in fleecy flowers of snow, the clouds
Seem to descend, and whiten o'er the land,
What unsubstantial unity of tinge
Involved each prospect: Vision is absorb'd;
Or, wandering through the void, finds not a point
To rest on. All is mockery to the eye.
Thus light diffus'd, defaces that effect
Which shade improves. Behold what glorious scenes
Arise through Nature's works from shade.  You lake

With
With all it's circumambient woods, far less
Would charm the eye, did not that dulky mist
Creeping along it's eastern shores, ascend
Those towering cliffs, mix with the ruddy beam. 425
Of opening day, just damp it's fires, and spread
O'er all the scene a sweet obscurity.

But would'th thou see the full effect of shade
Well massed, at eve mark that upheaving cloud,
Which charged with all th' artillery of Jove,
In awful darkness, marching from the east,
Ascends; see how it blotth the sky, and spreads,
Darker, and darker still, it's dulky veil,
Till from the east to west, the cope of heaven
It curtains closely round. Haply thou stand it
Expectant of the loud convulsive burst,
When lo! the sun, just sinking in the west,
Pours from th' horizon's verge a splendid ray,
Which tenfold grandeur to the darkness adds.
Far to the east the radiance shoots, just tips
Those tufted groves; but all it's splendor pours
On yonder castled cliff, which chiefly owes
It's glory, and supreme effect, to shade.

Thus light, enforced by shadow, spreads a ray
Still brighter. Yet forbid that light to thine
A glittering speck; for this were to illumine
Thy picture, as the convex glass collects,
All to one dazzling point, the solar rays.

Whate'er the force of opposition, still
In soft gradation equal beauty lies. 450

When the mild luftre glides from light to dark,
The eye well-pleased pursues it. Mid the herds
Of variegated hue, that graze the lawn,
Oft may the artist trace examples just
Of this sedate effect, and oft remark
It's opposite. Behold yon lordly bull,
His fable head, his lighter shoulders tinged
With flakes of brown; at length still lighter tints
Prevailing, graduate o'er his flank and loins
In tawny orange. What, if on his front
A flar of white appear? The general mass
Of colour spreads unbroken; and the mark
Gives his stern front peculiar character.

Ah! how degenerate from her well-cloathed fire
That heifer. See her sides with white and black 460
So flussed, so distinct, each jutting each,
The groundwork-colour hardly can be known.

Of lights, if more than two thy landscape boast,
It boasts too much. But if two lights be there,
Give one pre-eminence; with that be sure
Illume thy foreground, or thy midway space;
But rarely spread it on the distant scene.
Yet there, if level plains, or fens appear;
And meet the sky, a lengthened gleam of light
Discreetly thrown, will vary the flat scene.

But if that distance be abruptly closed
By mountains, cast them into general shade:
Ill suit gay robes their hoary majesty.
Sober be all their hues; except, perchance,
Approaching nearer in the midway space,
One of the giant-brethren tower sublime:
To him thy art may aptly give a gleam
Of radiance: 'twill befit his awful head,
Alike, when rising through the morning-dews
In milky dignity, the pale, wan ray,
Invells him; or when, beaming from the west,
A fiercer splendor opens to our view
All his terrific features, rugged cliffs,
And yawning chasms, which vapours through the day
Had veiled; dens where the lynx or pard might dwell
In noon-tide safety, meditating there
His next nocturnal ravage through the land.
Are now thy lights and shades adjust'd all?
Yet pause: perhaps the perspective is just;
Perhaps each local hue is duly placed;
Perhaps the light offends not; harmony
May still be wanting. That which forms a whole
From colour, shade, gradation, is not yet
Obtained. Avails it ought, in civil life,
If here and there a family unite
In bonds of peace, while discord rends the land,
And pale-eyed Faction, with her garment dipped
In blood, excites her guilty sons to war?
To aid thine eye, distrustful if this end
Be fully gained, wait for the twilight hour
When the grey owl, failing on lazy wing,
Her circuit takes; when lengthened shades dissolve;
Then in some corner place thy finished piece,
Free from each garnish ray: Thine eye will there
Be undisturbed by parts; there will the whole
Be viewed collectively; the distance there
Will from it's foreground pleasingly retire,
As distance ought, with true decreasing tone.
If not, if shade or light be out of place,
Thou seest the error, and mayest yet amend.

