

1.—THE ORIGIN OF PAINTING.  
 From the *Painting* by Benjamin West, P.R.A.



THE art of silhouetting has lately been revived. Many are now living who can remember this fashion of the time of their earlier days, forty or fifty years ago. Indeed, to some of the present generation, the idea of their grandfathers and grandmothers is inseparable from certain curious black pictures, which, in this irreverent age, have found their last resting-place upon the walls of the boot-room, or even the floor of the attic. The art was by no means confined to professionals, nor to portraiture. In the early part of the present century, the cutting-out of figures from paper with scissors still formed one of the common evening diversions of young people, though the subjects chosen by

the humble amateur did not often rise above the difficulties of still life, household furniture, chairs, tables, and so forth. Sometimes a performer of more than ordinary skill would attack domestic animals, carriages and horses, dancing figures; while one of higher aspirations still might attempt to represent a panoramic landscape.

Photography has, at the present day, pushed the silhouettist from his stool, while the almost complete abolition of the old holiday fair has done much towards the extinction of his art. However, at great exhibitions—the modern counterpart of the English fair—the silhouettist has again come forward, though he is no longer likely to recover the position he once enjoyed as the preserver of the family likenesses.

The art itself is very ancient. It was largely employed by Etruscan potters of the eighth century before the Christian era in the decoration of their vases; and it is to that time that we owe the legend which is preserved for us in Benjamin West's "Origin of Painting," which is given at the head of this article. The picture sufficiently tells its own story. Art owed its birth to Love, as photography still largely owes its maintenance. However, the silhouette as we know it, belonging to the latter half of the last century and the earlier years of this, is not produced by the method here depicted.

Considerable interest attaches to the history of the word "silhouette." M. Etienne de Silhouette was a Frenchman of note. He spent many years in England, and returned to his native country greatly impressed with the English practice of public economy. His application of these principles, when he undertook the direction of French finance under Louis XV., did not meet with the approval of his countrymen; his efforts at retrenchment were very unfairly scoffed at as the work of a parsimonious cheese-parer, and, like many another ardent reformer, he was covered with unmerited ridicule. Every-

thing that was mean, shabby, or incomplete, from a top-hat without a brim to a drawing in outline only, was dubbed *à la Silhouette*. M. de Silhouette was deeply wounded at this treatment, and it seems quite an unworthy act once more to "drag his frailties from their dread abode." For, happily, the obnoxious significance which once attached to the word has died a natural death, and the term "silhouette" remains to denote objects seen only in outline, such as



2.—DR. BATHERST, BISHOP OF NORWICH.  
From a Silhouette by M. Edouart.

trees, or a town against a bright sky, and lastly, those shadow-pictures of which we are speaking.

Although, at first sight, outline would appear to be a fatally restricted field for the artist in portraiture, the silhouette has proved itself capable of extraordinary expression of character in the hands of such a master as Augustin Edouart. The accompanying picture of Dr. Batherst, Bishop of Norwich, is reproduced from one of his silhouettes (2). The drawing of the whole, its balance of pose, the force of the general rendering of character, are too obvious to require comment. It is interesting to learn that Wellington boots formed part of the episcopal attire. On the back of this silhouette is pasted the following remarkable list of the charges made by this artist for his work:—

#### LIKENESSES IN PROFILE

*Executed by Mons. Edouart,*

Who begs to observe, that his Likenesses are produced by the Scissors alone, and are preferable to any taken by Machines, inasmuch as by the above method, the expression of the Passions, and peculiarities of Character, are brought into action, in a style which has not hitherto been attempted by any other Artist.

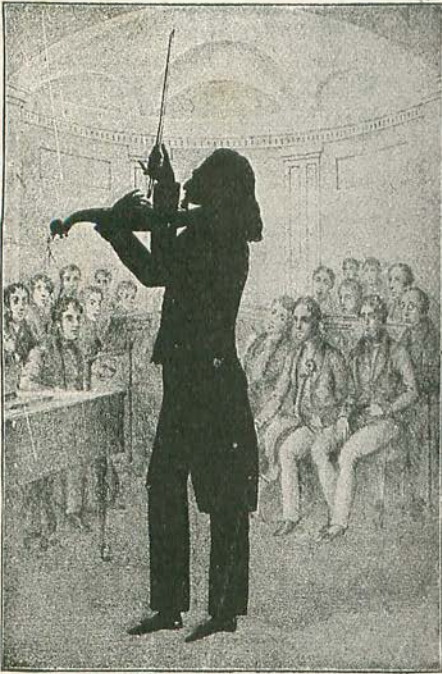
Numerous Proof Specimens may be seen at the house lately occupied by Mr. Trinder, at the bottom of the High Street, Oxford.

