

nave should have angelic figures to ornament them. Before beginning work, some expedient had to be found for drying the present walls, and for placing external cement to prevent the damp from penetrating. The north and south aisles were to be decorated with orna-

CHAPTER X

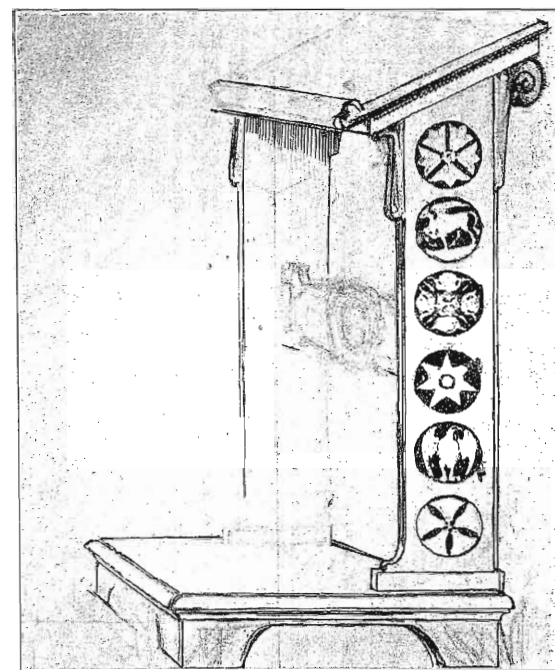
1865-1869

Reason cannot show itself more reasonable than to leave reasoning on things above reason.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

My friend the Rev. W. J. Beamont, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, had been appointed vicar of the Church of St. Michael and All Angels in that city, and as holder of the benefice endowed by Hervey de Stanton, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II., was wishful that I should decorate and paint the interior.

I made several visits to Cambridge to consider and consult about the work, but I could not leave off my pressing paintings in hand; indeed I was not called upon to do so until funds should be forthcoming from the public; so, except some superintendence of the flat colouring of the side aisles, nothing further was done to carry out Beamont's purpose, and my affairs being now such that I could go back to the East, I did so, hoping to take up the church decoration on my return.

There was strong reason for deliberation before deciding on the work in the weather-beaten condition of its walls. To the north and south of the chancel were two suitable spaces for figure subjects, and at the end of the north aisle a large surface offered a perfect place for a picture. I decided that the first two might be used for companion subjects, and the third be treated with an independent story, while the walls above the arches of the



DESIGN FOR LECTERN, CAMBRIDGE.

mental designs. For the north chancel wall, I thought out the subjects of Michael and his host warring in heaven against the devil and his angels, all deformed by expressions of different vices and supported by monsters of extinct type, to indicate that the instincts of primeval rapacity, which had been justified in the condition of the early world, were not then vices, but that in higher life organisation they became so. On the south the same

defeated crew was to be shown in the sky holding beautiful masks before their faces, striving to entice the regard of fathers and mothers, youths, maidens, and children, as they were led up to the altar of self-sacrifice erected by the Founder.

It was part of my purpose although I did not reveal it, to paint as the Founder whose portrait was not preserved, my friend the vicar, a man of saintly countenance and bearing. I prepared some devices for decoration, which I determined should be absolutely new in character, but for these the walls were not ready, and I have never made use of them.