Here science ceases: but to close the theme,
One labour still, and of Herculean cast,
Remains unfung, the art to execute,
And what it's happiest mode. In this, alas!
What numbers fail; tho' paths, as various, lead
To that fair end, as to thy ample walls,
Imperial London. Every artist takes
His own peculiar manner; fave the hand
Coward, and cold, that dare not leave the track
It's matter taught, Thou who wouldst boldly seize
Superior excellence, observe, with care,
The fyle of every artist; yet disdain
To mimic even the best. Enough for thee
To gain a knowledge from what various modes
The fame effect results. Artist there are
Who, with exactness painful to behold,
Labour each leaf, and each minuter moss,
Till with enamelled surface all appears
Compleatly smooth. Others with bolder hand,
By Genius guided, mark the general form,
The leading features, which the eye of taste,
Praclifed in Nature, readily translates.
Here lies the point of excellence. A piece,

Thus
Thus finishe'd, tho' perhaps the playful toil
Of three short mornings, more enchants the eye, Than what was laboured through as many moons.
Why then such toil milpent? We never mean, With close and microscopic eye, to pore
On every studied part. The practised judge
Looks chiefly on the whole; and if thy hand
Be guided by true science, it is sure
To guide thy pencil freely. Scorn, then,
On parts minute to dwell. The character
Of objects aim at, not the nice detail.

Now is the scene compleat: with Nature's cafe,
Thy woods, and lawns, and rocks, and splendid lakes,
And distant hills unite; it but remains
To people these fair regions. Some for this
Confult the sacred page; and in a nook
Obfure, prefer the Patriarch's teft of faith,
The little altar, and the victim fon:
Or haply, to adorn some vacant sky,
Load it with forms, that fabling bard supplies
Who fang of bodies changed; the headlong fleeds,
The car upheave of Phaeton, while he,
Rafh boy! fpreads on the plain his pallid corfe,
His fifters weeping round him. Groups like these:
Befit not landscape: Say, does Abraham there
Ought that some idle peafant might not do?
Is there expression, passion, character,
To mark the Patriarch's fortitude and faith?
The scanty space which perspective allows,
Forbids.

Forbids. Why then degrade his dignity
By paltry miniature? Why make it thus
A mere appendage? Rather deck thy scene
With figures finply suited to it's style.
The landscape is thy object; and to that,
Be thefe the under parts. Yet still observe
Propriety in all. The speckled pard,
Or tawny lion, ill would glare beneath
The Britifh oak; and Britifh flocks and herds
Would graze as ill on Afric's burning fands.
If rocky, wild, and awful be thy views,
Low arts of husbandry exclude: The fpa'de,
The plough, the patient angler with his rod,
Be banifhed thence; far other guests invite,
Wild as tho'fceenas themselves, banditti fierce,
And gypsey-tribes, not merely to adorn,
But to impres that fentiment more strong,
Awaked already by the favage-scene.

Oft winding flowly up the forest glade,
The ox-team labouring, drags the future keel
Of fome vall admiral: no ornament
Affifts the woodland fcene like this; while far
Removed, feen by a gleam among the trees,
The forest-herd in various groups repofe.

Yet, if thy skill should fail to people well
Thy landscape, leave it defert. Think how Claude
Oft crowded scenes, which Nature's felf might own,
With forms ill-drawn, ill-chofen, ill-arranged,
Of man and beast, o'er loading with fai/e tale.
His sylvan glories. Seize them, Poesilence,
And sweep them far from our disfigured sight!
If o'er thy canvas Ocean pours his tide,
The full sized vessel, with its swelling sail
Be cautious to admit; unless thy art
Can give it cordage, pennants, masts, and form
Appropriate; rather with a careless touch
Of light, or shade, just mark the distant skiff.

