

TURNER AT BRISTOL.

THE following interesting memoranda have been communicated by Mr. Beavington Atkinson to Mr. Hamerton, for a future edition of his 'Life of Turner;' but as that biography first appeared in the 'PORTFOLIO,' it seems right that the readers of this periodical should have the advantage of them. This is one of the very few instances in which there is something to add to Mr. Thornbury's materials, though it has often been necessary (as happens with respect to the name and occupation of Mr. Narraway) to correct Mr. Thornbury's inaccuracies. Mr. Hamerton has been reproached by some critics for not having added many new facts to what was already known about Turner. Nothing can better prove the idleness of such a reproach than the extreme paucity of the facts which have been brought to light to fill up the deficiencies in Mr. Hamerton's biography. A biographer, in such cases, is strictly limited by the ascertainableness of details and incidents. He is not allowed to invent them like a novelist; and he has not, like the historian, the facility of passing at will from a personage whose history (as in the case of Turner) is meagre and imperfectly known, to one whose history abounds in subjects of interest. The 'Life of Turner' was published slowly in the 'PORTFOLIO;' it was generally known that the Editor was engaged upon it, and yet only in two or three instances did he receive new information from correspondents. The stimulus given by the publication of that biography in a volume, awakened a keen desire to discover facts overlooked by Mr. Hamerton, both amongst his friends and his critics. Mr. Hamerton was equally willing to be helped by both, but to his disappointment hardly anything has been forthcoming; and it appears that our possibilities of knowing Turner are now almost entirely confined to what has been recorded in the existing biographies. We, therefore, feel especially grateful to our friend and contributor, Mr. Atkinson, for the trouble he has taken in collecting the following memoranda; and we may add that Mr. Christopher Thomas, of Bristol, has kindly promised to try what can be done to increase them. If readers living in other parts of England could gather any information about Turner in their several localities, however trivial it might appear, there would perhaps be some possibility of adding to what is known of him; though our hopes, after considerable experience of the difficulty attending such late gleanings, are of the faintest.

DRAWINGS BY TURNER WHEN A YOUTH

GIVEN TO HIS KIND FRIEND, JOHN NARRAWAY OF BROADMEAD, BRISTOL, 'FELLMONGER AND GLUE MAKER, CONDUCTING AN EXTENSIVE BUSINESS.'

Early *Portrait* of Turner by himself; for data see below; bought by Mr. Ruskin in 1860.

Small *Sketch Book*, also bought by Mr. Ruskin. Both were exhibited by the present owner in Bond Street, in 1878. Mr. Ruskin paid 25*l.* for the two.

Old Hot-Well House, Bristol. Vessel coming up the Avon full sail: cliffs rising in background; boats, figures, and trees, in foreground. On frame written 'Painted 1791, by the late J. M. W. Turner, R.A., then aged sixteen.' The drawing is signed 'William Turner.' Style: the old transparent use of colour, but plenty of it: yet not loaded on to the loss of purity and quality. Evidently juvenile: execution painstaking, timid: shows little experience or acquired mastery; yet wonderful for age, proves, indeed, precocity; composition good; all well brought together, and yet perhaps no one could have foreseen the genius that was to follow. Bought of Miss Dart, about 1860, for 20 guineas, collected by Miss Thomas, and presented to the Bristol Art Academy, where it now is.

Old Chelsea Church, in possession of Mr. J. Christopher Thomas, and purchased by him of Miss Dart for 2 guineas. Supposed to have been executed about the age of sixteen—same period as the before-mentioned portrait. Careful and precise pencilling of outlines

and details; colour washed on liquidly and transparently, no body-colour. Lights left, as for instance, the white clouds. The execution sharp and true, with a care characteristic of youth; fine quality, altogether artistic. Measurement, $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $5\frac{1}{4}$ in.

'*Seat of Lady Lippincott*, Stoke, near Bristol, done by J. W. M. Turner, R.A., aged eighteen. The standing figures on the foreground are Sir Henry Lippincott and a friend, those sitting are the artist himself and J. Narraway, Jun. of Bristol, 1791 or 2.' The above is on the frame. Measurement, 1 ft. 4 in. by $11\frac{3}{4}$ in. This drawing was bought by the late Mrs. Herbert Thomas of Miss Dart for 20*l*. It now belongs to Mr. Herbert Thomas, husband of the deceased, of Great George Street, Bristol. This well-known house, still standing, is very accurately and firmly drawn; details of carved porch, delicate and minute; great simpleness and pains in execution; signs of juvenility, and yet for age wonderfully mature; the trees yellow and blue to excess of rawness; the effect of light on the house warm and sunny; transparent colour throughout.

St. Mary, Redcliff, The Chapel, Bristol: south-west view. Inscription on back of frame in handwriting of Mr. Narraway, states the drawing to have been made by Turner at the age of eighteen. There is added—'N.B. he has crooked legs, 1791 or 2.' A powerful, masterly drawing, beautiful tone; complete unity; the latter gained by uniform grey in shadow; the light of a warm yellow. The drawing of the architecture precise and accurate, but here and there in the turning of an arch, the lines shaky. Measurement, $13\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $11\frac{1}{2}$ in. The work is in the possession of Mr. Short, 5 Ellenborough Buildings, Redland, Bristol.

Also in the same hands is an early and quite juvenile drawing; in foreground a group of trees, blueish, sketchy; in the distance the town of Oxford. The little work is so lightly esteemed that it is kept loose in a drawer with a lot of papers.

These two drawings are said to have been given by Miss Dart to the Shorts 'in return for kindness during a long period.'

A drawing of Lambeth Palace is spoken of as among the Narraway Collection.

All the works in Bristol belong to the 'tinting' style of water-colour art.

