

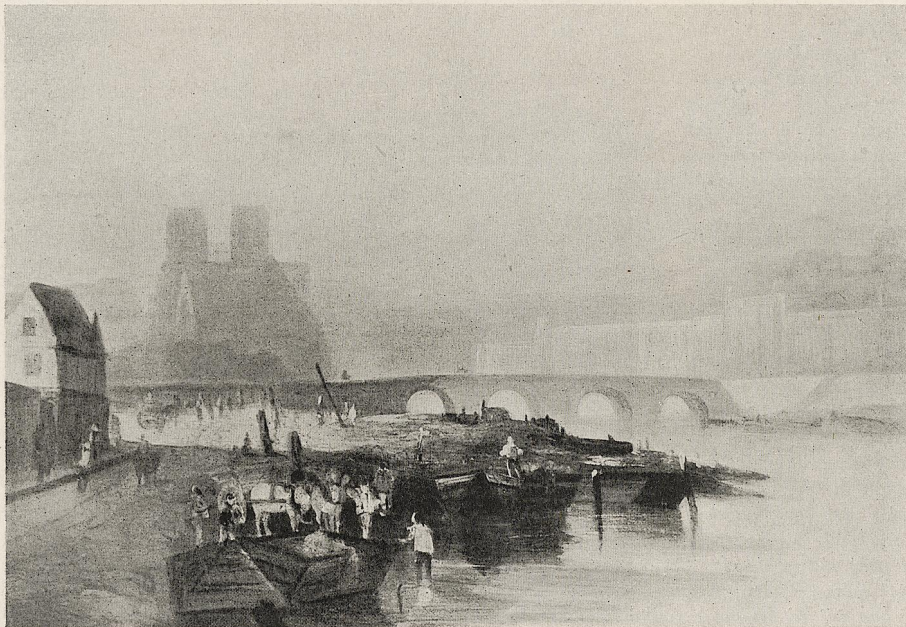
*R. P. Bonington*

**T**HE ART OF RICHARD PARKES BONINGTON, 1801—1828. BY HENRI FRANTZ.

THERE are some men of genius whom no changes of opinion, no steps in the evolution of taste, can rob of the privilege of eternal youth. Richard Parkes Bonington is one of these. Naturalism succeeds to romanticism only to give way in its turn before impressionism, and still the water-colours and the oils from this artist's hand retain all that freshness of charm, all that modern feeling, which is as enchanting for us as for our fathers. In fact, this youthful genius, endowed with an inspiration as pure as it was spontaneous, had no time to lose his inborn characteristics or to feel the evil influences of the caprices of fashion and of the temptations of success. For genuine originality his work stands unrivalled; never in the least forced, it flashes out distinctly like a sudden blaze of torchlight, and once extinguished leaves no fading glow behind it. His every production has the charm which those alone can give whom the Muses love, and therefore condemn to an early death. How fascinating is the story of

this sickly young life, sapped by a passion for art, born in the grasp of fever, and half conscious of its approaching end: of this romantic and delicate personality, which recalls that of Keats, as true an artist as Bonington, who was suffering at the same period as he under the same Italian sky.

Thus of Bonington we can never tire of talking, and in him interest should from time to time be revived, if only to show how living his work always remains, how modern is his peculiar style, in which the characteristics of the English landscape painters and those of the French romantic school seemed blended together, to delight at once the eye and the imagination. Richard Parkes Bonington was born in the village of Arnold, near Nottingham, on October 25th, 1801. His father appears to have been at one time an artist, and even after he had become a business man continued to take an interest in the productions of his son, both in directing them and even sometimes in collaborating in them. From his childhood young Bonington showed an unusual aptitude for painting, and was always sketching, in the green English country, trees, houses, barges—anything which attracted his attention. In 1816 his father set up



“NOTRE DAME: SUNSET”

(In the collection Chéramy)

BY R. P. BONINGTON

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