matchless splendour and beauty.” From this period on­ward till about 1840 Turner’s life was one of unceasing activity. Nothing is more astonishing than his prodigious fertility; he rose early, worked from morning till night, entirely absorbed in his art, and gradually became more and more solitary and isolated. Between 1829 and 1839 he sent fifty-five pictures to the Royal Academy, painted many others on private commission, made over four hundred drawings for engravers, besides thousands of studies and sketches from nature. His industry accounts for the immense quantity of work he left behind him. There is not the slightest evidence to show that it arose from a desire to make money, which he never cared for in com­parison with his art. He has been accused, perhaps not without some cause, of avarice and meanness in his busi­ness dealings, and many stories are told to his discredit. But in private he often did generous things, although owing to his reserved disposition his virtues were known only to a few. His faults on the other hand—thanks to the malice, or jealousy, of one or two individuals—were freely talked about and, as a matter of course, greatly ex­aggerated. “Keep it, and send your children to school and to church,” were the words with which he declined repayment of a considerable loan to a poor drawing-master’s widow. On another occasion, when interrupted in his work, he roughly chid and dismissed the applicant, a poor woman ; but she had hardly left his door before he followed her and slipped a *£5* note into her hand. His tenants in Harley Street were in arrears for years, but he would never allow his lawyer to distrain ; and if further proof of his generosity were needed his great scheme for bettering the condition of the unfortunate in his own profession should suffice. On one occasion he is known to have taken down a picture of his own from the walls of the Academy to make room for that of an unknown artist.

The first of Turner’s Venetian pictures (Bridge of Sighs, Ducal Palace and Custom House, Venice, Canaletti Painting) appeared in the Academy in 1833. Compared with the sober, prosaic work of Canaletti, Turner’s pictures of Venice appear like poetic dreams. Splendour of colour and carelessness of form generally characterize them. Venice appeared to him “a city of rose and white, rising out of an emerald sea against a sky of sapphire blue.” Many of these Venetian pictures belong to his later manner, and some of them, the Sun of Venice Going to Sea (1843), Approach to Venice (1844), and Venice, Evening, Going to the Ball (1845), to his latest. As Turner grew older his love of brilliant colour and light became more and more a characteristic. In trying to obtain these qualities he gradually fell into an unsound method of work, treating oil as if it had been water-colour, using both indiscrimi­nately on the same canvas, utterly regardless of the result. Many of his finest pictures are already in a ruined state, mere wrecks of what they once were.

The Fighting Téméraire Tugged to her Last Berth to be Broken up (see vol. xxi. p. 441, fig. 43) was exhibited in the Academy of 1839. By many it is considered one of his finest works. Turner had all his life been half a sailor at heart : he loved the sea, and shipping, and sailors and their ways ; many of his best pictures are sea pieces ; and the old ships of Collingwood and Nelson were dear to him. Hence the pathetic feeling he throws around the fighting Téméraire. The old three-decker, looking ghostly and wan in the evening light, is slowly towed along by a black, fiery little steam tug,—a contrast suggesting the passing away of the old order of things and the advent of the new; and behind the sun sets red in a thick bank of smoke or mist. The Slave Ship, another important sea picture, was exhibited in the following year, and in 1842 Peace : Burial at Sea, commemorative of Wilkie.

Turner had now reached his sixty-seventh year, but no very marked traces of declining power are to be seen in his work. Many of the water-colour drawings belonging to this period are of great beauty, and, although a year or two later his other powers began to fail, his faculty for colour remained unimpaired almost to the end. He paid his last visit to the Continent in 1843, wandering about from one place to another, and avoiding his own country­men, an old and solitary man. At his house in Queen Anne Street they were often ignorant of his whereabouts for months, as he seldom took the trouble to write to any one. Two years later (1845) his health gave way and with it both mind and sight began to fail. The works of his declining period exercised the wit of the critics. Turner felt these attacks keenly. He was naturally kind- hearted and acutely sensitive to censure. “ A man may be weak in his age,” he once remarked, “but you should not tell him so.”

After 1845 all the pictures shown by Turner belong to the period of decay,—mere ghosts and shadows of what once had been. In 1850 he exhibited for the last time. He had given up attending the meetings of the Academi­cians ; none of his friends had seen him for months ; and even his old housekeeper had no idea of his whereabouts. Turner’s mind had evidently given way for some time, and with that love of secrecy which in later years had grown into a passion he had gone away to hide himself in a corner of London. He had settled as a lodger in a small house in Chelsea, overlooking the river, kept by his old Margate landlady, Mrs Booth. To the children in the neighbourhood he was known as “Admiral Booth.” His short, sailor-like figure may account for the idea that he was an impoverished old naval officer. He had been ill for some weeks, and when his Queen Anne Street house­keeper at last discovered his hiding-place she found him sinking, and on the following day, the 19th December 1851, he died. He was buried in St Paul’s cathedral, in deference to a wish he had himself expressed.

He left the large fortune he had amassed (about £140,000) to found a charity for the “ maintenance and support of male decayed artists, being born in England, and of English parents only, and of lawful issue.” His pictures he bequeathed to the nation, on con­dition that they were to be exhibited in rooms of their own, and that these rooms were to be called “ Turner’s Gallery.” The will and its codicils were so confused that after years of litigation, during which a large part of the money was wasted in legal expenses, it was found impossible to decide what Turner really wanted. A compromise was effected in which the wishes of everybody, save those of the testator, were consulted, his next-of-kin, whom he did not mean to get a single farthing, inheriting the bulk of his pro­perty. The nation got all the pictures and drawings, and the Royal Academy £20,000.

It is unnecessary here to do more than allude to the charges which have been brought against Turner’s moral character. Like most men of note he had his enemies and detractors, and it is to be. regretted that so many of the stories they set in circulation should have been repeated by one of his biographers, who candidly admits having ‘ spared none of his faults,” and excuses himself for so doing by “ what he hopes” is his “undeviating love of truth.” The immense quantity of work accomplished by Turner during his lifetime, work full of the utmost delicacy and refinement, proves the singularly fine condition of his nervous system, and is perhaps the best answer that can be given to the charge of being excessively addicted to sensual gratification. In his declining years he possibly had recourse to stimulants to help his failing powers, but it by no means follows that he went habitually to excess in their use. He never lost an opportunity of doing a kindness, and under a rough and cold exterior there was more good and worth hidden than the world imagined. “ During the ten years I knew him,” says Mr Ruskin, “years in which he was suffering most from the evil­speaking of the world, I never heard him say one depreciating word of any living man or man’s work ; I never saw him look an unkind or blameful look ; I never knew him let pass, without sorrowful remonstrance, or endeavour at mitigation, a blameful word spoken by another. Of no man but Turner, whom I have ever known, could I say this.” Twice during his earlier days there are circumstances leading to the belief that he had thoughts of