CHAPTER V

1855–1856

Accepting all that happens and all that is allowed as coming from thence, wherever it is from whence he himself came. — MARCUS AURELIUS.

This is the everlasting duty of all men, black or white, who are born into this world. To do competent work, to labour honestly according to the ability given them ; for that and for no other purpose was each one of us sent into this world ; and woe is to every man who, by friend or by foe, is prevented from fulfilling this the end of his being.—CARLYLE.

Cock, cock, cock, cock, cock, cockchafer,
If you won't come, I won't have you.

Child's Rhyme.

LEIGHTON, it will be remembered, had appeared (from study in various continental cities) as a comet, but at once took up his course here as a planet. I gathered from my friends that on his arrival in 1855 the Academicians had been glad to hail his "Cimabue" with loud appreciation, the more because its continentalism separated it from Pre-Raphaelite pictures. Influenced by the glowing accounts of his last work, I looked with the greater attention at his painting of "Orpheus and Eurydice" in 1856, and I found much to admire in it as an indication of the author's power, but I was in a minority in most society circles, where it was declared to be a decline from the promise of the previous year.

On Leighton's arrival in London from Rome, Berlin, and Paris, the young architect Cockerell invited me to meet him at a bachelor dinner. I was charmed with the new painter's graceful and easy air ; it was that of a happy youth who had been ever surrounded by idolising friends, a youth who had never suffered the rubs of life, and so had absolute happy confidence in himself. This spirit offended many who had approached him with the strongest disposition in his favour. Had he had nothing behind his happy self-assurance I too should have perhaps felt disenchanted enough to smile, but I had seen that which made me recognise full warrant for his handsome estimate of his powers, and this, with his acquirements and good looks, of a kind that grew ever more dignified with age, inspired me with an affection for him which I never lost, notwithstanding occasional frank differences between us. His genius, seen in his work, gave me continual delight, the free-handedness with which he was able to keep up the campaign against public prejudice, stubborn even to innovators of his suavity, made life seem the easier.

With fast increasing pressure I had to take counsel with myself as to my course. The small original sketch of " The Light of the World " was but little advanced. I could complete this from the finished picture without expense or time spent in arrangement, or in the search for materials, so that now the picture having won reputation, I should be certain of not having to wait for a purchaser of the smaller painting. My friends at Oxford were ever hospitable and helpful, so I went to them, and worked from the picture day by day.

While I was thus engaged, the Member of Parliament for the city determined to resign, and surprised all by bringing down Thackeray as ambitious to stand in his place. They addressed a public meeting and issued the usual placards, which advertised Thackeray's Liberal principles. Mr. Combe was a determined Conservative, but his wife, while echoing his political sentiments, mollified

FREDERICK LEIGHTON, AGED 21, BY HIMSELF.

her spouse towards the author, by her ardent appreciation of Colonel Newcome, and I dwelt upon the greatness of Thackeray's teaching and influence, which was taken approvingly; I accordingly wrote to tell him that my friends, although not of his party, were personally inclined towards him, and that it might be prudent for him to call with a view to gaining their support. The next morning the cards of the retiring and the proposed member were brought up to me in the absence of both my hosts. I reported Mr. Combe as a lover of painting and a patron of Millais, Collins, and myself, and at their request I showed them the pictures of the house. Thackeray then asked, "What are you doing here?" I returned, "I am working at the first study of an original picture of mine." "Where is it?" said he, and on their expressing interest, I led them to my painting-room. When in front of the easel there was silence, which awakened in me bashful regret at my invitation. "Ah me!" he pondered aloud, "I assume that we must regard this painting to be your *magnum opus*." The words were not unkindly intended; had I been in better spirits and not afraid of want of eloquence, I might have asked him to explain his sentiments on the picture unreservedly. I winced under the suspicion that he regarded the work as prompted by narrow sectarianism or insincerity, and I was ashamed that he who had taught me so much should think me capable of either feeling. Mr. Combe firmly refused his vote to the Liberal side, and the majority of electors were too slow to appreciate the great teacher.