Nor thou refuse that ornamental aid,
The feathered race afford. When fluttering near
The eye, we own absurdity refutes;
They seem both fixed and moving: but beheld
At proper distance, they will fill thy sky
With animation. Leave them there free scope:
Their distant motion gives us no offence.

Far up yon river, opening to the sea,
Jut where the distant coast extends a curve,
A lengthened train of sea-fowl urge their flight.
Observe their files! In what exact array
The dark battalion floats, dimly seen
Before yon silver cliff! Now, now, they reach
That lonely beacon; now are lost again
In yon dark cloud. How pleasing is the sight!

The forest-glafe from it's wild, timorous herd,
Receives not richer ornament, than here
From birds this lonely sea-view. Ruins too
Are graced by such addition: not the force
Of strong and catching lights adorn them more,
Than do the dusky tribes of rooks, and daws
Fluttering their broken battlements among.

Place but these feathered groups at distance due,
The eye, by fancy aided, sees them move,
(Plit past the cliff, or circle round the tower)
Tho each, a centinel, observe his post.

Thy landscape finished, tho it meet thy own
Approving judgment, still requires a tell,
More general, more decisive. Thine's an eye
Too partial to be trusted. Let it hang
On the rich wall, which emulation fills;
Where rival masters court the world's applause.

There travelled virtuosi, stalking round,
With flrst important, peering though the hand,
Hollowed in telescopic form, survey
Each luckless piece, and uniformly damn;
Assuming for their own, the taste they feal.

"This has not Guido's air;" "That poorly apes
"Titian's rich colouring;" "Rembrandt's forms are here,
"But not his light and shadow." Skilful they
In every hand, fayre Nature's. What if these

With Gaspar or with Claude thy work compare,
And therefore scorn it; let the pedants prate
Unheeded. But if taste, correct and pure,
Grounded on practice; or, what more avails
Than practice, observation justly formed
On Nature's best examples and effects,
Approve thy landscape; if judicious Lock
See not an error he would with removed,
Then boldly deem thyself the heir of Fame,
**NOTES**

**ON THE FOREGOING**

**POEM.**

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Line 34 Some perhaps may object to the word *glimmering*: but whoever has observed the playing lights, and colours, which often invest the summits of mountains, will not think the epithet improper.

Line 45 What *it's leading feature*: that is the *particular character* of the tree. The different shape of the leaves, and the different mode of spreading it's branches, give every tree, a *distinct form*, or *character*. At a little distance you easily distinguish the oak from the asph; and the asph from the beech. It is this *general form*, not any *particular detail*, which the artist is instructed to get by heart. The same remark holds with regard
regard to other parts of nature. These general forms may be called the painter's alphabet. By these he learns to read her works; and also to make them intelligible to others.

With light of curling foam contrasted. The progress of each wave is this. Beneath the frothy curl, when it rises between the eye, and the light, the colour is pale green, which brightens from the base towards the summit. When a wave subsides, the summit falling into the base, extends, and raises it; and that part of the water which meets the succeeding wave, springs upward from the shock; the top forms into foam, and rolling over falls down the side, which has been shocked; presenting if the water be much agitated, the idea of a cascade.

The evening shadow lies opaquely falls. It is not often observed by landscape-painters, tho' it certainly deserves observation, that the morning shadows are darker than those of the evening.

If the big thought seem more than art can paint. It is always a sign of genius to be dissatisfied with our own efforts; and to conceive more than we can express.

Design presents the general subject, disposition, &c. Some writers on the art of painting have varied this division. But it seems most proper, I think, to give the selection of the elements of landscape—the assemblage of rocks, mountains, cataracts, and other objects to design: while disposition is properly employed in the local arrangement of them.