Full Length .....	s. d.
Ditto, Children under 8 years of age	5 0
Profile Bust .....	2 0
Duplicates of the Cuttings to any quantity, are for each Full Length	3 0
Ditto, Children .....	2 6

\* \* \* Attendance abroad, double, if not more than two Full Length Likenesses are taken.

Any additional Cutting, as Instrument, Table, &c., &c., to be paid accordingly.

M. Edouart wrote a work on silhouetting which is now exceedingly rare, and gives some excellent examples of the art. Among the portraits is one of Paganini, the famous violinist—a particularly fine specimen of drawing (3). The musician's name had become a household word; his skill was such that many refused to believe he could attain such a marvellous execution upon his instrument without the intervention of diabolical assistance. So strong was this superstition that, on one occasion, an impressionable hearer declared he saw Satan in person directing Paganini's bow, placing his grinning face cheek by jowl with the player's. To "add a little corroborative detail to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative," the visionary insisted that Paganini bore a strong personal resemblance to the enemy of mankind—a fact which renders this portrait doubly interesting to the curious in such matters.



3.—*Violin-Player*  
From a Silhouette by M. Elouart.

A silhouette of Daniel O'Connell (4) is also preserved in this work. That comfortable gentleman, reading the advertisement sheet of the



4.—*Daniel O'Connell*  
From a Silhouette by M. Elouart.

*Times* after his breakfast, looks very unlike a fiery popular agitator, a beggar king, or the persuasive orator whose blarney "distilled from his lips like honey." Backgrounds, such as are employed in these two pictures, are uncommon. The best silhouettists, too, usually indicated no detail in the face, as in the two next sketches. If detail were indicated, it was generally done with faint gold lines.

There is a malicious story told about the appearance of Wellington (5) in his early days. His mother, seated with a friend in a box at the opera, perceiving her son in the stalls, exclaimed: "I do believe there is my ugly boy, Arthur." In spite of a prominent feature, the description was a libel. The Iron Duke was not tall, but of most dis-



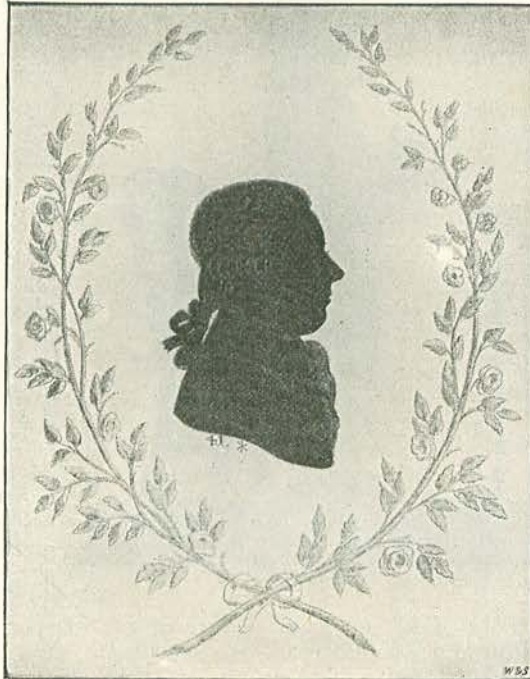
5.—THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

tinguished appearance. His usual dress, the blue frock-coat and white trousers, is known "to every schoolboy."

William Pitt's nose, said Romney, "was turned up at all mankind." Yet, no one who truly realizes the great statesman's character can possibly subscribe to the accusation implied in these words; nor was the remark true in a literal sense (6). "In truth, no man was less of a prig," says Lord Rosebery, after telling a story of Pitt's youth, which is worth repeating. For the first time, Pitt met Gibbon. "The great man (Gibbon), lord of all he surveyed, was holding forth, snuff-box in hand, amid deferential acquiescence, when a deep, clear voice was heard impugning his

conclusions. All turned round in amazement, and saw that it belonged to a tall, thin, awkward youth, who had hitherto sat silent. Between Pitt, for it was he, and Gibbon an animated and brilliant argument arose — in which the junior had so much the best of it that the historian took his hat and retired. Nor would he return. 'That young gentleman,' he said, 'is, I doubt not, extremely ingenious and agreeable, but I must acknowledge that his style of conversation is not exactly what I am accustomed to, so you must positively excuse me.'