After a full month's strenuous labour my task was done. Before the end, my good mentor, Mr. Combe, in our evening walks on Port Meadow, talked much about the difficulty of my monetary position, and urged that I was wrong in not soliciting election by the Royal Academy. Three years before, as a refutation to the provoked suspicion that our movement was intentionally inimical to

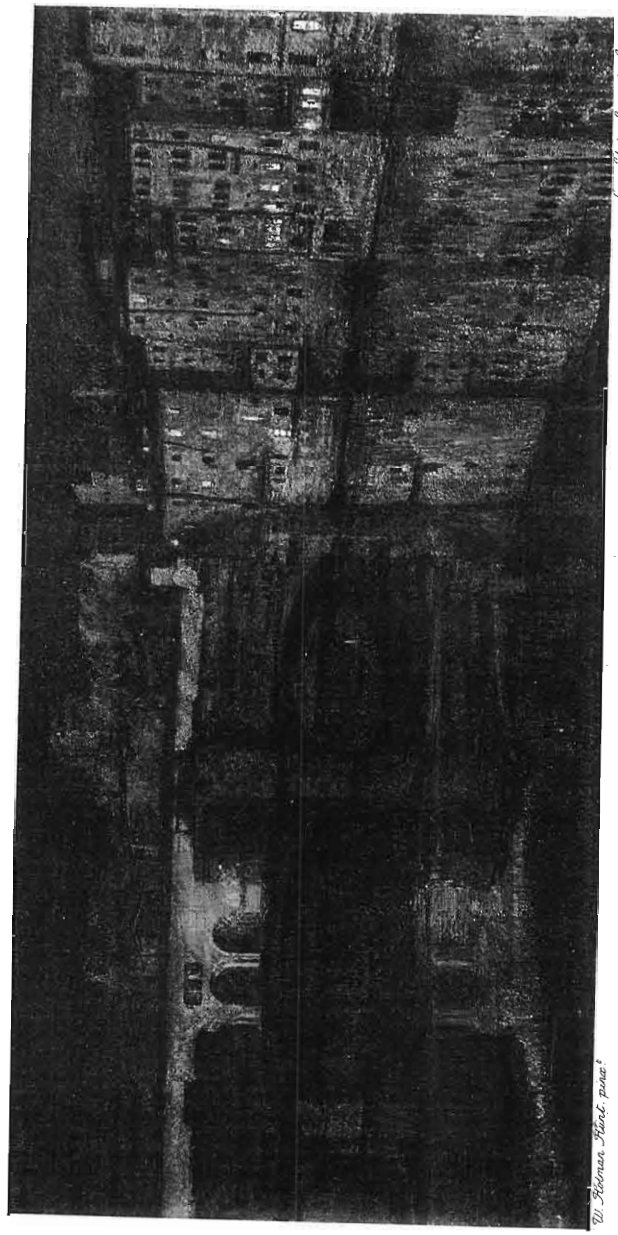
that Institution, Millais and I had put down our names. In the election of 1852 both of us were passed over; I had not expected election, but my compeer was at first very indignant, and wrote to me at Fairlight to declare that he would never have anything more to do with the Body. I knew he was likely to go about declaring this intention, so I wrote immediately, saying that while after the "Ophelia" and the "Huguenot" it was monstrous that his claim should be overlooked, it was most desirable he should not hastily make so important a resolve; that he knew I would always support him in an independent course if after deliberation it seemed to him wise, but I felt strongly we ought to take full time to consider the matter before we declared any such intention. A second letter from him crossed mine on the way, saying that Mr. Leslie had called, explaining that it was the rule against admitting any candidate under twenty-four that had prevented Millais from being elected, and that he was sure to be chosen the next year, whereupon he said he was appeased. In 1853 he was made a member, and our combined school loyalty having been thus expressed, I did not again become a candidate.

The unjust treatment of Millais by the hanging committee in the first year after his Associateship, and the determined bitterness of the Academy against our disciples, had convinced me that the Institution, conferring as it did life-memberships, enabled those of the Body whose first reputation was never justified by later productions, to strengthen a scheming minority whose interest it was to keep the prestige of the Institution for their own advantage, and to delay for years, and sometimes for ever, the acceptance of artists of independent power, so that it became a solid hindrance to the best interests of art.

When the Academy had first been founded, the full number of sixty members could not be made up from British artists, and it was supplemented by many foreigners.