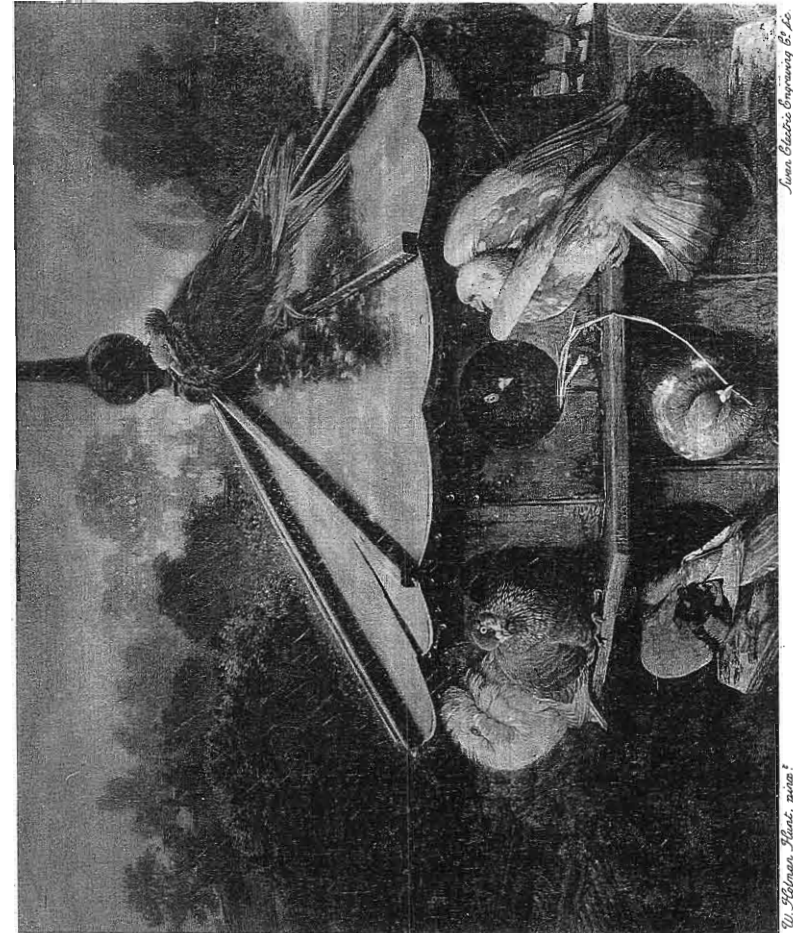
Ah! if I permitted myself to linger over the pastures of personal romance which the members of our community traversed, how much greater would be the gleanings of human interest I could bring with me; but the sweet delirium, the trials and the rewards of innocent affection are the private treasures of a man, and no result but the satisfaction of impertinent curiosity could be gained were I to dilate upon these phases of the lives of men prominent in our movement. I have avoided speaking of such experiences, except where the barrier of what to me would have been sacred privacy has been already overstepped, leaving inaccuracies to be corrected. Respecting thus the sacredness of private life in others, I claim it for myself, however much at some points this book may seem of the nature of an autobiography.

It was at this time that I married Miss Waugh.

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There had been substantial reasons for my long delay in returning to the East, in the fact that family claims made the task of amassing means a protracted one, for I had to accept the lesson of my experiences with the Temple picture and come to the conclusion that I must not go without sufficient funds to bring my new picture to a complete end.

I explained to a practical business friend my prudential needs for delaying my return to Syria; he counselled



The Festival of St. Cecilia.

J. M. W. Turner, 1848.

me how to improve my position by change in investments, and this advice I followed.

Another consideration was to advance my sister to a state of proficiency in which she could proceed without



W. H. H.

MY WIFE, FANNY HOLMAN HUNT.

help. I had lately designed for her a picture of pigeons from an incident I had seen in a dovecot during a storm of rain, and this, by dint of my daily attention, was now advancing.

During my absence in the country, I found my sister had grown tired of the pigeon picture and had given it

up; it was not half completed, and this half was nearly all by my own hand. The dovecot was still in my garden, all arrangements I had made for carrying out the picture were at hand, together with the pigeons, and it seemed foolish to throw the work away, so I decided to give the necessary time for its completion, and this delayed me a few months.

Walking, one morning in March 1866, from Paddington to my house at Campden Hill, I saw in the distance a youth come out of a house in Park Place, holding his hands to his head and swaying his body to and fro as he walked across to the opposite pavement. It was evident that he was in distress. Hastening forward, I discovered that it was Fred Walker, and saw that he was suffering sore tribulation of mind. I approached, he clutched my wrist, and when I said, "What is it, my dear fellow?" he groaned, "O God, O God, what can I do!" He looked at me now with fresh recognition, revealing that he had been scarcely conscious who I was, and added, "My brother has just this moment died; he had been ailing a long while, and we had been sitting up with him. I had his hand in mine, and gradually found it was no longer his—he was dead—and I have come out to breathe; when I go back it will be to find him still lying dead. What can I do?" I asked if I could effect any good by coming in. "Oh no, don't come, it would harass my mother and sisters." I reluctantly parted from him, and afterwards I scarcely saw him again in any way worth recording, owing to my long life abroad.