As a representation of character, the portrait of Gibbon (7) would be hard to beat. The famous historian of the "Decline and Fall" was a complete bookworm. Once, indeed, this extraordinary man served as a captain in the Militia, a most uncongenial employment, we may be sure, for him the evil day had one redeeming feature: it gave him a practical idea of military formations. "The captain of the Hampshire grenadiers," he says, "has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire." Gibbon was little seen in society; his natural reserve, added to the circumstances of his life, which rendered him almost a foreigner among Englishmen, prevented this. Yet, for eight Sessions, he had a seat in Parliament, at the end



6.—WILLIAM PITT.

of which time he writes: "I am still a mute; it is more tremendous than I had imagined; the great speakers fill me with despair, the bad ones with terror." Poor Gibbon! He was not born a hero. Once he fell in love, but was defeated by the wishes of his father. "I sighed as a lover, but obeyed as a son." The timidity and indecision of his character are admirably expressed in the outline; one can imagine him, tapping his snuff-box — a regular habit — and slowly delivering polished periods out of that

mouth, which, "mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage."



7.—GIBBON.

Garrick (9) was a man of a very different stamp. Testimony to his many attractive and even endearing qualities lies scattered in profusion up and down the pages of Boswell's "Life of Johnson." Yet, Miss Hawkins has left on record that: "The natural expression of his countenance was far from placidity. I confess I was afraid of him; more so than I was of Johnson, whom I knew not to be, nor could suppose he ever would be thought to be, an extraordinary man. Garrick had a frown, and spoke impetuously. Johnson was slow and kind in his way to children."

Hogarth (8) received a very different impression of the great lexicographer, when they met



8.—HOGARTH.

9.—GARRICK.

for the first time. He did not know Johnson, whose volubility and excitement in speaking on some favourite topic at first led the painter to suppose him mad. That solution, however, proved inadequate, and Hogarth eventually conceived a great respect for Johnson's power. Garrick's portrait is too generally familiar to need description. Hogarth, says Miss Hawkins, wore usually "a dark blue coat, the button-holes bound with gold, a small, cocked hat, laced with gold, his waistcoat very open, and his countenance never at rest, and, indeed, seldom his person."

In speaking of Johnson, we may recall that it was he who said of George I. (10) that he "knew nothing and desired to know nothing: did nothing and desired to do nothing; and the only good thing that is told of him is, that he wished to restore the crown to its hereditary successor." As if this were not enough insult to heap upon a King who came to rule at England's invitation, Horace



10.—GEORGE I.

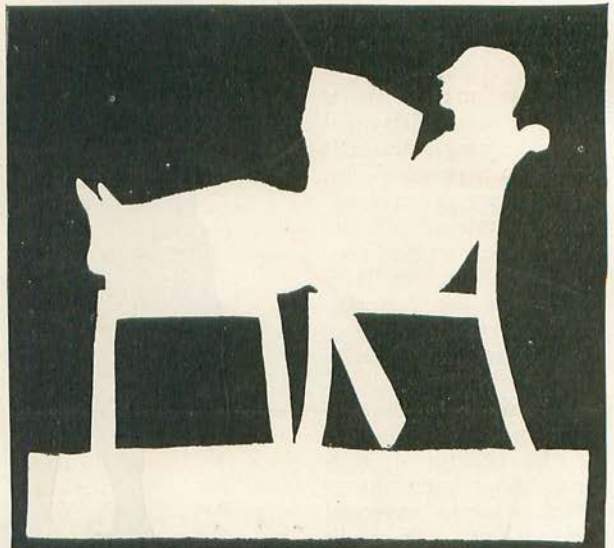
Walpole adds: "The new monarch was void of taste," and so forth; but tempers the wind with the

admission that George I. possessed "all that plain, good-humoured simplicity and social integrity which peculiarly distinguish the honest English private gentleman."

Among amateur silhouettists, Mrs. Leigh Hunt takes a foremost place. She left a large collection of portraits at her death, but, unfortunately, neglected to attach names to them, so that, in the larger number of cases, the connection between her paper-portrait and the person it was intended to represent has been irrecoverably lost. Three of the best, in the judgment of her husband, are here reproduced. The sad story of the last few

years of the life of John Keats (11) needs no repetition. About 1820 he went to stay with the Hunts, at whose house he was seen by Mrs. Gisborne, the friend of Shelley, "looking emaciated and under sentence of death from Dr. Lamb."

Leigh Hunt habitually wore, in summer, a sort of gabardine, made of black alpaca, and, in winter, a grey garment of like pattern, of a stouter woollen material, with the addition of a detachable cape, the work of Mrs.



11.—JOHN KEATS.

From an unpublished Silhouette by Mrs. Leigh Hunt.



12.—LEIGH HUNT.  
From an unpublished Silhouette by Mrs. Leigh Hunt.