At that date, therefore, there remained no able outsiders aggrieved. The numbers of the profession since then had increased so much that the institution now contained only a section of competent English artists. In every respect a revision of the original laws was needed, especially as to lifelong membership. When a single large-minded artist was elected, his attempts at reform were resolutely ignored. It was proved that a healthy renovation, to suit altered circumstances, could not come from within, for the hinderers of progress were too numerous. Maclise and E. M. Ward had taken the first opportunity at a Council to lay down their views as to the necessary alteration to be made, but their motions had been received in blank astonishment and the question whether there was "any further business to discuss," so that all would-be reformers ceased to bestir themselves. Linnell's example, with that of others, had been of good service to us, for they had gained public regard despite the enmity of the Institution, and had quietly gone on exhibiting at the Academy, leading courageous patrons to feel that election to the Body was not the only stamp of superiority. For these reasons I wished to remain an outsider, hoping that in some way I might thus, with the help of others, do a wholesome service to the profession. Further talk on the question with Mr. Combe proceeded thus :—

"You remember how they treated Millais with his 'Fireman' last year; their behaviour proved how little his election was a mark of their repentance or of any change in them, beyond a conviction of the need of separating us, the active Pre-Raphaelites. I would not imply that any of the members are intentionally dishonest; on the contrary, many are men of high honour, but an Institution so entirely unchecked in the exercise of power was not framed for ordinary humanity, least of all for men who find constant difficulty in obtaining support for themselves and their families by their profession. Yet it is impossible to ignore the enormous advantage of



Ponte Vecchio.

membership in a pecuniary sense to either competent or incompetent artists."

Mr. Combe, knowing this, and also how slow the world of patrons was in getting reconciled to my new work, strongly argued with me against my resolution of holding aloof from the Academy. The matter was not settled until the eve of the last day of July, and as the morrow was the final day for applicants to the Institution to subscribe their names, my good friend pressed me not to let the opportunity pass. It was undeniable that I could not afford to court the perpetuation of my difficulties, so I undertook to go to town in the morning to enrol myself for the winter election.

There were many other affairs I had to attend to; when I arrived at the clerk's office of the Royal Academy it was nearly striking four, and the official, to my surprise (although I knew he was a very masterful underling), was shutting up his door. To my request for attention he declared that it was too late, and refused to take my name. I would not bandy arguments with him, but at once set off to Mr. Knight, the secretary, who was fortunately at home. I acquainted him with the clerk's refusal, and told him that the man had objected that it was too near four o'clock for further business. Mr. Knight, glancing at his watch, interjected, "Why, it is now only a few minutes past four, the clerk's excuse is unjustifiable," and he at once promised that my name should be inscribed, adding pleasantly that he could say sincerely that he hoped I should be elected.

Independently of the contentment felt at having acted on the advice of a good friend with sound practical judgment, I was glad that I had put to the test the estimate which the Academy set upon my claim to recognition. I had now nothing further to do in this matter than to wait for the result of the election several months later. When the Exhibition was just closing,

I received a communication from Mr. Windus that he would buy "The Scapegoat" for 450 guineas, if I would forego my claim to the copyright, and this I agreed to do.

I had been continually hearing of Watts' personality from friends, but so far I had not seen him. A common acquaintance brought me a cordial invitation from him to come to his studio. It was a wonderful home in which he lived, both for its surroundings and its inmates. It had, in Addison's days, been a farmhouse, but as London had come near to it the farmer had gone further afield, and its closeness to town had made it a delectable family home. A still-remembered duel, in which one combatant had been killed, occurred in the beginning of the century in the handsomely elmed grounds. The present occupant, Mr. Prinsep, had been there a few years on his retirement from official life in India, but he still served as a Director of the East India Company. Watts had been brought there when he was ill, to be nursed into health by the impulsive kindness of the hostess, and he became so great a favourite with all the family that he built a studio and remained. At the time of my visit he had two painting-rooms, and a third in course of building. It was indeed a delight to see a painter of the day with such dream-like opportunities and powers of exercising his genius. It was more than a happy combination, for one may safely assert that nowhere else in England would it have been possible to enter a house with such a singular variety of beautiful persons inhabiting it. The sisters of the lady were seen in all their dignified beauty in Watts' fine portraits, and other beautiful sitters had been attracted to his studio, as was witnessed by their delightful portraits upon his walls.

At the date of my visit the beautiful Emma Brandling, afterwards Lady Lilford, was a cherished guest. I had known her brother, Henry Brandling, as a student at the Academy, and I had heard Charley Collins speak of

her with worship. The father of this young lady had made a noble sacrifice of his wealth by supporting George Stephenson in the expenses of his sturdy struggle to be allowed to endow the world with his beneficent invention. A portrait by Watts of the lady at that time will prove how much admiration of her grace was justified. Watts' likenesses were not *flattered*, a phrase which always means that the real strength and character are taken out, no peculiarity was softened down, the very fulness of personality was given; but it was the incarnation of the soul rather than the accidental aspect. The drawing of heads, such as that of Mr. Wright of Manchester, of Layard, and others, now in the National Collection, which were then on his walls, are not second to those of the greatest painters, Raphael, Titian, Tintoretto, Rembrandt, Rubens, or Vandyck, the great English portraitist. In respect to his fulness of rendering of the human form, I was fain to regard Watts as an ideal Pre-Raphaelite.