Soon after this there was a disquieting panic in the City, and one morning, taking up *The Times*, I read with dismay that a bank in which I held shares had stopped payment, while another business with the same directors was in as much discredit as the bank itself, so that the shares of both were less than valueless. I had to raise money by selling other property; so after all I had to carry out my plans with no surer provision for uninterrupted progress in the East than I had had before.

BETHNAL
GREEN
MUSEUM.



W. Holman Hunt. pinx.

Swan Electro-Engraving Co. sc.

Isabella and the pot of Basil.

Meantime the strict principle upon which I worked was commented upon by each in his particular temper. Mr. Lee, the head of a popular school in London, chatting with his elder student class, said: "Holman Hunt is so superlatively conscientious that were he painting a picture in which everton toffee had to be introduced, he would never be satisfied unless he went to Everton to paint it, in order to make sure of representing the purest example of the article under best local conditions." Such comments were harmlessly amusing.

We started in August. At Marseilles, where I was intending to take the boat to Alexandria, I learnt that quarantine was established on account of the cholera, but the secretary of the P. and O. assured me that the next departing boat would probably be allowed to enter Alexandria with a clean bill of health; we waited for this. In the meantime there were mournful crowds in the streets following the funeral processions, and the people brought out their furniture, making bonfires of it. The next steamer from Egypt brought news that no boat from Marseilles would yet be allowed to enter. Accordingly we proceeded over the Maritime Alps for Leghorn, whence we heard it was possible to reach Egypt *via* Malta. We rested a night at Florence, intending to continue the next morning, but learning that intercourse with Egypt was stopped, we had no choice for the present but to remain in Florence.

As it had been overruled (if I may make use of so obsolete an expression) that I should remain in Florence, I at once set to work on a design of "Isabella mourning over her Basil Pot." I took a studio, the best I could find, and started on the work.

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In September of the next year I returned to England with my motherless child. My picture was bought by Mr. Gambart and exhibited by itself, and an engraving was made of it by Blanchard. It was now that the Athenæum Club, to which I owe much of life's friendship

since, did me the honour to elect me under Rule II., one which I gratefully appreciated.

Staying in England for a few months, I enjoyed the society of many old friends. Charles Collins kept me in touch with the Dickens family. Dickens' country retreat was a comfortable home, with a declining lawn overlooking the Medway, the old castle, the bridge, and the undulating sweep of hills which led towards the sea. There were still many peaceful sweet days in store for the family in this house; but when, worn out with unceasing labour, he consulted his doctor, he learned that the day had come for him to begin the last chapter of his life. He thereupon ransacked every cabinet, cupboard, chest, and long-neglected recess, collecting records of relations, friends, and acquaintances, and possibly enemies, and consigned them to the peace-making flames. A large proportion of these letters were from men of illustrious name, endeared over land and sea as household names, but he sent them—the laughter, the tears, the confidence, the blessings, the cursings, and the idle words—as a holocaust to the Father of the dead and the living, and so put an end to many sore revelations made by the writers only for the passing hour.

I returned to Florence to complete the monument I had begun to my wife, and in the meanwhile, as my health required me to live out of the city, I went up to Fiesole, where I painted a damsel as a Tuscan straw-plaiter of the type of gentle features peculiar to the cities of the Apennines, such as Perugia loved to picture. I also executed a few water-colour drawings from the hills, and so kept myself in the pure air.

In Florence, by the kindness of an American family there, I painted one of the daughters as "Bianca."

I commenced this picture in tempera, tracing out the design and light and shade, as many of the old masters did, in the end adding the finishing painting in oil varnish.

While I was waiting for the marble mason to finish

the work with which I had entrusted him, I went to visit my old Jerusalem friend, Dr. Sim, then established at Naples, and stayed for two or three weeks at Salerno and Ravello. There I became acquainted with Professor Salasaro, who had made interesting researches on early Christian art in that neighbourhood, and who showed me altar-pieces in subterranean churches of the fourth and fifth centuries.

