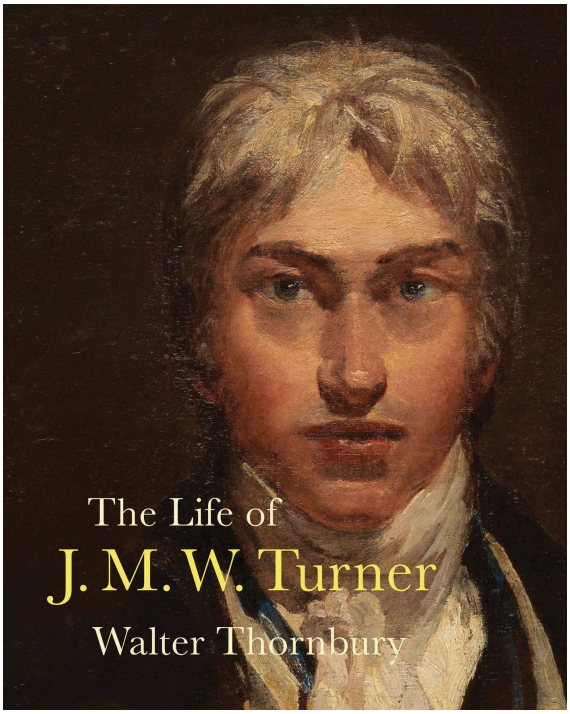
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Tel: +1 212 645 1111
Email: ussales@accartbooks.com
Web: https://www.accartbooks.com/us



The Life of J. M. W. Turner

Walter Thornbury

Introduction by Ian Warrell

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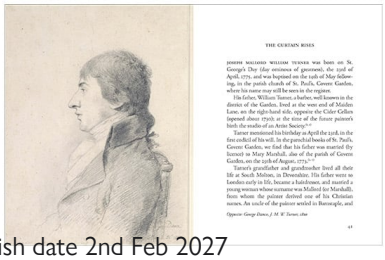
- The biography that provided most of what we know about Turner's life and career
- A vivid, compact and coherent arrangement of Walter Thornbury's ill-organized and prolix original
- Nearly 100 pages of color illustration covering the full range of Turner's extraordinary output

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) is without contest England’s greatest painter – as his contemporaries were quick to admit, even when they could not understand his increasingly abstract art. Yet, despite achieving fame young, the man himself was so intensely private as to be almost unknown. Both brusque and kindly, tight-fisted and generous, taciturn and witty company, he remained a fascinating enigma and source of many legends.

Soon after Turner’s death the journalist, critic and novelist Walter Thornbury began collecting anecdotes from friends and colleagues. The resulting biography provides most of what we know about Turner. It is unfailingly energetic and entertaining – but also ill-organized and prolix. In this edition, the scholar Ian Warrell has arranged Thornbury’s most illuminating passages into a compact, coherent narrative of the painter’s life.

Unfailingly vivid and thought-provoking, and with nearly 100 pages of color illustrations, this is the first stop on any exploration of Turner’s life and career.

Walter Thornbury (1828–1876), journalist, historian, novelist, critic, poet and travel writer, is best remembered for his biography of Turner, and Old and New London. Hugely prolific and controversial, he died of over-work at the age of only 47.**Ian Warrell** is an independent curator specializing in British art of the 19th century. He has written extensively on Turner and has curated exhibitions worldwide on many aspects of his art. His latest publication with Pallas Athene is *Impressions in Watercolour: Turner and his Contemporaries.*


THE CURTAIN RISES

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER was born on St. George's Day (the eminence of gentlemen), the 23rd of April, 1775, and was baptised on the 14th of May following, in the parish church of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where his name may still be seen in the register.

His father, William Turner, a barber, well known in the district of the Garden, lived at the west end of Maiden Lane, on the right-hand side, opposite the Cider Cellars (opened about 1756) at the time of the future painter's birth the studio of an Artist Society.[1]

Turner mentioned his birthday as April the 23rd, in the first codicil of his will. In the parochial books of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, we find that his father was married (by licence) to Mary Marshall, also of the parish of Covent Garden, on the 24th of August, 1773.[2]

Turner's grandfather and grandmother lived all their life at South Molton, in Devonshire. His father went to London early in life, became a hairdresser, and married a young woman whose surname was Mallord (or Marshall), from whom the painter derived one of his Christian names. An uncle of the painter settled in Barnstaple, and

Opposite: George Dance, J. M. W. Turner, 1800





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