CHAPTER XIII

1853–1854

The Christian Religion under every theory of it, in the believing or the unbelieving mind, must ever be regarded as the crowning glory, or rather the life and soul of our own modern culture. How did Christianity arise and spread among men? It arose in the mystic deeps of man's soul; and was spread abroad by the preaching of the word; by simple altogether natural and individual efforts; and flew, like hallowed fire, from heart to heart till all were purified and illuminated by it, and its heavenly light shone, as it still shines and (as sun or star) will ever shine through the whole dark destinies of man.—CARLYLE, *Signs of the Times* (1829).

ALTOGETHER I was in low spirits when I returned to town, and I dreaded to look at my work lest it should be disappointing, but after some three or four days I opened the box, and was relieved to find how far it represented my intention. I then wrote to Mr. Charles Maude, telling him that I had given the additional inches to the canvas solely for my own satisfaction; that I had intended to say nothing whatever about it, but finding that it had resulted in so much extra work, and in causing a substantial increase of value to the picture, I trusted he would not be shocked at my proposing that after all I should make the repetition of the group of sheep in "The Hireling Shepherd" for him as at first proposed, and that I should have "The Strayed Sheep" to sell independently. This was suggested, however, with full acknowledgment of his claim upon the painting for the price agreed upon, for in correspondence I had always spoken of it as his picture. He generously admitted my right to larger remuneration,

and offered £120, which I gratefully accepted. To this work was awarded next year the £60 prize at Birmingham.

This was a double success for our school, as Millais' picture of "The Huguenot" obtained the prize at Liverpool. The growing recognition of our claims was thus proved to be general.

I had now to bring the "Claudio and Isabella" to a finish, and I worked on it steadily throughout the winter. There was not so much to elaborate as to hinder me from working on moonlight nights at the picture, which Ruskin, who visited me, called "The Watchman." In addition to the long delayed painting for Egg, I had the portrait of Canon Jenkyns,[1] entitled "New College Cloisters," as also "The Strayed Sheep," for 1853. My earliest professional champion and friend, Augustus L. Egg, had watched the "Measure for Measure" picture from the beginning with the greatest kindness, and had always approved of my putting it aside whenever there was an opportunity of doing more pressing work; now I hoped to see him justified in his favourable view of the design.

We had continual signs that there was division in the camp of our enemies. Every exhibition contained examples of attempts to work from Nature, in avowed, and still more often in unavowed, accordance with our principles, and the efforts made by professed adversaries to appear confident of our defeat were not always very impressive. Their curiosity to see our last production was not indicative of contempt.

On show day at Millais' studio the outraged rear-guard of the profession appeared, looking implacable when in full force. John Phillip arrived with his handsome and candid tempered wife, and before the pictures both for a time stood silent.

He had been intimate with Millais since the latter was a child, and had rated him roundly upon his heterodoxy in art, using all the pet accusations of his set, that our pictures showed an abandonment of the spirit of

[1] Now in the possession of Jesus College, Oxford.

beauty, that there was an utter want of repose and tone, such as the great masters had secured as their crowning excellence; that our forms were coarse, that the colour was extravagant, unnatural, and inharmonious; that our attempt to imitate sunlight was against all the worthiest precedents, and, in short, in his own words, that "the whole movement was an example of rank humbug." This time there was no one to bolster him up, and as he stood moody and mysterious, suddenly his wife said, "Jockey dear, I don't see how people can say that such a painting as this is affected and false, it seems singularly perfect, and wonderfully like what Nature looks to me." "By Jove, you're just right!" he suddenly exclaimed, "and it's all confounded nonsense and rubbish that we've been persuading ourselves to say; and I'll tell you what, Johnny my boy, I've been a fool, and I won't be one any longer, but throw up the whole conventional dogma and paint like the Pre-Raphaelites. You trust me! And I wish you would just come one evening, and ask Hunt too, and we'll have a bit of supper and smoke a pipe over it together." And so it was, and Barlow the engraver was present to hear his recantation. In the ensuing Exhibition appeared the picture, painted according to promise, of "The Spanish Letter Writer," with strong sunlight trenchantly rendered, and all details given scrupulously, with every trait besides of his complete conversion to all that he understood to be Pre-Raphaelitism. It was enough for a convincing recantation, and we wondered whether he would follow it up with a more complete and subtle pursuit of the poetic mysteries of Nature. This picture is now in His Majesty's collection. The new disciple, however, did not continue staunch; he soon returned to a more unrestrained manner, and he was quickly rewarded for a second declaration of hostility to our principles by the championship of the critics, and advance in position with the "powers that be," which the advocacy of the contemporary press always accelerates.

After we had sent in our pictures to the Exhibition

we gave up a full day to a task which proved that we had not forgotten our bond of good fellowship. Woolner

W. H. H.

J. E. MILLAIS.

(This Portrait is not the one made on the occasion referred to on page 341, it represents Millais some eight months later.)

had in his letters explained his want of good fortune in the gold-fields, and that he had again made art his

profession by establishing himself as a portraitist in medallions and busts, and it seemed his practice in this branch of work was improving. He informed us further that as our names appeared so often in the home newspapers it would be an advantage to him with the colonists to have visible evidence of our friendship. We therefore all met one morning at Millais' studio, and set to work to complete a collection of our portraits, in pencil, chalk, or pastel. Millais did William Rossetti and Stephens. William did, if I am not mistaken, make a beginning with some one, but gave up his purpose to save the time for others. Stephens abstained from any attempt. Gabriel chose me for his subject, and I managed to get Millais and Rossetti done, although the slowness of Gabriel, with his appeals for special posings, gave the dusk the opportunity of overtaking us before I had quite finished Millais. Rossetti's tendency then in sketching a face was to convert the features of his sitter to his favourite ideal type, and if he finished on these lines, the drawing was extremely charming, but you had to make believe a good deal to see the likeness, while if the sitter's features would not lend themselves to the pre-ordained form, he, when time allowed, went through a stage of reluctant twisting of lines and quantities to make the drawing satisfactory. With unlimited time his work became eminently true and artistic too. On this occasion he had to leave off when my likeness stood between the two stages, so that the verdict given was that it made me twenty years older than I could claim to be, and William Rossetti suggested that it resembled Rush, the notorious murderer of the day. However, the drawings all went as they were left that evening, and they were framed together to hang in Woolner's studio at Melbourne, and afterwards in London, not without the desired effect upon his clients, while he was waiting for recognition.[1]

[1] The collection some twenty years after was broken up, some of the portraits being sold at Christie's. The pastel of Rossetti, much rubbed, and in danger of obliteration, was obtained by his brother William, who kindly lent it to me to make an oil painting of it, which I still possess.

