

... Peut-être pourrait-on combiner l'une et l'autre masse vocale; prendre le petit chœur de Covent Garden pour l'Enfance du Christ qui n'exige pas de masses puissantes, et lui adjoindre un petite armée d'Ullah pour le Te Deum, à un second concert.



The smaller choir from Covent Garden may have been the preference of Berlioz, who esteemed their conductor Smithson. St. Martin's Hall burned in the summer of 1860 and was replaced by Queen's Theatre on the same site.

David Southern



John Ruskin and the Younger Critic Harry Quilter

ALSO AMONG RUSKINIANA AT DUKE'S DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN Rare Book and Manuscript Library are five letters to Harry Quilter (1851–1907; *ODNB*), critic and contributor to numerous Victorian periodicals including the (London) *Times*, *Cornhill Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, *The Spectator*, and *Nineteenth Century*. The specimens presented here begin awkwardly with a misunderstanding, when Ruskin was 61 years of age and Quilter was 29. The younger critic had sent to Ruskin a copy of his book *Giotto* (London: Samson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1880) and apparently, in a state of impatience or worse, had asked for its return. Two years earlier, the conservative Quilter had taken Ruskin's side in the libel suit pursued by James McNeill Whistler, who had been deeply offended by Ruskin's review of his *Nocturne in Black and Gold*—a philosophical solidarity that Ruskin may have forgotten.



Brantwood
Coniston, Lancashire.

July the 11th 80.

Sir

As my secretary writes precisely what I order him,—you will perhaps exonerate him from your charge of discourtesy.

You will also do well to remember in future that busy men cannot be responsible for the books and papers sent to them.

As it happens, I have—since my secretary wrote to you—glanced at yours——and its insolence and arrogance are so wonderful to me that I may perhaps take some public notice of them—when I have done with the book—you shall have it.

There is probably some real capacity in you of knowing something about the matter in time—if you hold your tongue and words—but I fear you have not sense enough to do either.

very truly yrs,

JRuskin



Brantwood
Coniston, Lancashire.

16th July 80

My dear Mr Quilter

I am sincerely grateful for your letter: I have seldom received one that gave me more pleasure.—chiefly in this that it shows me you have indeed the power to do much.

I did not recognize you as my former correspondent—forgive this to my extreme pressure, now—both in time and business.

I think it will please you to know that I perfectly saw the sincerity of your work, and its right intention. Had it been otherwise, I should merely have returned you your book

with my Compliments—the letter I wrote you was partly a trial letter—which you have stood admirably—but—pardon me once more—the charge of ‘insolence and arrogance’—is inescapable!— You are innocently both—vulgarly neither—but—without those qualities—too natural now to our English youth—you would never have written your book—nor published your drawings. You would have done exactly what I did at your age—thriven to know more—quietly.

Remember—I was freed to write *Modern Painters*, by attacks on a living painter. I should not have called you insolent in writing to defend any one—even wrongly. But to write a book of praise—of the most mystic—the most difficult—the most inextricably subtle in quality of all painters ancient or modern! My dear Sir—only a Modern youth would have dared it. When I went for the third time to Italy—I could draw—though I say it—considerably more accurately than you. You will find the engraved outline of mine—“*Ancilla Domini*” in *Modern Painters*—much closer to its entirely difficult original than you are to the quite coarse and common school fresco of Assisi which you have put for a Frontispiece!— (I photographed it—& all over, and can show you your gross errors in a moment)— (il Giotto!! Indeed!)— But do you suppose I would then have published my drawings of him—I rarely ventured to do so—of leaves and stones.

I only thought of leaves more—and more—and always more—and even when I wrote the Shepherd’s Tower—it was because Colvin was blurting rubbish about it which I had to stop.⁵

I can’t write more to day, but will soon.

Always your’s affectionately

JRuskin



Within the six years between the former series of letters and that which follows below, the exchange had taken a firmer

⁵ “The Shepherd’s Tower” is “The Sixth Morning” in Ruskin’s *Mornings in Florence* (1875–77). Sir Sidney Colvin (1845–1927; *ODNB*), museum director and scholar of art and literature.

footing. Quilter's favorable reviews of Hunt in *The Spectator* was unattributed, though it is plain that Ruskin knew who wrote them.



Brantwood
Coniston, Lancashire.

2nd June 86.

Dear M^r Quilter

I am extremely glad to read both your letter and article: and I did indeed very greatly admire the articles on Hunt in the *Spectator* and most heartily acknowledge the good your zeal and honesty have affected, and am very glad you did not hold your tongue. And I hope that from the exhibitions and reviews of this year, there indeed be dated a change in many directions for good, in the feelings both of artists and the public towards their work and pleasure.

The one thing needed—without which all the rest is still but scramble-tumble—is a disciplined school both of water & oil painting—I mean, separate schools,—contemplating in each the devotion of total life to work in that material, and both founded on a common school of elementary drawing

Ever—with sincerest wishes for your continued industry and influence

Faithfully y^{rs}

John Ruskin

Harry Quilter Esq.



Quilter's book *Sententiae Artis: First Principles of Art for Painters and Picture Lovers* was published in London in 1886 by William Isbister. It is dedicated to Charles Easton Jolliffe, former fellow barrister. In many letters and reviews, Ruskin praised the drawing *The Lemon Tree* (1859) by Sir Frederic Leighton (1830–1896; *ODNB*), and it was displayed at the gallery of Oxford University where Ruskin

had founded a school of drawing in 1871. Ford and Dickinson was a London fine-art framing shop.



Brantwood
Coniston, Lancashire.

6th June 86.

Dear M^r Quilter

I have been too long in answering your note—but because it was the kind of note that needed a quiet half hour to think over. I should be delighted by your dedication.—but I think it would imply that I had more to do with the matter than was really the fact—why not to M^r B. Jones himself, and just give me my own share in the text.— Or to Holman Hunt, whose self-sacrifice has been so far beyond that of the rest. If you dedicated to me, I should want to see the proof. and perhaps be a tea[—]e to you— It seems to me you are better free,—with perhaps a word or two added by me when you've done, which I could do better without the compliment of dedication. You can reproduce anything you like— The Lemon tree is framed in the Oxford gallery and is entirely at Sir Frederick's orders and yours. M^r Macdonald will give any necessary directions about it—after commemoration I am going to have a lot of things done there by Ford & Dickinson, perhaps Sir Frederick's simple order to them would be best.

Ever faithfully y^{rs}

JRuskin

Harry Quilter Esq

David Southern

