

“THE ONLY TRUE ART OF THE DAY”:
WARING PARODIES THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

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I: Who Was Tennyson Longfellow Smith?

A visitor to the 1857 Art Treasures of Great Britain Exhibition at Manchester might well have stopped at the exhibition’s book-stall and been either amused or mystified at a thin pamphlet called *Poems inspired by certain pictures...*,¹ ostensibly written by one Tennyson Longfellow Smith (of Cripplegate Within), edited by his friend, the author of “Thorns and Thistles,” illustrated by the Honourable Botibol Bareacres, and dedicated with “profound admiration and awe” to “THE IMMORTAL BUSKIN.” The real author, illustrator, and editor of the *Poems* was John Burley Waring (1823-1875), an architect who never built a building, but flourished as a writer on ornamental art and architectural adornment, and served as the superintendent and catalogue editor of the great Manchester Exhibition of 1857 and of similar important exhibitions at Kensington and Leeds. Waring’s varied and eccentric career – his strange combination of conventional and idiosyncratic views – provides at least partial insight into his creation of a delightfully satirical pamphlet filled with verbal and visual parodies of the Pre-Raphaelites and their friends.

Born in Lyme Regis and educated at the Bristol branch of University College, London, Waring was apprenticed to a London-based architect and also studied at the Royal Academy. Making the first of his many trips to Italy in the winter of 1843, he writes in *A Record of My Artistic Life* (1873) that he had gone “to improve himself in art and become a painter” (9). After receiving his credentials as an associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1845 and working as a draughtsman in a number of architects’ offices, he returned to Italy in 1847 and with Thomas Macquoid published a heavily illustrated work on *Architectural Art in Italy and Spain* (1850). Still