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HINTS

ON

SKETCHING FROM NATURE.

BY

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PART I.



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SKETCHING FROM NATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE first point for consideration in connection with this subject is the great difference that exists between Sketching from Nature and copying from the work of an artist. It frequently happens that those who have attained considerable proficiency in copying are surprised and distressed to find how little such ability avails them when they attempt a study in the open air. This disappointment arises from ignorance of the principles of the art, and from an imperfect recognition of the amount of practice and ability requisite for the production of original work.

Those who have learnt to draw, and can indulge in the delightful recreation of copying, are aware of the slow and sometimes tedious process by which the power has been acquired; but this bears no comparison with the amount of study requisite for the production of a Sketch from Nature equal in excellence to an average copy.

The first advice we would give to those who intend to prosecute this study, is to enter upon it with very humble expectations, anticipating many disappointments, and being fully prepared to meet them as they arise. Above all things not to be discouraged by the gradual character of the improvement, but hail with delight the faintest indications of coming

power, remembering that years of patient industry have been expended by every professor in attaining the ability exhibited in his works.

In these days of photography and laborious finish in works of art, it might be supposed that sketching must decline in favour, and landscape studies eventually be valued simply in proportion to the number of hours expended on their production. But this hankering after detail, the introduction of which is too often destructive of truth in the general effect, is but the passing humour of the day; and we may rest assured that the love of nature and of truth will outlive every fashion in art. The slightest sketch having the facts of nature for its basis, and a love of art for its animating principle, will ever prove a source of pleasure alike in the production and possession. The sketch-book will continue to be the chosen companion of the artist or amateur, and the mind will never cease to rejoice in its triumph over the difficulties of representation; a success the more evident, in proportion to the apparent insufficiency of the means by which it has been attained.

It is with a deep conviction of the truth of the foregoing remarks, that these hints on sketching have been prepared. They are offered to all true lovers of nature and art, with the earnest desire that they may be the means of shortening the labour and increasing the happiness of many, and not without a hope that some who, perhaps, have been deterred by imaginary difficulties, will be induced to commence a study that may be fairly considered one of the most pure and refined of intellectual pleasures.