On the Sunday before opening day, Mr. Augustus Egg came in, telling me that the "Claudio and Isabella" had obtained an excellent place in the first room of the Academy. Further, that on the morning before the dinner it was much discussed and had won many warm admirers. Lord Grosvenor—I write entirely from memory—did not profess to like the school, or this picture himself, but one of his friends approved it so much, that his lordship said if it could be bought for three hundred guineas he would purchase it as a present for his friend. Egg urged then that I should take the opportunity to obtain a fair price for my work, saying that he would cheerfully wait my convenience for the picture of a single figure for the twenty-five pounds he had paid to me; but I said, "I shall do no such thing. When I began the picture the market value of the work was proved to be not even fifty guineas—in fact only twenty-five; had you not come forward with an offer of this, the picture would never have been done at all. If it had not been put by for my convenience, there would have been just the same temper towards it on its appearance as was shown then to other works of mine." He pressed his point until I affected indignation, and added, "You little know what an obstinate dragon I am when thoroughly provoked. The picture is yours, sir, and nobody else's. You may do what you like with it. Pray, assure Lord Grosvenor that I am truly flattered by his intention, but that I have nothing whatever to do with the possession of the picture." Afterwards Egg asked me to come and have a little dinner with him alone at Greenwich, to "make it up"; he made a speech, and I returned thanks to him as my patron. Some three years later, I received, as a memento, an old-fashioned sideboard which had been turned out of Kensington Palace, and which he had wisely rescued; and we remained the dearest friends till he died. How I love now to call up his handsome, kindly face, sitting at table with his dear prism at his side![1]

[1] This he kept by hand to enjoy its mysterious colours.

I ought here to add that a few nights after my interview with the artist who had originally given me a commission and had then withdrawn it, he and Egg were at another artist's house, and I was told by a third person present (never by Egg) that the repudiator began saying, "Young Hunt called on me the other morning, asserting that I had given him a commission for fifty guineas, but I soon told him that I had never done so; and he showed me some designs, which I declared to him candidly were odious and full of affectation." At this Egg said, "Stop!" And beginning at one end of the table, he went round to nearly every guest, asking, "Were you not at Forster's two years ago with Charles Reade?" When all had remembered, he went on, "Did or did he not come in boasting that he had asked Hunt to paint a picture of one or two figures for fifty guineas?" Egg would have no evasions, and every one remembered the circumstances. "As for the rest," he added, "Hunt brought the drawings from you to me. I declare they are admirable, and I have persuaded him to commence the 'Claudio and Isabella,' and you shall all judge of it in time."

—— was silenced, but he never forgave me; men rarely do when they have done you an injustice, or even a deliberate rudeness.

Millais that year exhibited his fine picture "The Order of Release." The art critic in *The Times* had been removed, and Tom Taylor, who had made an impression of liberality by an enthusiastic article on "The Huguenot" in *Punch* in the previous year, was put in his place. The whole world was beginning to waver; even the converted oracles guarded themselves against signs of too sudden a conversion. On the previous opening day, when Millais' "Ophelia" and "Huguenot" had convinced many of his former enemies, in the press of people I found myself near a group of very authoritative critics of the loud talking kind. One was prominent who had scrupled at nothing to oppose us, giving to the public, in the intervals between the Exhibition, startling and spurious information of our

doings for the forthcoming year. He was accosted with, "Well, it seems as though the P.R.B. are looking up." "Millais is decidedly coming forward, but I hate his followers!" he replied. The chance shot—for he did not know me—could not have been better directed, and it brought into greater distinctness the need of proving that P.R.B.-ism was of wide application, and that each expounder of its principles could find regions for enterprise which would show even to the least reflective that amongst the originators there was no following of one by the other. I had begun, therefore, to prepare more openly to carry out my long conceived plan, already often talked of with Millais, of going to the East. My good friend Mr. Combe had from the first taken the greatest interest in the project. We had talked of it in many a ramble across Port Meadow, about the Cherwell, and over Abingdon and Shotover; and he then almost hoped to come out to me for a time to Palestine.

My "Claudio and Isabella," it is true, had brought me no accession of means, and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" had only just kept things going, but the payment for "The Hireling Shepherd" left me with a surplus. With such experience as I had, it was amusing to read references to painters as generally leading a lazy, cigar smoking life. The only artists I ever knew who achieved work of note in any sense whatever, went first through a steady training of several years, and afterwards entered their studios with as unvarying a punctuality as business men attend their offices, worked longer hours than these, and had fewer holidays, partly because of their love for art, but also because of their deep sense of the utter uselessness of grappling with the difficulties besetting the happy issue of each contest, except at close and unflinching quarters.

About the end of 1852 I had the happy fortune to be chosen as one of the original members of the Cosmopolitan Club; its meetings in Charles Street were in continuation of less formal ones held there when G. F. Watts used the room as a studio. He had now relinquished it, and

Claudio & Isabella.

his artistic and other numerous friends had taken steps to keep together and extend the circle of remarkable men of differing intellectual activity whose association had represented the talking clubs of Dr. Johnson's time.

One large wall of the room was covered by a masterly composition painted *in situ* by the late occupant. It illustrated Boccaccio's story of the *Demon Lover*, and it was the more interesting in my eyes because since the cartoon days at Westminster Hall none outside Watts's private circle had had the opportunity of seeing works of importance by his hand. In the painting as it stood there were passages of form and colour which Michael Angelo and Titian might have been satisfied to claim. Two head portraits of young ladies were also temporarily there, which at any epoch of art would have commanded high esteem, but which in the existing age of vulgar portraiture courted special enthusiasm.