He soon came to see my oft retarded picture. I felt ashamed of its smallness, but he had the catholicity of interest for other work than his own that all true artists retain.

On leaving Little Holland House I was cordially urged by Mrs. Prinsep to repeat my visit, and on doing so I became acquainted with her sisters. Mrs. Cameron was perhaps the most perseveringly demonstrative in the disposition to cultivate the society of men of letters and of art; her husband, like Mr. Prinsep, was an East India Director.

One day when Woolner and I happened to be going to dine at Combehurst on Wimbledon Common, Mrs. Cameron kindly asked us to stay on our way at her house at Roehampton, as "the great Tennyson" was there; there could be no stronger attraction, as I had repeatedly been prevented from meeting him. Woolner's admirably executed medallion sketch had led me to expect a man of somewhat haughty bearing, but he whom I met

was markedly unostentatious and modest in his mien, as though from the first courting trustfulness; his head was nobly poised on his grand columnar neck, rarely held erect, but inclined towards whomever he addressed with unaffected attention; he was swarthy of complexion, his black hair hanging in curls over his domed head; he had a great girth of shoulder, resembling many a Syrian Arab I had met. As I entered he turned and said, with a ring of simple cordiality, slowly, in sonorous voice, "I have been wanting to know you for some while. I am told that you never received my letter thanking you for the Latakia tobacco which you bought at Baalbec from the farmer who had grown and dried it. I felt I wanted to recognise your kindness of thinking of me and to say *what good flavour the tobacco had. The letter had my* name outside and should not have miscarried. I was always interested in your paintings, and lately your illustrations to my poems have strongly engaged my attention!" After some general talk he said, "I must now ask why did you make the Lady of Shalott, in the illustration, with her hair wildly tossed about as if by a tornado?"

Rather perplexed, I replied that I had wished to convey the idea of the threatened fatality by reversing the ordinary peace of the room and of the lady herself; that while she recognised that the moment of the catastrophe had come, the spectator might also understand it.

"But I didn't say that her hair was blown about like that. Then there is another question I want to ask you. Why did you make the web wind round and round her like the threads of a cocoon?"

"Now," I exclaimed, "surely that may be justified, for you say—

> Out flew the web and floated wide;
> The mirror crack'd from side to side;

a mark of the dire calamity that had come upon her."

But Tennyson broke in, "But I did not say it floated round and round her." My defence was, "May I not urge that I had only half a page on which to convey the impression of weird fate, whereas you use about fifteen pages to give expression to the complete idea?" But Tennyson laid it down that "an illustrator ought never to add anything to what he finds in the text." Then leaving the question of the fated lady, he persisted, "Why did you make Cophetua leading the beggar maid up a flight of steps? I never spoke of a flight of steps."

"Don't you say—

> In robe and crown
> The King stepped down,
> To meet and greet her
> On her way.

Does not the old ballad originally giving the story say something clearly to this effect? If so, I claim double warrant for my interpretation. I feel that you do not enough allow for the difference of requirements in our two arts. In mine it is needful to trace the end from the beginning in one representation. You can dispense with such a licence. In both arts it is essential that the meaning should appear clear and strong. Am I not right?"

"Yes," he said, "but I think the illustrator should always adhere to the words of the poet!"

"Ah, if so, I am afraid I was not a suitable designer for the book." This I said playfully, when he returned, "You don't mind my having spoken my conviction so frankly?" To which I replied that I was only too honoured by his having treated me thus candidly.

When I returned to town after my Oxford work, I found the Brownings had come to London, and soon Gabriel and I were invited to spend the evening with them. When the appointed hour approached I had a return of ague upon me, but I would not allow myself

to lose the opportunity of meeting the poet; he and his wife were extremely unaffected and genial. Browning was taller than he had been described to me, perhaps about five feet six, robust and hearty in his tone of interest in all questions discussed, but I felt some self-reproach in so faintly recognising in him the stamp of a man as elevated above his fellows as his noblest poems proved him to be.

