

Sept 5/56
J. Cole

3 Rochester Road
Camden Town
Sept 9. 1856

Sir

I understood from a
circular sent to me some
time ago that returned
pictures from the Crystal
Palace would be delivered
on application, but I have
sent several times to the
Portland Bazaar & have
not been able to get
mine (one entitled
"Lyndon's Got on the Wye")
If you will kindly inform

J. Cole

me when it will be
obtainable you will greatly
oblige
Yours truly
V. Cole

H. Snufford Esq.
Portland Bazaar

VICAT COLE, A.R.A.

Agreeably to our custom on the occasion of elections by the Royal Academy, we present a portrait of Mr. Vicat Cole, the last-elected Associate of that body. The recent election was attended with the novel result of introducing a landscape-painter into the academic pale. We say "novel result" because it is nearly thirty years since a landscape-painter *pur et simple*—i.e., the late Mr. Creswick—was deemed worthy of the honour. The compliment is, of course, the greater to Mr. Cole; but we are far from admitting that several other painters have not been, during that lengthened period, entitled to the same distinction. It is universally felt that English landscape-painting has excelled, despite Academic neglect. On the Continent, where criticism is surely as much advanced as here, our landscape is held in higher estimation than our figure painting; and to this day it best sustains comparison with foreign work of the same kind. Yet at this moment we have, strictly speaking, only two landscape-painters among the sixty Academicians and Associates—Messrs. Lee and Cole—though some others of the number paint landscape occasionally, or employ it in combination of equal importance with figures. The too great preponderance of figure-painters in the Academy is the only explanation to be offered for the sparsity of representatives of one of the most meritorious and delightful branches of British Art.

Mr. Vicat Cole was born at Portsmouth. He is the son of Mr. George Cole, the well-known member of the Society of British Artists, from whom he received his earliest instruction in Art. To the habit of constantly painting out-of-doors "on the spot," must probably be attributed his subsequent artistic development, for Mr. Cole owes little to schools, systems, or traditions. There are, doubtless, regulative pictorial principles applicable to landscape as to all other forms of Art; but constant reference to Nature herself, as the highest authority, is the paramount duty of the landscape-painter. Mr. Cole exhibited first at the British Institution, in 1852; the subject of his picture being a view of Leith-hill from Rammoor-common. In 1858 he was elected a member of the Society of British Artists, and during several succeeding years he was a regular exhibitor in Suffolk-street. One of his contributions to those rooms, a picture of a corn-field, was re-exhibited in the '62 International Gallery, and gained the medal of the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts.

In 1864, following the example of Stanfield, Roberts, Creswick, and others who had been members and exhibitors at Suffolk-street, Mr. Cole retired from that society to become a candidate for exhibition and honours at the Royal Academy. The most important works which he has exhibited at the Academy are "The Decline of Day" (1864)—a large picture with effect of evening-tide; "Spring-time" (1865), the subject being suggested by one of the songs in "Love's Labour Lost;" "Evening Rest," and "Summer's Golden Crown" (1866)—the latter appeared at the Paris Exhibition of 1867, and attracted much notice there; a large stormy seapiece and "St. Bride's Bay" (1867); "Sunlight Lingering on the Autumn Woods" (1869); "A Pause in the Storm, at Sunset," "Summer Showers," and "Floating Down to Camelot" (1869). Mr. Cole's favourite field of study and the source of most of his subjects is Surrey, with its picturesque hills and dales, moors, and woodland corn-field and pasturage. The artist may be classed as an imitative realistic painter, relying on the character and sentiment of the scene he represents; and if his work receives no very decided modification from passing through a mental or imaginative medium, it is always healthy and cheerful in feeling, and it owes much to the technical charms of an elegant, graceful execution, and an effective scheme and playful interchange of colouring.

The portrait is from a photograph by Mr. John Watkins.