Hunt. To such simplicity the portrait (12) bears witness. In his youth he had studied law, but later took to his pen. With his brother he started the *Examiner*, a paper of pronounced Liberal views, and forthwith proceeded to get into trouble, both civil and financial. Once he was prosecuted for publishing the statement that: "Of all monarchs since the Revolution, the successor of George III. will have the finest opportunity of becoming nobly popular." This proved too much for the Royal pride of even that good-natured King, but the charge had to be withdrawn. The brothers were acquitted on their trial for—a sign of the times—denouncing flogging in the Army. But when they added to a fashionable newspaper's description of the Prince Regent as an Adonis, the qualification, "A fat Adonis of fifty," each of them paid a fine of £500, and went to prison for two years. Surrounded by friends, com-

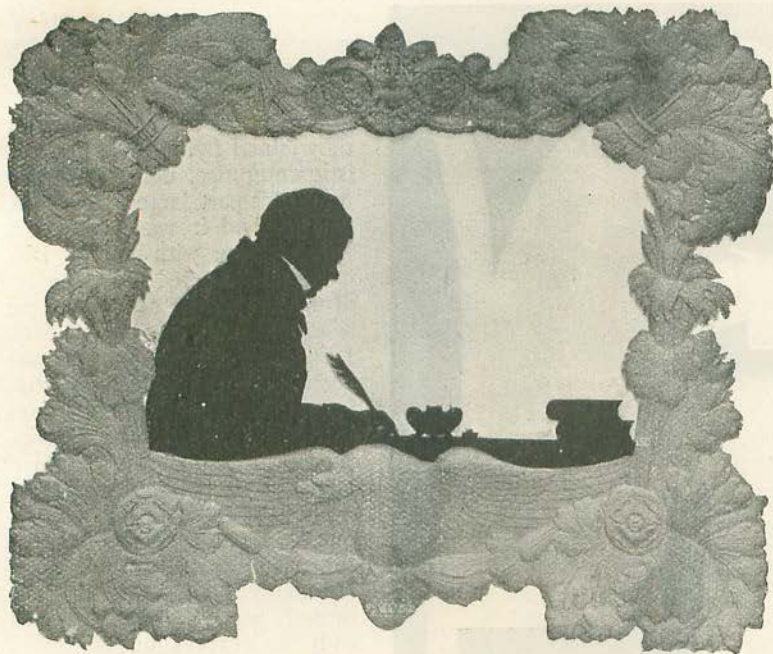
Vol. xii.—74.

forts, and congenial employment, they probably did not find their confinement intolerable.

Shortly after their liberation they joined Byron in a journalistic enterprise, undertaken, on the poet's part, largely to benefit them. And it was while they were staying with him at Pisa or at Genoa in the summer of 1822 that the accompanying silhouette (13) was cut by Mrs. Leigh Hunt. This portrait was considered so successful that it was engraved on copper and published, the following description of the poet's appearance being given below the picture: "He used to sit in this manner out of doors, with the back of the chair for an arm, his body indolently bent, and his face turned gently upwards, often with an expression of doubt and disdain about his mouth. His riding-dress was a mazarine blue camlet frock, with a cape, a velvet cap of the same colour, lined with green, with



13.—LORD BYRON.  
From a Silhouette by Mrs. Leigh Hunt.



14.—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

a gold band and tassel, and black shade, and trowsers, waistcoat, and gaiters all white, and of one material. The cap had something of the look of a coronet, and was a little pulled forward over the shade. His lame foot (the left) but slightly affected his general appearance; it was a shrunken, not a club foot, was turned a little on one side and hurt him if much walked upon; but as he lounged about a room it was hardly observable. The rest of his person, till he grew fat, was eminently handsome; so were his mouth and chin—fit for a bust of Apollo. The fault of the face was that the jaws were too wide compared with the temples, and the eyes too near one another. Latterly he grew thin again, as he was in England. His hair had been thick and curling, but was rapidly falling off."

Byron and Sir Walter Scott (14) met once at the house of the "great Mr. Murray," the publisher, and several letters remain to testify to the kindly feelings which Byron entertained towards his whilom rival—assuming it as a fact that Scott forsook poetry in despair on the appearance of Byron's greater works. Yet Laidlaw says that Scott "felt the influence he had over his great contemporary's mind, and said there was so much in it that was very good and very elevated that anyone whom he much liked could, as he (Scott) thought, have withdrawn him from many of

successfully undertook.

The silhouette of Her Majesty the Queen (15) was executed many years ago at Kensington by special command. Mr. Pearce, the fortunate artist, was the father of a son who displays no less skill. The latter's portrait of Napoleon III. (16) was taken by appointment at the Hôtel des Invalides, just before

15.—QUEEN VICTORIA.  
From a Silhouette by Pearce.

the attempt was made on the Emperor's life by the notorious Orsini in January, 1858. Orsini admitted the justice of the sentence which he underwent in the following March.