The general composition of a landscape consists of three parts—the foreground—the second ground—and the distance. But no rule can be given for proportioning these parts to each other. There are ten thousand beautiful proportions; from which the eye of taste must select a good one. The foreground must always be considerable—in some cases, ample. It is the very basis, and foundation of the whole. — Nor is it a bad rule, I think, that some part of the foreground should be the highest part of the picture. In rocky, and mountainous views this is easy, and has generally a good effect. And sometimes even when a country is more level, a tree on the foreground, carried higher than the rest of the landscape, answers the end. At the same time in many species of landscape this rule
rule cannot easily be observed: nor is it by any means essential.

169 *Waterlo, like thine.* The subjects of this matter seldom went beyond some little forest-view. He has etched a great number of prints in this file of landscape; which for the beauty of the trees in particular, are much admired.

178 *Landscapes, that knew no leading subject.* There is not a rule in landscape-painting more neglected, or that ought more to be observed, than what relates to a leading subject. By the leading subject we mean, what characterizes the scene. We often see a landscape, which comes under no denomination, Is it the scenery about a ruin? Is it a lake-scene? Is it a river-scene? No: but it is a jumble of all together. Some leading subject therefore is required in every landscape, which forms it’s character; and to which the painter is confined by rules, as fixed, and rigid as the tragic bard.

When the landscape takes it’s character from a ruin, or other object on the foreground, the distance introduced, is merely an appendage; and must plainly appear to be an under-part; not interfering with the subject of the piece. But most commonly the scene, or leading subject of the picture, occupies the middle distance. In this case, the foreground becomes the appendage; and without any striking object to attract the eye, must plainly shew, that it is intended only to introduce the leading-subject with more advantage.

194 Thus, in a forest-scene, the woods and lawns, are the leading subject. If the piece will allow it, a hill, or a lake, may be admitted in remote distance: but they must be introduced, only as the episodes in a poem, to set off the main subject. They must not interfere with it: but be far removed.

202 *And tho a glance.* It is certain, in fact, that a considerable foreground, with a glance of distance, will make a better picture, than a wide distance, set off only with a meagre foreground: and yet I doubt whether an adequate reason can be given; unless it be founded on what hath already been advanced, that we consider the foreground as the *basis, and foundation of the whole picture.* So that if it is not considerable in all circumstances, and extensive in one, there seems a defect.
A novel whole. The imaginary view, formed on a judicious selection, and arrangement of the parts of nature, has a better chance to make a good picture, than a view taken in the whole from any natural scene. Not only the lines, and objects of the natural scene rarely admit a happy composition; but the character of it is seldom throughout preferr'd. Whether it be sublime, or beautiful, there is generally something mixed with it of a nature unfit for it. All this the exhibition of fancy rectifies, when in the hands of a master. Nor does he claim any thing, but what the poet, and he are equally allowed. Where is the story in real life, on which the poet can form either an epic, or a drama, unless heightened by his imagination? At the same time he must take care, that all his imaginary additions are founded in nature, or his work will disgust. Such also must be the painter's care. But under this restriction, he certainly may bring together a more consistent whole, culled from the various parts of nature, than nature herself exhibits in any one scene.

Trace thy lines with pencil free. The master is discovered even in his chalk, or black-lead lines — so free, firm, and intelligent. We often admire these first, rude touches. The story of the two old masters will be remembered, who left cards of compliments to each other, on which only the simple outline of a figure was drawn by one, and corrected by the other; but with such a superior elegance in each, that the signature of names could not have marked them more decisively.

First sketch a slight cartoon. It is the practice indeed of the generality of painters, when they have any great design to execute, to make a slight sketch, sometimes on paper, and sometimes on canvas. And these sketches are often greatly superior to the principal picture, which has been laboured and finished with the exactest care. King William on horse-back at Hampton court, by Sir Godfrey Kneller, is a striking example of this remark. The picture is highly finished; but is a tame, and unmannerly performance. At Houghton-hall I have seen the original sketch of this picture; which I should have valued, not only greatly beyond the picture itself, but beyond any thing I ever saw from the pencil of Sir Godfrey.