On my return to Florence, to obey the desire of Mr. Beamont, I drew a design of a lectern for the church at Cambridge, and contracted with an artisan to make this in walnut wood, and to inlay it with ivory and dark wood. But before the desk had been shaped the sad news came that my dear friend had died, on his return from Mount Athos, of fever contracted while travelling there; I therefore cancelled the order. The subject which I had conceived for the wall at the eastern end of the north aisle of the church was the Holy Family on their flight into Egypt resting in the night, with St. Joseph striking a light with flint and steel, while around, St. Michael and his company standing on guard, and children as angels were attending and bringing food to the resting fugitives. I had conceived this treatment to be altogether my own, but going over the Uffizi Gallery I came upon a little picture by Annibale Caracci of the Holy Family in flight, with cherub angels bending down to them the branches of trees bearing fruit. I had forgotten that this story was told in the Gospel of Nicodemus. As the intention of painting the church at Cambridge had now come to an end, I had not to consider what my discovery of the unoriginality of the idea would determine me to do for the wall-painting in question, so I gave no time to altering this design, as otherwise I should have done. As the marble-carver now made it clear that his chiselling of the monument to my wife would never be brought to a conclusion, I took up his tools and finished the work, being then ready to leave the city of flowers, which had been so sad a resting-place to

me. Occasionally I made hasty sketches on foreign paper for my infant son at home ; notwithstanding their slightness they may stand as records of passing interest.

At this time Mr. and Mrs. Combe came to Florence, but the dangerous illness of my friend Tupper, who was in Florence, prevented me from following them to Rome.

It was not until the summer of 1869 that I was at last able to overcome evil Fate and start for the East.

During my two years' detention in Italy, I had not



managed to visit Venice, and as I had never seen the treasures of the Adriatic city I resolved to spend a week or two more on the journey by going there, notwithstanding that it was not the season most approved by visitors.

There were indeed few English people in the hotels, but after the first day of my arrival, it was my surprising fortune to run against Ruskin in the piazza ; he had only just returned, after over twenty years' absence. A complication of circumstances had made me of late years unable to keep up my close intercourse with him. On seeing the author of *Modern Painters*, and hearing from

him that he had come to stay in the city, I very earnestly observed that I had often desired to resume our intimacy, and that no place in the world could be so fitting and delightful to meet him in as Venice, for I, like many others, had first conceived a love of its precious possessions from his description of its paintings and architecture, till then but little valued. I had ever since dreamed of the works he had described, and now, beyond all possible expectation, I was to see them for the first time in his company. He accepted my tribute in silence, observing that he should enjoy my company at all places where the precious pictures by Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese were collected, and accordingly we went straightway by gondola to the landing steps leading to the Church of San Rocco.

Ruskin was at that time a man of nearly six feet in height, but of great spareness of limb, which his tailor only partially succeeded in concealing ; the colour of his hair was rusty, his eyes were bluish-grey, his complexion pink in hue, and his skin transparent, showing violet veins about the eyes, but the delicacy of the tint of his visage was in part subdued by sun freckles. He was faultlessly groomed, and, despite his soft felt hat, was not at all costumed like an art specialist, no passers-by stared at him more than they would have done at any other *forestiere*.

Entering the door of the church dedicated to San Rocco, we found the paintings designed to illustrate the virtues of the saint, so far effaced by time and defaced by restoration that the full perfection of these noble creations was only slowly realised. The other pictures illustrated acts of mercy by Our Lord, but these were disappointing in comparison to the full richness of the small original designs on canvas by Tintoretto, existing in English private collections. We were the more glad to find that on the paintings in the Scuola di San Rocco, representing the history of the Virgin, time alone had laid his hand, shown in the effects of damp and too great dryness in turn.

The first picture that we stood before was the "Annunciation," the dilapidation and ruin represented in the dismantled house seemed greater than I had imagined it to be, from the description by my present companion, which I had read more than twenty years ago; but the image raised in my mind by the "Oxford Graduate," and retained ever since, was not so different from what I saw before me, as conjured-up scenes derived second-hand often prove to be at sight of the original.