There was ever a throng in the room of the true working men of the time; English literary men, artists, statesmen, and noblemen met together in a spirit of unreserve truly enjoyable. Thackeray was a member of this club, and it was here that I first set eyes upon this wondrous delineator of the hidden impulses of humanity. I had read all his books of which I could get possession. Of all modern authors he was the one to whom I felt most reason for gratitude, in that he interpreted into contemporary and personal language the general moralising of others, and made one feel what it meant to be self-controlled in the duties of actual life. I looked at him with hardly concealed awe, but his manner seemed to withdraw demand for such homage for him. Surveying his six feet of somewhat burly build standing there with his hands in pockets, it was impossible not to class him in type with others of past ages who had been daring proclaimers of a new perfection. That broad and soaring cranium, that short nose, that full face, with large eyes and well-advanced chin, made him brother to Socrates, Tintoretto, Hobbes, Sobieski, and Hogarth, who each denounced the

corruption of his time. It was surely no accident that this prophet should bear a kindred stamp to those who in old time had done similar work.

Another opportunity specially appreciated by me at this time was my meeting the Eastern traveller, Henry Austin Layard, who had only recently returned from adventurous wanderings and his invaluable excavations in the Mesopotamian valley. I told him how, three years earlier, I had lost the appointment of draftsman to his expedition only by being one day too late in my application, and that my passion for the East he loved so much had not waned, for I was then on the point of going to Syria. With spontaneous good nature he thereupon gave me advice, and furnished me with letters to several officials of high standing in my probable line of route.

Proceeding with my painting on "The Light of the World," a board in the balcony of my studio at Chelsea was so adjusted that from the street scarcely anything could be seen by day through the window which lit my canvas; by night the venetians were down, with intent to hide me and the easel completely. I would sit at my work from 8 or 9 P.M. till 4 A.M., and this I continued till the moon no longer suited. Thus, with intervals, I went on for some months.

Once when I was riding on the omnibus to Chelsea, the driver was talking about the characters of an eccentric kind peculiar to the neighbourhood; having spoken with amusement of Carlyle, of his staid aspect, his broad-brimmed hat, and his slow gait, he added he had been told "as how he got his living by teaching people to write," and he mentioned other odd characters who were unknown to me. "But I'll show you another queer cove if you're coming round the corner," he went on. "You can see him well from the 'bus; he is in the first floor, and seemingly is a-drawing of somethink. He does not go to bed like other folks, but stays long after the last 'bus has come in; and, as the perlice tells us, when the clock strikes four, out goes the gas, down comes the gemman,

opens the street door, runs down Cheyne Walk as hard as he can pelt, and when he gets to the end he turns and runs back again, opens his door, goes in, and nobody sees no more of him." But that night the "cove" was not there, as it turned out, and the driver said, with disappointment, "Ah! it is unlucky; this ain't one o' his nights."

I had modelled a head, taxing many friends in turn from whose features anything could be gained. Appreciating the gravity and sweetness of expression possessed by Miss Christina Rossetti, I felt she might make a valuable sitter for the painting of the head for which my plaster model would not, of course, serve for the colour. She kindly agreed, and Mrs. Rossetti brought her. I decided to use the opportunity afforded by the sitting to work direct on the canvas rather than make an independent drawing of her; otherwise I might now have a memento of her of great interest; but for me the practice of making separate studies of vital parts of a picture does not bring a gain commensurate with the loss entailed by it; on the canvas itself the surrounding forms and lines often suggest improvement of the initial idea which brings the work into harmony of expression and meaning, while by use of a separate drawing this is often impaired.

When I had gradually advanced my picture towards completion, Augustus Egg came concerning a design of "The Awakened Conscience" which I had shown to him, and which he wished me to paint. The pathetic verse in Proverbs, "As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that sings songs to a heavy heart," had led me to this subject when thinking of a material interpretation of the idea in "The Light of the World." My desire was to show how the still small voice speaks to a human soul in the turmoil of life. Egg had been talking of it to Mr. Thomas Fairbairn, and the latter took so much interest in the subject that he commissioned me to undertake the picture for him. Without the support of a patron I

could not, in my still precarious position, have ventured to paint it. To do this I deferred the arrangements for my journey to the East.

At this point my good friend Egg urged me carefully to reconsider the resolution to go abroad; he insisted that it was only after a continuously bitter struggle that I had succeeded in getting recognition; that now there was an excellent prospect before me; that the world must be taken as it is, and that it would hold to the fashion that a painter, once known, should be accommodating enough to keep to one class of subject and character of work, so that there should be no difficulty in distinguishing his production. It was conducive also to a man's fortune to be *en evidence*, he said. He knew of cases where men, changing their subjects, and being away for a time, had had to begin the battle all over again. "How do you know," he said, "it would not be so with you? And that is assuming that the untried difficulties alone would not prevent you from making a success of your experiment."

I insisted that the fashion he spoke of appeared to me an unwholesome one in its influence on art, and that hitherto I had ignored it, inasmuch as I had already painted pictures of very varying subjects; that an artist should not be limited in his interests; that it was for him to find in the world the overflowing garners of beauty, and show these unconsidered graces to his non-observant fellows. To Egg's argument that I should go only for a few months to make sketches, and come back to paint from these, I demurred that others had done this; Roberts, for example, and Wilkie had intended to do so, that I was convinced the sketches by the latter would have had no great service for pictures had he lived to make use of them. Confessing to Egg that my project of going to Syria had originated when I was a boy at school when the lessons from the New Testament were read, I added, that "although the revelations of science, and more transiently the conclusions drawn from these by theorists

and commentators, had often compelled me to reconsider my earlier understanding of the story, yet the doings of that Divine Master in Syria never ceased to claim my homage. The pursuit of painting only gave my childish Palestine project distincter purpose. The gain in thoughtfully spent life is," I said, "the continual disturbance of obsolete convictions; at such tremulation of ideas one is tempted to shoot off to any extreme harbour of rest, and to violently denounce all others. I would guard against this danger with my respect for impartial investigation, built upon confidence, that truth, whatever it be, is above all price, and my desire is very strong to use my powers to make more tangible Jesus Christ's history and teaching. Art has often illustrated the theme, but it has surrounded it with many enervating fables, and perverted the heroic drama with feeble interpretation. We have every reason to believe that the Father of all, demands that every generation should contribute its quota of knowledge and wisdom to attain the final purpose, and however small my mite may be, I wish to do my poor part, and in pursuing this aim I ought not surely to serve art less perfectly." At which Egg yielded the point, saying, "Well, perhaps you're right."