One truth he gives, &c. From these three virgin colours, red, blue, and yellow, all the tints of nature are compos'd, Greens
of various hues, are composed of blue, and yellow: orange, of red, and yellow: purple and violet, of red, and blue. The tints of the rainbow seem to be composed also of these colours. They lie in order thus: violet—red—orange—yellow—green—blue—violet—red: in which assement we observe that orange comes between red, and yellow; that is, it is composed of those colours melting into each other. Green is in the same way composed of yellow and blue; and violet, or purple of blue, and red.—Nay even browns of all kinds may, in a degree, be effected by a mixture of these original colours: so may grey; and even a kind of black, tho' not a perfect one.—As all pigments however are deficient, and cannot approach the rainbow colours, which are the purest we know, the painter must often, even in his splendid tints, call in different reds, blues, and yellows. Thus as vermillion, tho' an excellent red on many occasions, cannot give a rosy, crimson hue, he must often call in lake, or carmine. Nor will he find any yellow, or blue, that will answer every purpose. In the tribe of browns he will still be more at a loss; and must have recourse to different earths.—In oil-painting one of the finest earths is known, at the colour-shops, by the name of castle-earth, or Vandyke's-brown; as it is supposed to have been used by that master.

341 And is by her rejected. Scarce any natural object, but snow, is purely white. The chalk-clip is generally in a degree discoloured. The petals of the snow-drop indeed, and of some other flowers, are purely white; but seldom any of the larger parts of nature.

362 Keep in view that harmony, &c. Tho' it will be necessary to use other colours, besides yellow, red, and blue, this union should however still be kept in view, as the leading principle of harmony. A mixture indeed of these three will produce nearly the colour you want: but the more you mix your colours, the muddier you make them. It will give more clearness therefore, and brightness to your colouring, to use simple pigments, of which there are great abundance in the painter's dispensatory.

364 This mode of colouring is the most difficult to attain, as it is the most scientific. It includes a perfect knowledge of the effects of colours in all their various agreements, and oppositions. When attained, it is the most easy in practice. The artist, who blends his colours on his palette,
depends more on his eye, than on his knowledge. He works out his effect by a more laboured process; and yet he may produce a good picture in the end.

Nobody was better acquainted with the effects of sky, nor studied them with more attention, than the younger Vanderveldt. Not many years ago, an old Thames-waterman was alive, who remembered him well; and had often carried him out in his boat, both up and down the river, to study the appearances of the sky. The old man used to say, they went out in all kinds of weather, fair, and foul; and Mr. Vanderveldt took with him large sheets of blue paper, which he would mark all over with black, and white. The artist easily sees the intention of this process. These expeditions Vanderveldt called, in his Dutch manner of speaking, going a staring.

The most remarkable instance of ingenious colouring I ever heard of, is in Guido's St. Michael. The whole picture is composed of blue, red, and black; by means of which colours the ideas of heaven and hell are blended together in a very extraordinary manner; and the effect exceedingly sublime; while both harmony, and chasteness are perverted in the highest degree.

Let shade predominate: As a general rule, the half-tints should have more extent than the lights; and the shadows should equal both together. — Yet why a predominancy of shade should please the eye more than a predominancy of light, would perhaps be difficult to explain. I can easily conceive, that a balance of light and shade may be founded in some kind of reason; but am at a loss to give a reason for a predominancy of either. The fact however is undoubted; and we mustscreen our ignorance of the principle, as well as we can.

This rule respects an affected display of light. If it be introduced as a focus, so as not to fall naturally on the several objects it touches, it disfigures. Rembrandt, I doubt, is sometimes chargeable with this fault. He is commonly supposed to be a master of this part of painting; and we often see very beautiful lights in his pictures, and prints; but as in many of them we see the reverse, he appears to have had no fixed principle. Indeed, few parts of painting are so much neglected, so easily transgressed, and so little understood, as the distribution of light.