One vital question arose, was the symbolism as described by Ruskin fanciful? Undoubtedly, here were ruins of a stately house no longer affording shelter to indwellers; no protecting or habitable domicile for the lone damsel within; she dwells amid the ugly broken-down bricks, crumbled stones, and unseemly mortar. But in the midst of this cheerlessness there lies the well-shaped block with mason's square and plummet at its side: this is an exception to the prevailing marks of decay, and who could read the story of the picture and resist the suggestion that this was "The stone which the builders rejected, which has become the headstone of the corner." Recalling quattrocento and early cinquecento pictures dealing with the same subject, representing the Virgin in a stately palace, perfect and well-ordered, there could be no doubt that Tintoretto had the purpose to suggest the desolation that had come upon the existing Israelitish Church, and its replacement by a new edifice. The Virgin is at her devotions, and the Archangel Gabriel is entering on wing through a dismantled lattice. When language was not transcendental enough to complete the meaning of a revelation, symbols were relied upon for heavenly teaching, and familiar images, chosen from the known, were made to mirror the unknown spiritual truth. The forerunners and contemporaries of Tintoretto had consecrated the custom, to which he gave a larger value and more original meaning. How far such symbolism is warranted depends upon its unobtrusiveness and its restriction within limits not destroying natural beauty.

There is no more reason why the features belonging to a picture should be distorted for the purpose of such imaginative suggestion than that the poet's metaphors should spoil his words for ordinary uses of man. Tintoretto's meaning was expressed with no arbitrary or unnatural disturbance of the truth, indeed there was no need for the spectator to trouble himself with its hidden teaching at all. In the case of this picture all that could be objected was that the materials needful for the preachment were somewhat uncomely. Delectability should certainly be a preponderating element in every work of art; but this canvas presented only the root of the idea, which branched out into infinite beauties in the accompanying series. I thought what happiness Tintoretto must have felt when he had this illuminating thought presented to him, and of his joy in carrying it out on canvas, and was wondering how few were the men who had pondered over the picture to read it thoroughly, until in fulness of time the decipherer came and made it clear.

This decipherer, when he spoke, made it apparent that his mind was dwelling more on the arrangement of lines in the design and the technique displayed in the handling, than on the mysteries that he had interpreted five and twenty years before. He ended, in his most punctuated phraseology: "Now, my dear Holman, we will see what I wrote about it twenty or more years ago. I have not read a word of it since. I have no doubt that it will be marked by much boyish presumption and by inflated expression, I warn you of this, but it may be interesting to compare it with our present view, at least my own; so I will call my man."

The valet waited at the door with a hitherto unnoticed volume of the original edition of *Modern Painters*. Ruskin beckoned him, and opening the book at the passage already marked, he began deliberately and with pause to read to the end of it:—

Severe would be the shock and painful the contrast if we could pass in an instant from that pure vision¹ to the wild thought of Tintoretto. For not in meek reception of the adoring messenger, but startled by the rush of his horizontal and rattling wings, the Virgin sits not in the quiet loggia, not by the green pasture of the restored soul, but houseless under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted from the central object of the picture forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork with the plaster mildewed away from it and the mortar mouldering from its seams. If he look again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, he will perhaps see in the one and the other nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoretto could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the husband of Mary. But there is more meant than this. When he looks at the composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This I think sufficiently explains the typical character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation; that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builder's tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner.

The words brought back to my mind the little bedroom, twenty-two years since, wherein I sat till the early morning reading the same passage with marvel. When Ruskin had closed the book, he began: "No, there is no exaggeration or bombast such as there might have been, the words are all justified, and they describe very faithfully the character of the picture, I am well content," and he gave the volume back to his man.

He passed on to the "Adoration of the Magi," to the richly poetic "Flight into Egypt," the "Baptism," stopping at each with unabated interest, strolling on through the

¹ By Fra Angelico.

whole series of works in the lower chamber. At each we read as a chorus his earlier words, and he again said, "Yes, I approve," and indeed there was good reason for his contentment.

In ascending the stairs we observed the painting by Titian of "The Annunciation," rich in grace and beauty of colour, which Ruskin stayed a time to enjoy; it gave fairly favourably the treatment of the painters of the time, from which the picture below by Tintoretto was a departure. Some of the paintings on the ceiling in the hall above were hard to see, many, from damp, had the rich original colours (particularly of some pigment which seemed formerly to have been deep blue) blanched, by which the harmony of the whole was lost. In the chamber at the end on the left, we arrived at Tintoretto's "Crucifixion"; this more than warranted all of Ruskin's enthusiasm and eloquence, and we dwelt upon it for a full hour ere the *Modern Painters* was called into requisition. How many, I thought, would envy me as I listened to his precise and emphatic reading of the ever memorable passage in which he describes this picture, and as I heard him say, "No, again I decide that what I wrote in past years is well,"—and it was well!