It was not alone the jeopardy of my professional prosperity that was urged upon my attention as connected with my project. From many quarters came remonstrances more or less similar to those Rossetti had already advanced. Patmore urged graphically that the flora I should find would be only that of overgrown weeds, and that no natural beauty could be found that might not be gained in tenfold degree at home. Ruskin refused to admit that any additional vitality could be gained by designing and painting in Syria with its life and manners before my eyes, and argued that my true function in life was to establish and train a new School of Art, and that this important service would be sacrificed by my wild venture. Friends with a simple personal feeling pressed me to remember the fate of Wilkie, and hesitate before

taking a course which would probably end, if not in leaving my bones in the desert, at least in implanting in my blood Syrian fever, that would leave me a miserable invalid for the rest of my days.

With "The Light of the World" standing upon the easel, I was surprised one morning by the sound of carriage wheels driven up to the side entrance of my studio at Chelsea, then of loud knocking, followed by the names of Lady Canning and the Marchioness of Waterford. I received the ladies as they ascended to my studio. They said that Mr. Ruskin had assured them they might call to see the picture. My room, with windows free, overlooking the river, was as cheerful as any to be found in London; but I had not made any effort to remove the traces of the pinching I had suffered until lately, and to find chairs with perfect seats to them was not easy. But the beautiful sisters were supremely superior to any surprise. It might have seemed that they had always lived with broken furniture by preference; and when Lady Waterford, taking a chair by the back, placed her knee in the perforated seat, and so balanced her queenly person as she stood looking and talking, it might have been thought that the piece of furniture had been prepared for that especial purpose. They were both seriously interested in my picture.

I may say that any occult meaning in the details of my design was not based upon ecclesiastical or archaic symbolism, but derived from obvious reflectiveness. My types were of natural figures such as language had originally employed to express transcendental ideas, and they were used by me with no confidence that they would interest any other mind than my own. The closed door was the obstinately shut mind, the weeds the cumber of daily neglect, the accumulated hindrances of sloth; the orchard the garden of delectable fruit for the dainty feast of the soul. The music of the still small voice was the summons to the sluggard to awaken and become a zealous labourer under the Divine Master; the bat flitting about only in darkness was a natural symbol of ignorance; the kingly and

priestly dress of Christ, the sign of His reign over the body and the soul, to them who could give their allegiance to Him and acknowledge God's overrule. In making it a night scene, lit mainly by the lantern carried by Christ, I had followed metaphorical explanation in the Psalms, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," with also the accordant allusions by St. Paul to the sleeping soul, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." The symbolism was designed to elucidate, not to mystify, truth; and as I never gave any explanation of my underlying meaning, and the purpose has in the main been interpreted truly, the strictures upon my typical presentment of the subject are surely not founded on reason. My first visitors were interested in the mystic treatment, although they were not on that account prevented from looking at the picture for its delectability—as indeed a picture should always first be regarded.—A few days after the visit a letter came from Lady Canning to ask the price of the work. I therefore wrote to Mr. Combe, in accordance with a compact from the beginning, that when finished I should let him know the price before selling it to any other. I asked four hundred guineas, which he immediately remitted to me, and so the picture became his.

Soon I had another visitor—a distinguished picture-dealer. Mr. Linnell had sent him, as he explained, to see a religious picture which I had just painted. I replied that the only work of mine he could refer to was the one before him on the easel. No, he said, that could not be the one he meant, for it was a really important picture, and he had come to see if we could not do business for it; he had fancied it must be large with several figures. When he was convinced there was no other picture, he asked the price, and I had to explain that it was already sold; then he expressed desire that Mr. Combe should give it up to him. The instinct to care more for what others already have is very general, even with dealers.

Living at Chelsea, I was near to the house of the

philosopher who had from his genius pure and simple won worship of such degree that it was treason at the time I write of to limit the adoration offered at his shrine. Although he was strangely deficient in gladsomeness of soul for a prophet who was to regenerate the beaten-down children of men, the reading of any chapter of his could not leave any wise man reluctant to acknowledge the wealth of his sturdy genius. How the revulsion of feeling that has grown up about him since his death can be maintained while his books are within reach, it is difficult for me to understand. It has arisen mainly from the fact that the clever wife, having no one in her household to whom she could tell her real and imaginary vexations, committed a statement of these to her diary as a confidant that would never speak the secrets to others. What a difference this has made in his reputation from the days when young authors such as James Hannay left my bachelor gatherings for a quarter of an hour, only to look up at the dark house of the great sage, and to distinguish the room he was sitting in by the light in his window! I had read all his books that I had been able to buy or borrow, and with all the reverence of my nature I had seen the living prophet rambling along the streets of the neighbourhood, bent down, as it seemed, with the weight of sad wisdom—for joy it never seemed to have brought. Curious as his aspect was in his slow perambulations, it was noticeable that never did the rudest boor or the most impudent gutter-boy fail to be chilled into dumb propriety when he passed; they were silenced in their noisy idleness by his outer grotesqueness and inner grandeur. It was noticeable to me that none of the thousand entertaining incidents of childish caprice and character, nor the endless surprises of whim in the grown-up children of men, ever made him pause or turn his head; his eyes were at all times turned inwards. Despite this habit of mental absorption, he could at unexpected disturbance awaken to reality. One day walking on a narrow pavement, passing a lady girded with preposterous hoops, he was well-nigh thrown to the