My attention was first directed to the Narraway Collection of Turner drawings in 1860, by my friend, Mr. J. Christopher Thomas. The works were then in possession of Miss Ann Dart, of St. James's Square, Bristol, bequeathed to her by her uncle, Mr. John Narraway. The lady was aged and rather poor, and I was taken to see the drawings with the idea of finding a purchaser. I at once wrote to Mr. Ruskin, with the successful result seen elsewhere. He selected as especially interesting the two works above named, and acted liberally. In the end all the Collection was disposed of to the lady's advantage.

In April, 1860, at the time when Mr. Ruskin purchased the small Portrait and Sketch Book, Miss Dart made a statement of what she knew to the following effect:—

'The father of J. W. M. Turner had an old friend in Bristol—my uncle, the late John Narraway, who was a Felimonger and Glue-maker, conducting an extensive business in Broadmead. Turner, when a lad, visited my uncle, sketched in the neighbourhood, and left from time to time several drawings as presents. My uncle, on one of these visits, after Turner had taken likenesses of my aunt and two cousins, said to him, "Before you go away you must take a portrait of yourself and leave it as a remembrance." My uncle had some difficulty in getting him to do so, but eventually prevailed. This was the small oval portrait which Mr. Ruskin purchased. The Sketch Book was one in which Turner made drawings when at home and when on visits in Bristol; he left it after him on one of these visits to my uncle's house. I was living myself in Bristol at the period of these visits, and have often seen young Turner at my uncle's house, and can recollect his leaving the Portrait, and Sketch Book, and other drawings with my relative as slight remembrances. These visits were, to the best of my recollection, about the years 1791 or 2. My uncle, John Narraway, died in 1822. Turner's father was the last friend who paid a visit to his house; on his death the Portrait, Sketch Book, and other drawings became the property of his daughter, Miss Narraway, with whom I resided in St. James's Square, Bristol, and, on her death in 1856, I became by will possessed of all these works. They have always been kept with great care, and, to the best of my knowledge, they have been in no way painted upon or altered, but are now just in the same condition as when left by Turner. The above facts I have often heard related by my uncle and others connected with the family, and I myself believe them to be true.

(Signed) ANN DART.'

Miss Dart indulged in a good deal of small gossip at Turner's expense, and I took down notes in her presence, and sent a short, unimportant statement to Mr. Ruskin at his request. All these materials he placed, I believe, at the disposal of Thornbury; who apparently knew nothing of the Bristol episode otherwise.

Miss Dart spoke querulously of Turner's ingratitude for the kindness received from her uncle; and a charge was made that the young painter took for his use a pony and saddle, belonging to his friend, on a sketching excursion to South Wales, and never returned the pony. This tour in Wales is counter to the assertion of some biographers that Turner never went further west than Bristol. The story of the pony was confirmed in 1879 by an old lady, a friend of the Narraways, of eighty years or upwards; but she added 'the saddle was restored to Mr. Narraway.' The whole incident is trivial, and perhaps scarcely sufficiently trustworthy to be put on record, yet it seems corroborated and generally credited.

I gather that some grudge or dissatisfaction had grown up between the Narraways and Turner—not probably in the lifetime of Mr. John Narraway, but afterwards with the daughter or son; the latter apparently became in need of ready money, and dunned Turner. The great painter was then rich, and more I think may have been expected from him than even gratitude demanded.

The Narraways were certainly not left without reward. The drawings, as before related, realised 68*l.* 2*s.* The family was from time to time supplied with money: 35*l.* had been lent to Miss Narraway, who wrote on Turner's death to the executors, asking for time to pay. The executors replied that there appeared among the papers no evidence of the debt, and it is supposed that Turner cancelled the bill or note. The witnesses in Bristol were opposing. Miss Dart, as before said, charged Turner with ingratitude. Probably Miss Narraway took the same side. Both have been dead for some years.

But the old lady of eighty before referred to, her daughter, and a third member of the family, defend Turner; he was, they say, 'a kind friend of the Narraways, and lent them money.' 'Narraway, the son, was not very satisfactory, and Turner was asked for money, and gave sums from time to time.'

The first meeting of John Narraway and the youth Turner was related to me at Bristol in April, 1879, by the aforesaid old lady and her daughter to the following effect:—'Old Narraway, in one of his business journeys into Devonshire, saw young Turner sketching, and was so interested that he called in the neighbourhood on the father, a barber, and said, "Let Bill come up with me, we have some pretty things in Bristol, and he will make some pretty pictures." It was not till afterwards that Turner's father went to live in London: the intimacy, thus originating in Devonshire, was kept up in later years between the Turners when removed to London and the Narraways still living in Bristol.'

This story, if trustworthy, is important; it transfers early scenes in the painter's life to Devonshire and the West of England.

ART CHRONICLE.

MR. HENRY O'NEIL, Associate of the Royal Academy, died on Saturday, the 13th of March. He was born at St. Petersburg in 1817, entered the Academy in 1833, and in 1840 went to Italy with Elmore. Among the pictures by which he is known may be named, *By the Rivers of Babylon*, *Catherine of Aragon*, *Ahasuerus and the Scribes*. Then in 1857 and '58, *Eastward, Ho!* and *Home Again*; and subsequently *The Wreck of the Royal Charter*, and the *Death of Raphael*.

MESSRS. AGNEW'S Exhibition in Old Bond Street comprises 252 water-colour drawings. Mr. Birket Foster has painted fourteen works for this exhibition. Mr. Marks contributes *Intellect and Instinct*, which is a small version of his Academy picture. Mrs. Allingham is represented by several small drawings. Amongst the works of the older painters which arrest the eye are *Lancaster* by De Wint, and *Lancaster Sands* by Daniel Cox. There are fine drawings by Prout, and a *Patterdale* by Turner, which is in his