I was able, before we left this picture, to point out to him the interesting fact that the painter had found his canvas at the left hand bottom corner damaged, or too restricted for his design, and that he had made this up by unnauling a canvas from a smaller stretcher and fastening it, with its nail punctures unconcealed, on to the larger canvas. I was able also to prove the fact that the whole canvas had been but barely primed with gesso, and that the surface, and, therefore, that of the other pictures not so accessible to close examination, had been at first painted in tempera medium, and this, for final painting, had been floated over with oil varnish, almost certainly of amber, and while each space was drying, he had glazed and painted what was necessary in oil colours. Ruskin seemed, by his surprised present enthusiasm, never before to have noticed

the opposite picture of "Christ brought out after the Scourging."

Our tour had taken us the whole day, and I went back with Ruskin and dined at Danielli's. When we were alone after the repast, he said to me: "I want to ask you whether, when you said to me this morning that you were so pleased to see me, you merely spoke in passing compliment, or with serious meaning?"

My rejoinder was, "What would make you doubt that I spoke with anything but deliberate candour?"

"Because," he replied, "for these many years, if you wanted to see me, Camberwell not being many miles from Campden Hill, you could easily have come to me, or asked me to come to you, and you have not done either."

My return was, "My dear Ruskin, you know there were reasons for a time to obstruct our intimacy, but beyond that I would say, you always seemed to me to forget that every man's father is not behind him with a fortune that enables him to do what he would with his time; with me there were few days that I could do this, yet I confess that I might of late have stolen some occasions to see such a friend as you, had there not been further difficulties which I will not enter into."

Ruskin immediately exclaimed: "Tell me. I do particularly want you to be unreserved."

So I continued: "I may be quite wrong in my estimate of some of the characters who formed the band of men you had about you, but in my eyes they were so distinctly a bar to me, that, had you been the Archangel Michael himself, these satellites would have kept me away."

He received this uncharitable utterance with a few moments' pause.

"You are quite right, Holman, I never was a good judge of character, and I have had some most objectionable people about me."

I ventured, "I observed to-day, Ruskin, that when we were dwelling on the pictures, your interest was in the æsthetic qualities of the works alone. Was this because, having previously dwelt on the symbolism, you felt free to treat of the painter-like excellence of Tintoretto's labours only?"

The tacitly established unreserve existing between men, who venture to test new truths that offer themselves, by the world is not always understood, sometimes even they air their own experimental excursions into space with arguments that exaggerate the real nature of their convictions. I may, however, reveal the frankness with which Ruskin and I conducted our intercourse.

He replied, "Your inquiry brings me to avow what I have intended to tell you, as touching a point of great importance to yourself. I am led to regard the whole story of divine revelation as a mere wilderness of poetic dreaming, and, since it is proved to be so, it is time that all men of any influence should denounce the superstition which tends to destroy the exercise of reason. Amongst the chaotic mass there are exquisite thoughts, elevating aspirations, and poetic mental nourishment, and it would be a pity that these riches should be lost to the world. I want you, who have done a deal of harm by your works in sanctifying blind beliefs, to join with me and others to save these beautiful fragments, lest the vulgar, when indignant at the discovery of the superstition, should in their mad fury destroy what is eternally true in the beautiful thoughts with that which is false. The conviction that I have arrived at leads me to conclude that there is no Eternal Father to whom we can look up, that man has no helper but himself. I confess this conclusion brings with it great unhappiness. When my dear mother is in sorrow she appeals to me, and I exercise my power to console her, and when my valet is in trouble, I can relieve him. You must admit, Holman, that I am a kind-hearted man, and, being friendly by nature, I feel my

loneliness, in having no one to console me when I am overcome."