ground; disentangling his foot, he recovered his balance of limb and temper, and, unruffled, turned ceremoniously to the lady, raised his hat and made his bow, revealing neither annoyance nor sarcasm. Before this period a visitor, in leaving the Carlyles to come to me, had told Mrs. Carlyle of his intention, and the lady asked with interest about me and my work, a curiosity in which her husband somewhat participated. This induced me, when I had some pictures finished, to ask my friend to ascertain from her whether the prophet would honour me with a visit. Although I did not subscribe to all that his worshippers demanded, he was to me one of the real greatnesses of England. Accordingly Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle came. On the first visit I need only say that he looked taller and younger than when muffled up outside, and that his face, despite a shade of rickety joylessness, was one of the noblest I had ever seen. His large-orbited blue eyes, deep sunk, had upper lids drooping over the iris, the lower lid occasionally leaving bare the white below. The brow was prominent, the cranium domed and large, the hair shaggy. His nose and the lower part of his face had the stamp of grandeur, and his figure when unbent had a dignity of its own. Weakness revealed itself in the meagreness of his neck, and want of robust development in a slight twist of the spine. These cripplings were also accompanied by a voice which reached the treble when he wished to discourage interruption at the melancholy tone of his philosophy. Following his talk was like listening to the pages of one of his own books. He would have no dialogue, but the tenderness of the man bespoke itself in unaffectedness of gesture and the directness of his first word. Like all great men I have ever seen, he indulged in no pomposity. He assumed, not unnaturally however, that people—young people particularly—wanted to hear him talk, and did not expect him to listen, and when the intention was made clear I was more than content. His enthusiastic comments upon my "Hireling Shepherd" and "Strayed Sheep" were

far beyond my hopes; a letter from Mrs. Carlyle written at this time proves that his eulogiums were not only those of a passing interest.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea,
13th April.

Dear Mr. Hunt—Will you oblige me by letting Mr. Watson see the Picture? Having raised his curiosity about it to a pitch, I feel myself responsible for the gratification thereof!

Mr. Carlyle says "it is a really grand Picture! The greatest Picture that he has seen painted by any modern man!" And Mr. Carlyle being notorious for never praising except in negations ("*not* a bad Picture"—"a picture *not* wholly without a certain merit," etc., etc.), the present outburst of *positive* praise evinces an appreciation of your Picture not to be exceeded by "any modern man"!

Please recollect that you settled with him to come here some evening soon.—Yours very sincerely,

Jane W. Carlyle.

This naturally encouraged me to repeat my invitation to him to see my picture.

Mrs. Carlyle had often in chatting to my friends let them know that she had been a noted beauty in her youth and an heiress, and that her friends were much averse to her marriage with Carlyle, but that she would not give him up. She said the same to me in turn. It seemed absurd that the lady who had by her marriage become one of the most renowned wives of her time—instead of being the wife of a respectable mediocrity—could be thinking of what she had given up for him. I observed that, in real fact, she was proud of her husband to the point of vanity. While he talked she placed herself behind him, and whenever something he said deserved special attention, she good-naturedly smiled across to me, nodded, and when at first I thought I must reply to some of his remarks, she held up her finger and shook her head. I saw her often afterwards, and now, spite of the grievances recorded in her diary (of his inconsiderate demand for buttons for his clothes by return post, when the letter arrived after

the shops were shut), I think she was one of the proudest wives in the country in all but having no children to divide her care.

It was Carlyle's second visit to my studio that best revealed the inner nature of the man, when "The Awakened Conscience" and "The Light of the World" were just completed. He spoke approvingly of the first, but without any artistic understanding of the effect (he pointed to the reflection of the green foliage into the shining table and said, "The moonlight is well given"); turning to the other, he spoke in terms of disdain. "You call that thing, I ween, a picture of Jesus Christ. Now you cannot gain any profit to yourself, except in mere pecuniary sense, or profit any one else on earth, in putting into shape a mere papistical fantasy like that, for it can only be an inanity, or a delusion to every one that may look on it. It is a poor misshaped presentation of the noblest, the brotherliest, and the most heroic-minded Being that ever walked God's earth. Do you ever suppose that Jesus walked about bedizened in priestly robes and a crown, and with yon jewels on his breast, and a gilt aureole round His head? Ne'er crown nor pontifical robe did the world e'er give to such as Him. Well—and if you mean to represent Him as the spiritual Christ, you have chosen the form in which He has been travestied from the beginning by worldlings who have recorded their own ambitions as His, repeating Judas' betrayal to the high priests. You should think frankly of His antique heroic soul, if you realised His character at all you wouldn't try to make people go back and worship the image that the priests have invented of Him, to keep men's silly souls in meshes of slavery and darkness. Don't you see that you're helping to make people believe what you know to be false, what y' don't believe yourself? The picture I was looking at just now of the shallow, idle fool and his wretched victim had to do with reality; this is only empty make-believe, mere pretended fancy, to do the like of which is the worst of occupations for a man to

take to." I tried here to declare that I did firmly believe in the idea that I had painted, more than anything I saw with my natural eyes, and that I could prove from his writings that he also did; but he raised his voice well-nigh to a scream, and Mrs. Carlyle, standing behind, put up her emphatic finger and shook her head, signing to me.

