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Critical Remarks on Works of Art: Volume 1

Allan Cunningham

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# The Life of Sir David Wilkie

*With His Journals, Tours,  
and Critical Remarks on Works of Art*

VOLUME 1

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM



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*Painted by Thomas Phillips R.A.*

*Engraved by Edward M. Cross*

*Yours most truly*  
*David Wilkie*

*London, John Murray Albemarle Street, 1843.*

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THE  
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WITH  
HIS JOURNALS, TOURS, AND CRITICAL REMARKS  
ON  
WORKS OF ART;  
AND  
A SELECTION FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE.  
BY  
ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.  
IN THREE VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR ROBERT PEELE, BART.

&c. &c. &c.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS LONG AND STEADY FRIENDSHIP

FOR

SIR DAVID WILKIE.

A 2

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## P R E F A C E.

I SHOULD feel some misgivings in setting this work before the world, if it depended solely on its merits as a literary composition. The Journals and Letters of Wilkie, while they exhibit a proper consciousness of his own acknowledged genius, betray no symptoms that they were ever intended for the public eye; and his biographer did not live long enough to watch his own work through the press, and see it in the new shape and light which the printer puts it in, of one consistent whole. Wilkie died suddenly at sea, full of hope and grand ideas in his art; and his biographer lay senseless within a few hours after he had written the last page of his friend's character — he died the next day. He understood Sir David, and loved him, and his heart was much with his subject.

But these volumes have, withal, many claims to public attention: they detail, with minute and faithful exactness, the several events of a great painter's life; his early struggles for distinction and support;

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the progress of his pictures, from the first rude conception of incident and story, till that last stage in which they won universal approbation upon the walls of the Royal Academy. His Letters and Journals reveal his secret misgivings, his eager thirst for fame, the patience with which he laboured, and the warmth of his friendship; while his Memoranda and Remarks exhibit a series of practical observations upon art, such as no painter has left us since Sir Joshua Reynolds. His Memoranda were made in all the great galleries of Europe — the deliberate opinions of the reflecting artist: — the Remarks at home — the result of a whole life of acute observation and experience.

The Letters are addressed to his brother and sister, and the various persons of taste with whom his genius had brought him acquainted. The frank and ready communication of these letters lightened the biographer's task of collecting; and he was also grateful for the assistance he had received from the considerate contributions of friends and admirers. The names of the parties to whom the several letters are addressed exhibit the friendly quarters from whence they were received; but I feel that an enumeration of names is necessary, that I may express the thanks of a son for assistance rendered to a father.

I beg leave to acknowledge, with thankfulness, the

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sense I feel of the courtesy and kindness of his Grace the Duke of Sutherland; the Right Honourable the Earl of Leven; the Countess of Mulgrave; the Right Honourable Sir Robert Peel, Bart.; Viscount Mahon, M. P.; Mrs. Howley (the lady of his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury); Honourable W. Leslie Melville; Sir George Beaumont, Bart.; Sir W. W. Knighton, Bart.; Sir James M'Grigor, Bart.; Samuel Rogers, Esq.; J. G. Lockhart, Esq.; Sir Martin Archer Shee, P. R. A.; Thomas Phillips, Esq. R. A.; William Collins, Esq. R. A.; Sir Peter Laurie; Peter Laurie, Esq.; J. Abel Smith, Esq. M. P.; Sir William Allan, R. A.; Lady Baird Preston; Miss Edgeworth; Mrs. Anthony Todd Thomson; Sir Claudius Hunter; Professor Buckland; John Burnet, Esq.; the late Abraham Raimbach, Esq.; George Young, Esq., of Denmark Hill; John Harvey, Esq.; Bonamy Dobree, Esq.; George Jones, Esq. R. A.; W. S. Woodburn, Esq.; Andrew Wilson, Esq., and his son, C. H. Wilson, Esq., of Edinburgh; Professor Gillespie, of St. Andrew's; Dr. Darling; James Hall, Esq.; Miss Catherine Sinclair; Angus Fletcher, Esq.; David Lister, Esq.; William Laidlaw, Esq.; Francis Graham Moon, Esq.; Mrs. Nasmyth, Edinburgh; A. Keightley, Esq.; W. S. Watson, Esq.; Alexander Fraser, Esq.; David Page, Esq., of Cupar; William Pagan, Esq., of Cupar; Andrew Geddes, Esq., A. R. A.; Thomas Bigge, Esq.; B. G. Windus, Esq., of Tottenham;

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J. W. Fraser, Esq., of Manchester; John W. Cook,  
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PETER CUNNINGHAM.

London, 1st March, 1843.

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