"But, Ruskin," I argued, "you must expect me to be astonished at what you say. I am not frightened at your declaration of Atheism. We know men often call themselves Atheists from a conscientious fastidiousness which makes them over scrupulous about terms, while in all their actions they acknowledge Duty; professing believers may prove themselves unbelievers by working with all their might to 'circumvent God!' As to the bible, I am perfectly ready to admit that many figures of speech, which may be described as Orientalisms, have led to misinterpretation of the meaning. The evidence of the individuality of Christ and of His teaching is absolutely convincing to me, there is record in the early books of the bible of the advancing teaching of prophets, without which Christ's evangel would have been impossible. So far the revelation is established in my mind; all the rest is extraneous and may be left in suspense, but I am the more astounded at your confession, because I remember that in a report of some address you made quite recently, you distinctly illustrated the service to the world of belief in divine governance, and such a change as you describe in yourself can scarcely have come about since then."

He replied, "When first I was shaken in my faith, in speaking to a lady whose general judgment deserved the greatest respect, I declared that I must publish my change of views to the world. She restrained me from doing so, and made me promise not to act on this impulse for ten years. Being afterwards called upon to lecture, I had to debate with myself in what way I could satisfy the demand without breaking my compact, and I was led to allow the greatest latitude to the possibility that my new views might not be permanent. It was wise to test this by reverting to my earlier theories, and I therefore determined to deliver one of my old lectures, which, when written, was heart-

felt and thoroughly conscientious; the report of this was what you read."

In return I asked: "Is not the depression of mind you lament in opposition to the general joyous spirit of Creation? If so, may it not be wrong? As to the question of the existence of a creative mind in the formation of the universe, it seems to me precisely equivalent to the inquiry whether in Tintoretto's pictures the flax of the canvas, the gesso and the glue of the priming, the delightful forms and arrangement traceable on the surface came there by a happy chance, or whether all these materials were brought together by an intelligent mind, and the design was accomplished by wise direction and control. The conclusion forced on the mind in the case of a painting applies also to the creation of the Universe. As we are talking about this artist, do you think that Tintoretto's convictions are of no value to us, that his great intelligence was deceiving him, that all his wrestlings with dead indifference on the part of the world were encouraged by delusions?"

Ruskin replied:—

"Tintoretto did not believe any more than I do the fables he was treating, no artist in illustrating fairy stories troubles himself about the substantiality of the fiction."

"Myths," I argued, "are of two kinds, one may be of the nature of a parable containing a never dying truth, others are mere purposeless imaginings. The choice of Hercules is of the first kind. Its purport gives it the sacredness which nerved the artist and the poet to treat it as the mythic stories in the early bible were treated; but an idle fable, such as the award of the apple by Paris, can only be taken for an exercise for æsthetic decoration; work of this kind always bears proof that the artist played with an intangible dream; the idea is a mere gossamer, never watered with the sweat, the tears, and blood of men. Tintoretto treats his subjects in a spirit which bears the stamp of his having

given his whole heart and soul to them. Working in the first half of the cinquecento, he accepted without question many legends, which in this day may be looked upon as fables, but the fundamental idea of the government of the world by the powers of good overcoming evil was to him, I am sure, an idea founded upon a rock; for, while some pictures of his contemporaries bear the stamp of superficial thought, his religious pictures give evidence of conviction that the more the ideas he treats are realised, the more the eternal truth will appear; every line he drew bore evidence of unfaltering sincerity. The testimony of science concurs with that of the bible that there is continual trending to perfection, it is traceable in geological records, and in human affairs also the movement must be recognised, the better ever supplanting the less good. No sacrifice of existing peace seems too costly for this advance."

We continued our talk at intervals, illustrating our arguments by reference to the teaching of Plato and the example of Socrates, adducing also the effect of Atheism upon the world at the decline of the Roman Empire. We discussed the teaching of the French philosophers and of their followers who exaggerated their tenets and assisted in the mad orgy of blood which followed in the French Revolution.

One day we went into the Church of the Salute and saw in the sacristy Tintoretto's great picture of "The Marriage in Cana," which brought to my mind Leonardo's "Last Supper," and the contrast between the intellects of the two painters. His appreciation of the nobility of the history was unboundedly evidenced by each artist, but Da Vinci expressed his feeling by incessant effort to represent the highest type of humanity; he relied upon the power of god-like elevation of form and bearing to take captive the mind of the spectator, disdaining the adjuncts of aureole around the head even of Christ Himself. It was a startling determination

of intellectual wilfulness when the Reformation was battering in every quarter at the gates of the visible Church, and the Inquisition was exerting its power to suppress the exercise of reason.