He vouchsafed but passing notice of my defence. "It's a' wilful blindness, ye persuade yourself that ye do believe, but it's high time that ye gave up the habit of deluding yourself." I tried again to say that he had himself written of the spirit of truth coming to men, and of the need of listening, and that no Spirit of Truth was so candid as that which Christ represents; but he would not stop, and his good wife more vehemently beckoned silence. "I'll tell ye what my interest in the matter is, I have a screen at home, and on it I have put portraits, the best I can anyhow get—often enough I have to be content with very poor ones—of all the men that ever were on earth who have helped to make us something better than wild beasts of rapine and havoc; of all the brave-hearted creatures whose deeds and words have made life a term of years to bear with patience and faith, and I see what manner of men most of these were—Socrates and Plato, Alexander, Pompey, Cæsar, aye, and Brutus, and many another man of the old time who won or lost in the struggle to do what they deemed the justest and wisest thing. By the help of these effigies I can conjure each up to my eyes as though he were an old acquaintance, and I can call up more or less vividly many a man of the time that has come since; but that grandest of all beings, that Jesus of heavenly omens, I have no means whatever of raising up to my sight with any accredited form." Taking a long breath here, he proceeded as if to a new chapter: "I am only a poor man, but I can say in serious truth that I'd thankfully give one third of all the little store of money saved for my wife and old age, for a veritable contemporary representation of Jesus Christ, showing Him as He walked about while He was trying with His ever invincible soul to break down the obtuse stupidity of the cormorant-minded, bloated gang who were doing, in desperate contention, their utmost to make the world go devilward with themselves. Search has been made honestly, and imposture has striven to satisfy the desire to procure some portraits of Him, but not the faintest shadow exists that can be accepted, nor any legendic attempt to represent Him can be credited, notwithstanding your fables of King Abgarus[1] of Edessa or of St. Luke or of St. Veronica's napkin. Yet there were artists enough and to spare, and the sculptors' work has come down to us, filling all the museums of Europe. They adored their stone images of obsolete gods, and looked to the augurs of these as ruling their destinies, while the living mouth-piece of God, the giver of true wisdom, was amongst them. It was a shadow-land in which they searched for their gods, and so made images of Jupiter, of Apollo, of Hercules, of all the deities and deesses who put no bridle upon the will of their votaries, but left them to play into the hands of all the devils in hell, from whose reign indeed they were not separated, unless forsooth they were only the creatures of purposeless fancy. Male and female, they were the rulers of a heaven that all the intelligent among men had long ceased to believe in, spite of the statues by sculptors who made believe to believe. And these carvers of marble, had they only instead chiselled a faithful statue of the 'Son of Man,' as He called Himself, and shown us what manner of man He was, what His height, what His build, and what the features of His sorrow-marked face were, and what His dress, I for one would have thanked the sculptor who did it with all the gratitude of my heart for that portrait, as the most precious heirloom of the ages. Now I tell you, young man, you are doing exactly what the sculptors of Roman time did, and y'll ne'er make your talent a benefit to your fellowmen of to-day and to

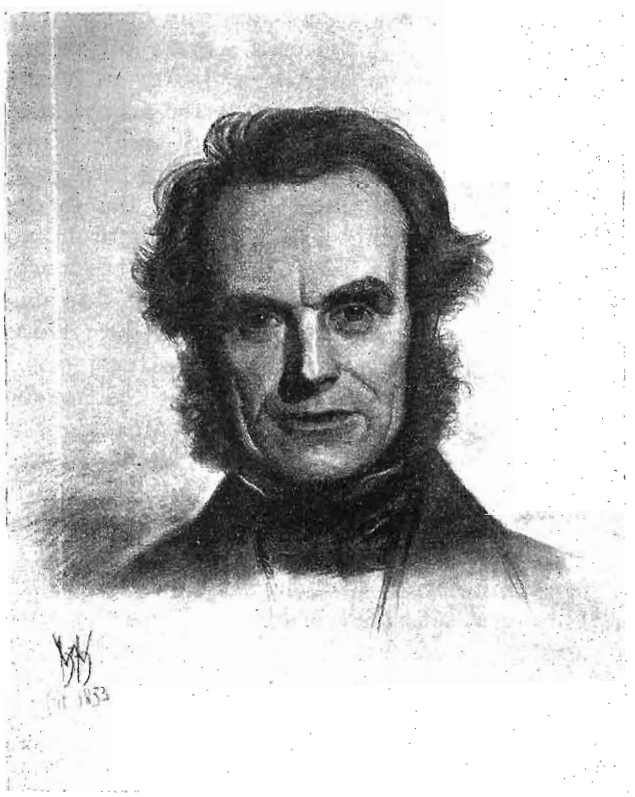
[1] For later investigation see the evidence collected and published by Sir Wyke Bayliss on the likeness of Jesus Christ.

them that come afterwards, if you go on working at worn-out fables. I have seen the pictures, all of them by the great painters who have set themselves to portray Jesus, and what could be more wide o' the mark? There's the picture of 'Christ disputing with the Doctors' in our National Gallery by Leonardo da Vinci, and it makes him a puir, weak, girl-faced nonentity, bedecked in a fine silken sort of gown, with gems and precious stones bordering the whole, just as though He had been the darling of a Court, with hands and fingers that have never done any work, and could do none whatever, a creature altogether incapable of convincing any novice advanced enough to solve the simplest problem in logic. There are other notable presentations of conceptions of Christ in paint and marble familiar to us in prints, and they are all alike." Here, raising his voice very high, he continued, "And when I look, I say, 'Thank you, Mr. Da Vinci,' 'Thank you, Mr. Michael Angelo,' 'Thank you, Mr. Raffaelle, that may be your idea of Jesus Christ, but I've another of my own which I very much prefer.' I see the Man toiling along in the hot sun, at times in the cold wind, going long stages, tired, hungry often and footsore, drinking at the spring, eating by the way, His rough and patched clothes bedraggled and covered with dust, imparting blessings to others which no human power, be it king's or emperor's or priest's, was strong enough to give to Him, a missioner of Heaven sent with brave tongue to utter doom on the babbling world and its godless nonsense, and to fashion out another teaching to supplant it, doing battle with that valiant voice of His, only against the proud and the perverse, encharming the simple by His love and lovableness, and ever disenchanting such as would suppose that the kingdom of heaven that He preached would bring to Him or to His adherents earthly glory or riches; offering them rather ignominy and death. Surrounded by His little band of almost unteachable poor friends, I see Him dispirited, dejected, and at times broken down in hope by the immovability and spleen of