The remainder of the silhouettes here

16.—NAPOLEON III.  
From a Silhouette by Pearce.

his errors" — as mighty a task, one would think, as that of surpassing his poetry. The peculiarity of Scott's appearance consisted chiefly in the enormous size of the upper part of his head, which measured fully an inch and a half more in circumference than the part below the eyes. He was also lame, but otherwise was a man of powerful build; indeed, it would have been impossible for any but one of unusual physique to accomplish the stupendous amount of work which Scott



17.—DUCHESS OF LEINSTER.

shown are from the hand of Mr. Harry Edwin. It was at the "Wild West" that he executed the portrait of the late Duchess of Leinster (17). Her appreciation of the likeness is the more valuable as she was herself an art student, being the pupil of the sculptor Edward Lanteri. He had frequently attempted to model her face, but almost despaired of ever reproducing the exquisite beauty of its features. On the other hand, without in-

stituting any odious comparison, Mr. Gladstone's features are so strongly marked, so full of character, that an approximation to their force will give a recognisable likeness (18). Sir William Harcourt (19) has been badly treated by the illustrated papers, and it is quite pleasant to be able to give a portrait of him which is not a gross caricature; while, for the edification of the curious, here is a representation of the Marquis of Salisbury as a "black man" (20).

Julian Hawthorne (21) is an instance of the far-reaching effects of international diplomacy. Had it not been for the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he might still have been an engineer. The loss to literature is attested by the prodigious list of works standing to the name of even so young a man.



19.—SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

The faces of Tennyson (22) and of Robert Browning (23) must have been at once the delight and despair of the silhouette artist. Strongly marked they were. But, unfortunately for the artist in outline, the strongest characteristics did not belong to the profile, but rather to the planes of the faces. The difference of the

two characters is plainly marked in the difference of their physiognomy. Browning was the strong, practical man of the world, all geniality and welcome to his fellows on earth. Tennyson was the recluse, the idealist. He loved "men, my brothers, men, the workers," best at a distance.

Yet, in his own way, he enjoyed life, and surpassed many an alderman in his cult of gastronomy. In spite of his "Plump head waiter at the 'Cock,' to which I most resort," he knew of a choicer dining place, in Regent Street, where his repast could be conducted with a truly religious solemnity. The story goes that an enterprising gentleman once managed to obtain possession of the menu which Tennyson regularly wrote for himself at this celebrated house, and was heard next day offering for sale "the manuscript of the last thing Tennyson wrote." Convention laid its heavy hand upon the Bohemian poet. When he became a peer of the realm, the

distinction was marked by the birth of Tennyson's first top-hat; a fearful and wonderful construction it was: his surrender to popular prejudice was very conditional.

With whom more fitly should this series close than with the first and last knight of the stage; whose history is too well known to need repetition, and his features, that his name should be written here? (24).

It may be remarked, in conclu-



20.—LORD SALISBURY.



18.—MR. GLADSTONE.



21.—JULIAN HAWTHORNE.





22.—LORD TENNYSON.



23.—ROBERT BROWNING.



24.—SIR HENRY IRVING.

sion, that these portraits are not caricatures, with one or two obvious exceptions. They are cut out of paper with a pair of scissors; indeed, a silhouettist has been heard to say that it is easier to draw accurately with the scissors than with the pencil. *Chacun à son goût*. About 1820, an ingenious gentleman named Schmalcalder patented a simple machine for taking profiles (25).

Readers of "Pickwick" will remember the passage in Sam Weller's love-letter in which this contrivance, then a comparatively new invention, received a characteristic description: "So I take the privilage of the day, Mary, my dear—as the gen'l'm'n in difficulties did, ven he valked out of a Sunday,—to tell you that the first and only time I see you,

your likeness was took on my hart in much quicker time and brighter colours than ever a likeness was took by the profeel macheen (wich p'raps you may have heerd on Mary my dear) altho it *does* finish a portrait and put the frame and glass on complete, with a hook at the end to hang it up by, and all in

two minutes and a quarter." "I am afeerd that werges on the poetical, Sammy," was the comment of the elder Mr. Weller—and certainly the machine, as depicted in the accompanying illustration, seems hardly capable of the achievements so imaginatively ascribed to it. At any rate, the best professors of the "black art" have never been tempted into forsaking the spirited work of the free hand for the rigid products of mechanical ingenuity.



25.—THE PROFILE MACHINE.