Tintoretto was not an idealist in the form of the beings he portrayed; he drew with unmistakable mastery the men and women he came upon in the market-place as perfect enough to act in his dramas. Standing before his pictures I was somewhat reminded of Hogarth's casual apology that the persons he painted were not those of the original history, but players enacting their parts. Perhaps Tintoretto thought that sublime form and aspect given to the Messiah and his friends might prevent ordinary men from thinking that the example of the sinless One could be followed by themselves, creatures of common clay as they well knew themselves to be. Uncelestial as the features often were, the figures were crowned by a halo, and the painter was so practised in aiding the spirituality of the scene by this means that the decorative treatment contributed to the general glory of the effect of the picture.

Tintoretto's method certainly had in its off-handedness the advantage of multiplying his works a hundredfold in comparison to that pursued by Leonardo. I say this without subscribing to the modern theory that Leonardo's existing productions are as few as they are often now stated to be.

On entering the nave of the empty church, observing that the marble pillars of a side altar were rich in embedded shell fossils, Ruskin walked up the steps, and pointed this out as an evidence of the much greater antiquity of the earth than the bible records state.

"But, Ruskin," I argued, "surely this question is not a new one. Most of us considered such facts in our teens."

But he, ignoring my remark, continued to urge importance in the argument that this marble, though not of igneous formation, must have been many millenniums anterior to man's appearance on earth.

I rallied him as having been brought up amongst "the strictest sect of the Pharisees," and taught that to doubt literal interpretation was a sin which had sheltered him for a time, but caused the truth to be more destructive when it burst through this defence.

As we were speaking the sacristan appeared, walking steadily in our direction. He never diverged in his progress until he arrived opposite us, and then addressed us with, "Signori, it is not permitted for any person not a priest to ascend the altar steps, and I must ask you to show your reverence by descending."

We both came down to the lower level, and then Ruskin replied to the verger thus: "It is now over twenty years since I was in Venice, and your words to us are the first signs I have found in this day of due veneration for the claims of unseen authority. I do not pretend to be a Christian, I speak to you simply as a philosopher, and as such I am pained to see how much the feeling of reverence has ceased to exist during my absence. Everywhere I find indifference to any pure form of municipal life, the streets and the canals are often foul, and when there has been any fancy on the part of business people to make your city unlike what it was, and what it should ever be, and like to others which can never have your exceptional advantages, churches and the oldest historic buildings have been cut away and destroyed, and no one has raised a voice to prevent the desecration."

The sacristan looked bewildered, while Ruskin continued, "To you I owe a tribute of sincere recognition, sir; I thank you very deeply for having told us that we were forgetting the sanctity of the spot where we were standing, and in bidding us descend. We shall never forget to pay respect in our memory to your sense of duty, and your obedience to it." The sacristan gaped amazement.

There were but few places of interest that we did not visit together, often sighing over the changes of modern days that we came across, but ever delighting in the treasures that remained.

Ten years later I met him in London. We had been dwelling upon a picture for which he expressed great enthusiasm. As we were driving together, he said, "One reason I so much value the picture we have seen is that it carries emphatic teaching of the immortality of the soul."

"What," I exclaimed, "I was supposing that you were approving of it for its artistic qualities of design, colour, and handling; for you must remember that when we last met you declared that you had given up all belief in immortality."

"I remember well," Ruskin replied; "what has mainly caused the change in my views is the unanswerable evidence of spiritualism. I know there is much vulgar fraud and stupidity connected with it, but underneath there is, I am sure, enough to convince us that there is personal life independent of the body; but with this once proved I have no further interest in the pursuit of spiritualism."

The carriage now brought us to our destination, and so our talk came to an end.

When I parted with Ruskin at Venice in 1869 I went on to Rome, where I chanced on my friend Captain, now General Luard. With him I visited most of the galleries there, and we swam daily in the Tiber, glad to find that the strong current could not prevent us from covering about a hundred yards ere our strength was spent in the struggle.

I departed from the Eternal City to Naples, thence took ship to Jaffa *via* Alexandria, where I landed after fourteen years' absence.