

1786-1789

Painter

Volunteer in Pennsylvania

R. A. Acting President

etc

better knowledge of drawing than sufficed to make a man eligible to the honor of R.A. in the times when Mr Jones was elected to that distinction. Mr Jones, I understand, is much respected, & deservedly, by a large circle of influential friends & his connections from his having been in the army, being high. He possesses taste & knowledge of art, designs cleverly & sketches with facility, and is, in short, a very clever person; but his accomplishments are rather those of an amateur than a complete artist. Such, at least, is the opinion estimate of his talents that I have conscientiously formed, & which is confirmed & supported by the information of others.

I fear that I have wearied you with this lengthy answer to your plain & brief question; but circumstances & inferences are not so concisely stated as positive facts, which I could not get hold of. Moreover the peculiar way in which the charge of unfairness was conveyed to you, made me feel that I was, in some measure, put upon my defence.

I remain, My dear Sir,

Faithfully Yours  
R. L. Nintoubly 1894.B.1

49 St Mark's Road, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1840

My dear Sir

I have endeavoured to ascertain with certainty if Mr Jones the Keeper of the Royal Academy really can draw, but in vain; no one will give a definite and satisfactory answer to the question: it is evaded. Hence I infer that he cannot draw, as a Professor of Drawing in a Royal Academy ought to be able. I can now understand why the simple, bona fide query, "can he draw?" gave such umbrage: truth is the sting of censure. No one thought of questioning his predecessor Hillon's power of drawing; but Mr Jones's qualifications seem to be of a retiring kind, shunning observation & eluding research. If the insinuation implied in the question were groundless how happens it that it did not to have been repelled in print? The article ~~was~~ question itself was quoted in the Morning Post; it was commented upon acquiescently in the Probe, the Editor of which appeared to be personally acquainted with and friendly to Mr Jones; while the Art-Union, which was the organ of the new Keeper's pretensions was silent on the point; though it put forth a feeble defence of his election on the ground of his amiability. Surely if the doubt of his qualifications had been unfounded, and the remarks conveying that doubt were so strongly objectionable, you would have heard of it otherwise than by a side-wind several weeks afterwards.

I cannot understand, I must confess, how any readers of the Spectator should take such offence

at the structure on Mr Jones's appointment, as that three or four subscribers should simultaneously discontinue a Journal of its stamp on such slight grounds; because I consider ~~the~~ readers to belong to that class who never object to truth fairly stated & boldly urged, on a fitting occasion - and to this category the remarks in question belong. It is unnecessary for me, Mratt, to disclaim to you any imputation of private motives or personal feeling in the matter: the confidence you place in my impartiality, added to a conviction that whatever value any opinions of so humble an individual as myself may possess is derived from their justness, make me careful to exclude all party or personal bias & to ascertain the truth, ~~and~~ I do not know Mr Jones even by sight, & could have no interest in attacking him as an individual; but a strong ~~improbability~~ <sup>conviction</sup> of his unfitness for the office, derived from an acquaintance with his performances, and an equally strong sense of the injury to the students & to the cause of British art, that would accrue from his appointment, as well as a feeling of disgust & indignation at the conduct of the Academy, urged me to the performance of a disagreeable duty.

The office of 'Keeper', is the most important in the Academy, regarded as a School of ~~the~~ Instruction: his chief duty is to teach the students to draw from the Antique & the living model; and as no student is admitted

into the Academy without being previously sufficiently well accustomed to use the crayon to be able to decalcopy a figure tolerably well, the qualifications of the master who is to instruct pupils so far advanced had need be very high, both on the score of knowledge & skill of hand: he should be a thoroughly good anatomist, learned in the proportions of the antique and human form, and be able to draw both with accuracy, ease, & elegance - at least such is my view of the accomplishments of an Academy Professor. Now I unhesitatingly assert, without fear of contradiction that Mr Jones is not thus qualified, and I believe it is generally understood by those cognizant of the subject that he is not. It is notorious that he was not chosen on the ground of his qualifications, but because he solicited the office, & the emoluments and position of which were better worth his acceptance than that of such artists as Eastlake, Mulready, & Elby; either of whom are worthy to succeed Giltou, and would have been willing, I believe, had the salary been adequate to the demands on the time, attention, & labour of first rate talent, the Academy ought to have made it so: they can well afford it; and the importance of a competent Professor of Drawing to the School of art is very great at this juncture, when our young artists are required to possess much