fools, who, being rich with armed slaves, determined to make the heavens bend to them. I see Him unflinching in faith and spirit crying out, 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear.' This was a man worth seeing the likeness of, if such could be found. One painter indeed there was who had some gleam of penetration in him, and faculty of representation, and his works I look for wherever I can hope to find them. Albert Dürer is that man, who illustrated the painful story of the Christ, the Man of Sorrows, in His babyhood nursed amid ruins, with Joseph ever toiling, and the Mother oppressed and haggard with thought, and the child without the carelessness and joy of infancy, being lean and prematurely sad, and then step after step of the same heavy burdened soul appears, until, with face worn and distorted, He ends His life of misery upon the Cross; but even Albert Dürer had canons of tradition which hindered him from giving the full truth, and I don't see what hope there could be in attempting to do now what he failed to do then. Take my word for it, and use your cunning hand and eyes for something that ye see about ye, like the fields and trees I saw here a year ago, and, above all, do not confuse your understanding with mysteries." And then as he turned to go he said, pointing to a drawing on the wall, "And pray who may that shrewd-looking man be with the domed and ample cranium? He ought to be a man of mark." I said that it was my father, whom I regarded as a man of very exceptional intellect, though he had neither had the opportunity nor the ambition to care to make his voice heard beyond his own private circle. He resumed, "And so it was with my father, and I can say that in native wisdom neither I nor any son of his came near him, and yet he cared only to go about his little land, and exercise his judgment upon its state, to settle the order of his crops, and to watch that they were defended from all the evils that threatened them in their course, and to see that the home was well ordered. Yes, at times he would talk about the news of the town, of its

men, the sage, and the crankie, and yet I can honestly aver he was well fitted to be a counsellor to kings."

The dark weather delayed my finishing "The Awakened Conscience" and made me exceed my calculated dates for

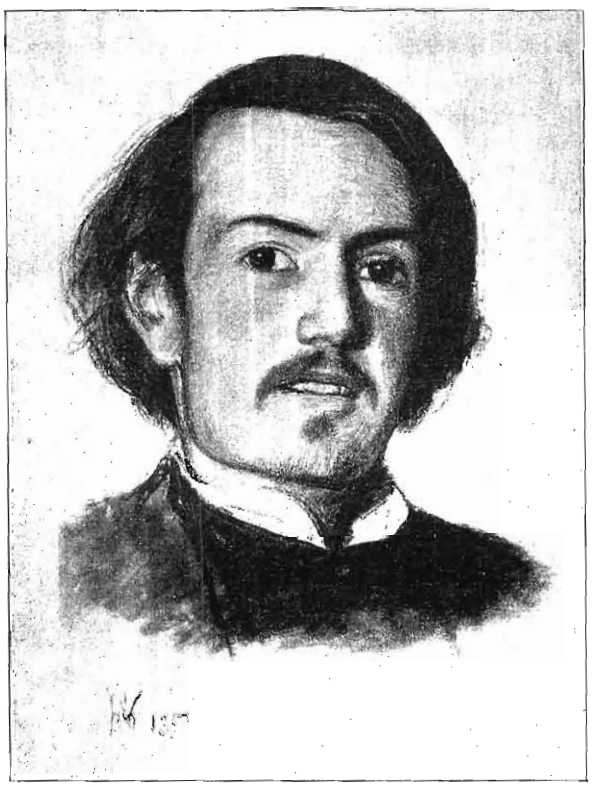


W. H. H.

WILLIAM HUNT.

departure, so much so that my friends who did not want me to go abroad gradually spoke of the plan as all a joke. At this time poor Deverell was attacked afresh by his malady, and although he would not listen to the doctor's opinion, it was evident that he was in great danger, and

indeed doomed to early dissolution. His father and mother had both gone to the grave, and Walter, as the elder son, had to take the burden of the family upon him. It was thought at the time that relief from worry about



W. H. H.

W. DEVERELL.

ways and means might do much to postpone the end. Millais was in Scotland, and in return to some letter of mine agreed to conclude the purchase with me of an unsold picture by Deverell, contributing one half of the price, which had been fixed at ninety guineas. I was able

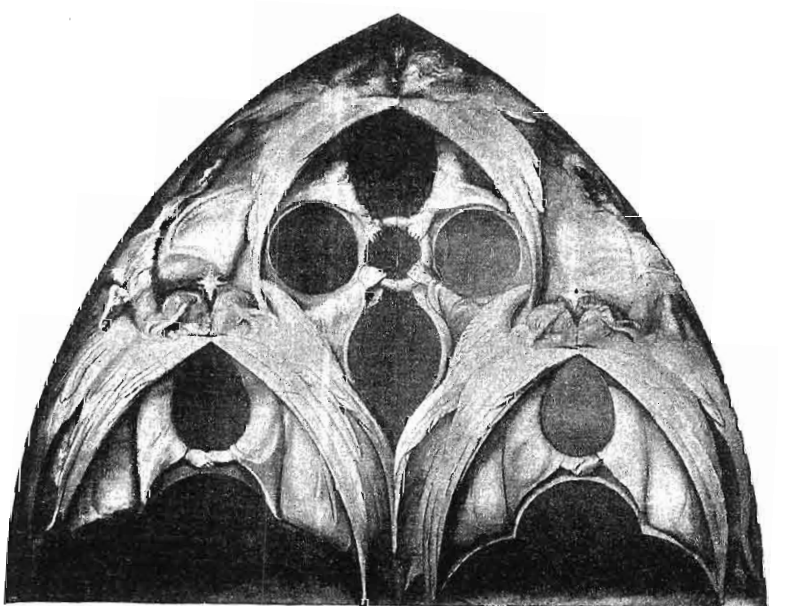
to take the comforting news to the sick man, and at the same time I did a drawing of his head, here reproduced.

While I was still delayed, Mr. Agnew, the founder of the celebrated firm, came saying that he had heard of my project, and had so much admiration of it that he had determined to offer me five hundred guineas for the first figure picture I should paint in the East. It was a liberal proposal, but I felt obliged to say that it would be so uncertain what I should have the opportunity to do, that it would be wiser for neither of us to be bound, and that instead I would propose to give him the refusal of the first picture I could finish at the price that should then suggest itself to be fair. He could not understand my rejection of so handsome a commission, and these proposals came to nothing.