Opposition, and gradation are the two grand means of producing effect by light. In the
the picture just given (l. 429. &c.) of the
evening-ray, the effect is produced by
opposition. Beautiful effects too of the
same kind arise often from catching lights.
— The power of producing effect by
gradation, is not less forcible. Indeed,
without a degree of gradation opposition
itself would be mute. In the picture just
given of the evening-ray, the grand part
of the effect, no doubt, arises from the
opposition between the gloom, and the
light; but in part it arises also from the
gradation of the light, till it reach its
point. It just tips

The tufted groves; but all it's splendor pours
On yonder castled cliff.

452 The colours of animals often strongly illustrate
the idea of gradation. When they soften
into each other, from light or dark, or
from one colour into another, the mixture
is very picturesque. It is as much the
reverse, when white and black, or white,
and red, are patched over the animal in
blotches, without any intermediate tints.
Domestic cattle, cows, dogs, swine, goats,
and cats, are often disagreeably patched.
Tho we sometimes see them pleasingly
coloured with a graduating tint. Wild
animals, in general, are more uniformly
coloured, than tame. Except the zebra,
and two or three of the spotted race, I
recollect none which are not, more or
less, tinted in this graduating manner.
The tiger, the panther, and other varie-
gated animals have their beauty: but the
zebra, I think, is rather a curious, than
a picturesque animal. It's streaked sides
injure it both in point of colour, and in
the delineation of it's form.

472 But rarely spread it on the distant scene. In
general, perhaps a landscape is best in-
lighted, when the light falls on the
middle parts of the picture; and the
foreground is in shadow. This throws a
kind of natural retiring hue throughout
the landscape: and tho the distance be in
shadow, yet that shadow is so faint, that
the retiring hue is still preferred. This
however is only a general rule. In histo-
ry-painting the light is properly thrown
upon the figures on the foreground; which
are the capital part of the picture. In
landscape the middle grounds commonly
form the scene, or the capital part; and
the foreground is little more, than an
appendage. Sometimes however it hap-
pens, that a ruin, or some other capital
object on the foreground, makes the prin-
cipal part of the scene. When that is the

cafe,
A fiercer splendor opens to our view all his terrific features. It is very amusing, in mountainous countries, to observe the appearance, which the same mountain often makes under different circumstances. When it is invested with light mists; or even when it is not illuminated, we see its whole summit perhaps under one grey tint. But as it receives the sun, especially an evening-sun, we see a variety of fractures, and chasms gradually opening, of which we discovered not the least appearance before.

Tho' the objects may lessen in due proportion, which is called keeping; tho' the graduating hue of retiring objects, or the aerial perspective, may be just; and tho' the light may be distributed according to the rules of art; yet still there may not be that general result of harmony, which denotes the picture one object; and as the eye may be milled, when it has the several parts before it, the best way of examining it as a perfect whole, is to examine it in such a light, as will not admit the investigation of parts.

534 Others, &c. Some painters copy exactly what they see. In this there is more mechanical precision, than genius. Others take a general, comprehensive view of their object; and marking just the characteristic points, lead the spectator, if he be a man of taste, and genius likewise, into a truer knowledge of it, than the copier can do, with all his painful exactness.

Why then degrade, &c. If by bringing the figures forward on the foreground, you give room for character, and expression, you put them out of place as appendages, for which they were intended.

Oft slowly winding, &c. The machine itself here described is picturesque: and when it is seen in winding motion, or (in other words) when half of it is foreshortened, it receives additional beauty from contrast. In the same manner a cavalcade, or an army on its march, may be considered as one object; and derive beauty from the same source. Mr. Gray has given us a very picturesque view of this kind, in describing the march of Edward I.:

As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilful march his long array;
Stout Gloucestor stood aghast in speechless trance:
To arms! cried Mortimer; and couched his quivering lance.
Through a passage in the mountain we saw the troops winding round at a great distance. Among those nearer the eye, we distinguished the horse and foot; and on the foreground, the action, and expression of the principal commanders. The ancients seem to have known very little of that source of the picturesque, which arises from perspective: every thing is introduced in front before the eye; and among the early painters we hardly see more attention paid to it. Raphael is far from making a full use of the knowledge of it: and I believe Julio Romano makes still less.

I do not remember meeting anywhere with a more picturesque description of a line of march, than in Vaillant's travels into the interior parts of Africa. He was passing with a numerous caravan, along the borders of Caffiraria. I first, says he, made the people of the hord, which accompanied me, set out with their cattle. Soon after my cattle followed cows, sheep, and goats: with all the women of the hord, mounted on oxen with their children. My waggons, with the rest of my people, closed the rear. I myself, mounted on horseback, rode backwards, and forwards. This caravan on its march, exhibited often a singular, and amusing spectacle. The turns it was obliged to make in following the windings of the woods, and rocks, continually gave it new forms. Sometimes it entirely disappeared: then suddenly, at a distance, from the summit of a hill, I again discovered my vanguard slowly advancing perhaps towards a distant mountain: while the main body, following the track, were just below me.

This rule indeed applies to all other objects: but as the ship is so large a machine, and at the same time so complicated a one, it's character is less obvious, than that of most other objects. It is much better therefore, where a vessel is necessary, to put in a few touches for a skiff; than to insert some disagreeable form for a ship, to which it has no resemblance. At the same time, it is not at all necessary to make your ship so accurate, that a seaman could find no fault with it. It is the same in figures: as appendages of landscape there is no necessity to have them exactly accurate; but if they have not the general form, and character of what they represent, the landscape is better without them.
648 They seem, &c. Rapid motion alone, and that near the eye, is here cen.sured. We should be careful however not to narrow too much the circumfered sphere of art. There is an art of seeing, as well as of painting. The eye must in part enter into the deception. The art of painting must, in some degree, be considered as an act of convention. General forms only are imitated, and much is to be supplied by the imagination of the spectator. — It is thus in the drama. How absurdly would the spectator act, if instead of afflicting the illusion of the stage, he should insist on being deceived, without being a party in the deception? — If he refused to believe, that the light he saw, was the sun; or the scene before him, the Roman capital, because he knew the one was a candle-light, and the other a painted cloth? The painter therefore must in many things suppose deception; and only avoid it, where it is too palpably gross for the eye to suffer.

641 Guido's air, no doubt, is often very pleasing. He is thought to have excelled in imagining the angelic character; and, as if aware of this superiority, was fond of painting angels. After all, however, they, whose taste is formed on the simplicity of the antique, think Guido's air, in general somewhat theatrical.

643 Skilful they, &c. The greatest obstruction to the progress of art arises from the prejudices of conceited judges; who, in fact, know less about the matter, than they who know nothing; inasmuch as truth is less obvious to error, than it is to ignorance. Till they can be prevailed on to return upon their steps, and look for that criterion in nature, which they seek in the half-perished works of great names, the painter will be discouraged from pursuing knowledge in those paths, where Raphael, and Titian found it. — We have the same idea well inforced in Hogarth's analysis of beauty. (Introd. p. 4.) "The reason why gentlemen, inquisitive after knowledge in pictures, have their eyes less qualified to judge, than others, is because their thoughts have been continually employed in considering, and retaining the various manners, in which pictures are painted — the histories, names, and characters of the masters, together with many other little circumstances belonging to the mechanical part of the art; and little or no time has been given to perfect the ideas they ought to have in
very applicable to the critic in painting. The inferior critic, who has travelled, and seen the works of many great masters, supposes he has treasured up from them the ideas of perfection; and instead of judging of a picture by the rules of painting, and its agreement with nature, he judges of it by the arbitrary ideas he has conceived; and these too very probably much injured in the conception. From this comparative mode of criticizing, the art receives no advancement. All we gain, is, that one artist paints better than another.

END OF THE NOTES.