Thomas Seddon was an amateur friend of our circle. He had for years desired to convert his furtive indulgence in art into a professional pursuit of it, but being of value in his father's business, he had been indefinitely chained to it. He was about thirty-three years of age when, hearing of my Eastern project, he asked to join me, and thus by novelty of subject and my instruction make up in a measure for his tardy commencement. As I was not yet ready to start, he elected to go on before me to Cairo, in fear that otherwise he might further lose his freedom. I met him at Brown's studio, where he had gone to take leave of our common friend. I found our host full of enthusiasm about my Egyptian and Syrian project, and in his warmth he said that had he not been married he would certainly have come too; this would have caused complications in plans already encompassed with enough anxiety.

On my last visit to Oxford at Christmas, Mr. Combe declared that he did not think I could be trusted with my little money, and that it would be wise for him to take care of it, that I could thus better defend myself from borrowers, and that with him as my banker I could draw drafts for sums as they became needful. I was glad to

accept the offer, but in view of a possible sudden emergency I apprised him that I should leave one cheque of a moderate sum at home, which might or might not be presented. I had thus about £700 left for my venture. An old fellow-student suddenly presented himself with a pitiful account of disaster that had befallen his family,

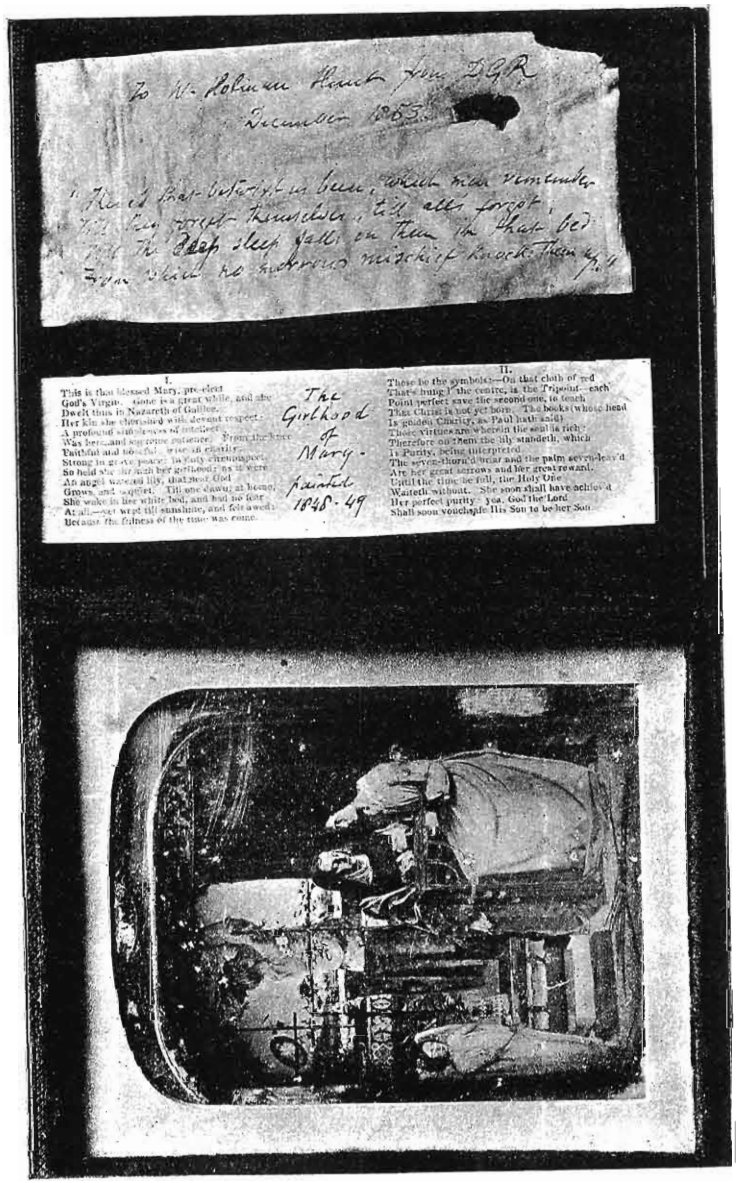


J. E. Millais.

DESIGN OF THE TRACERY OF A WINDOW.

which would be permanent unless he could have £50. I gave him the amount out of the balance to be left behind, thus saving myself in some degree from the dreaded reproaches of Mr. Combe, but, as it chanced, it led to the ultimate loss of the other portion.

Millais came back from Scotland before my start. He had been painting Mr. Ruskin's portrait while away, and in response to a challenge from him he had made a design of the tracery of a window illustrating the lines—



DAGUERREOTYPE FROM "GIRLHOOD OF MARY."

D. G. Rossetti.

Where angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gifts.[1]

I was waiting for one bright day to finish "The Awakened Conscience" before leaving England. At last it came, and by four o'clock I had accomplished all.

I took a cab and made a round of calls on my friends to say good-bye. The dear old Millais were astonished when I said I was going that night by the mail train. John came back with me and helped me to pack. Some bachelor friends rallied me, saying that they should go and dine leisurely and come on to my lodgings later. When they arrived I had gone, and Millais had accompanied me to the station. I had not had time to dine, and Millais rushed to the buffet and seized any likely food he could, tossing it after me into the moving carriage. What a leave-taking it was with him in my heart when the train started! Did other men have such a sacred friendship as that we had formed?

My thoughts in connection with the past were led to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, from which we had hoped so much, and which, it could not be ignored, was now, at least in part, a signal failure. The old comradeship was kept up as far as possible by letter, and renewed on my return. I for long cherished the hope that again as old men, with all the fever of distracting life abated, we might have other Pre-Raphaelite meetings. I have on my table now a daguerreotype of Rossetti's first picture of "The Girlhood of Mary," given me by Gabriel ere my departure. In addition to the two sonnets describing it he wrote the lines from Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde* upon it :—

There's that betwixt us been, which men remember
Till they forget themselves, till all's forgot,
Till the deep sleep falls on them in that bed
From which no morrow's mischief knocks them up.

From D. G. R.

[1] In doing this he indulged the ambition, which we had entertained from the beginning, to combine architectural design with picture painting as part of the work of a cultivated artist.