Mrs. Browning was also small, and, with this, fragile; she betrayed nervous anxiety in her eager manner, so that the supersensitive tenor of her poems seemed fitly embodied in her. Her hair was brought forward in ringlets on her face in a manner quite out of fashion, and thus helped to make one feel that she disregarded all changes of mode since her youth. The special interest of the evening was the production of a poem by their son, aged about six, the subject Leighton's picture of "Orpheus and Eurydice." It was, even taking the child's parentage into consideration, a wonderful example of precocity.

Gabriel seemed throughout the evening over apt to break in with jocular interruption to the conversation, as though claiming proprietorship in the company present; it was easy to yield to him in this whim, since it happened that we were all his debtors for the first knowledge of the works of our new friends.

Soon after my concession to the prejudices of fortune in becoming a candidate for Royal Academy membership, my dear father, who had become enfeebled of late by the worry caused by legal but inequitable claims connected with the property he had bought, suddenly determined to go to the seaside for his usual holiday. The resolution was so immediately acted upon, that it was decided he should go alone, and that my mother should follow the next day; it happened that a thunderstorm, which had ever had a fascination for him, was at its full force when he arrived at Folkestone; he learnt that a ship was in the agonies of wreck on the rocks, and deciding on

a lodging only to deposit his luggage, hastened to the cliffs, where he stood in the pelting rain for hours, entranced by the tragic spectacle; returning to shelter he felt cold, and, refusing food, went to bed. On my mother's arrival the next morning he was feverish, and the doctor's verdict was that he had contracted inflammation of the lungs; he returned to town seriously ill, and despite the constant and kind attention of Sir Richard Quain, we soon had to recognise that he was past all human aid.

While in attendance upon my father, I was gratified by a declaration from him that he was at last thoroughly satisfied that my independent course in adopting my profession was justified. "I had hoped to see you with a substantial fortune before you in the city," he said, "but you have proved your passion for art to be so strong, that you work even against unforeseen difficulties; this shows it is your natural occupation. Your profession provides fortunes but for few. I had hoped to see some indication by now that you would be one of these, but your pictures evidently do not meet the taste that is in vogue with picture-buyers, and you spend so much thought, time, and money upon them, that what would be a good price for the works of most others is but poor payment for you." All I could do was to assure him that I was certain of my course, and that his confidence made me accept the penalty with patience and without fear, and I thanked him for the admission, that the anxiety I had caused him had not been wantonly or idly given, and conjured him not to fret about the prospects of the family. I watched him until his life ebbed away, and he sank in peaceful spirit into his last sleep.

About the end of the season, Seddon called upon me to ask advice about a new idea of his that he should return to the East, to make use of the knowledge he had acquired there for the painting of landscape, as the most likely means of enabling him to secure reputation. I had no doubt that the plan was the best that offered for him. He left soon after, and we heard of his arrival

at Alexandria and his advance to Cairo, whence he wrote to me of plans he had made, but soon news came of an attack of dysentery, and then came an interval of no letters, followed by his death. Great sympathy was expressed for the widow and child, and Rossetti proposed that each of his painter friends should take up one of the unfinished works of the deceased, and bring it to completion. Brown, with generous enthusiasm, put this proposal into execution on a very embryonic painting of Penelope, but the other pictures were left without additional work, partly, perhaps, because most of them could be finished only in the East. As I was hard pressed by my own work and had given time to complete a water-colour of his when he left Syria so suddenly in 1854, I did not take part in this work. A meeting was held, at which Lord Goodrich presided, and Ruskin made an address at the Society of Arts, in which, misled as to the true workman, he said that while beforehand he had only regarded Seddon as a landscape painter of great promise, he now saw by the "Penelope" that he was also a great figure painter; this was the prelude to much generous laudation of Seddon's landscapes; it was resolved to appeal to the public for subscriptions as a testimonial to Thomas Seddon. A sum of £600 was collected, and out of this £400 was voted for the purchase of a picture of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives.

It was impossible for me to attain the object, according to my father's wish, of teaching my sister to paint in my bachelor home at Pimlico. I had, therefore, to find a fresh house. J. C. Hook was giving up the class of Venetian subjects which he had hitherto executed with grace of form and sweetness of colour; he now devoted himself to landscape and seascape, and for these he proposed to live in the country. His house on Campden Hill was now to let, and I determined to take it, in pursuance of Sir William Gull's advice, after curing me of Syrian fever, that I should always live on high ground.

I sent the finished replica of "The Light of the World" to an exhibition at Boston, undertaken by a collector of Turner drawings much spoken of by Ruskin; my picture was sold for 300 guineas.

At a dinner to which Lady Goodrich was kind enough to invite me, Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle were amongst the guests, accompanied by Henry Bruce, afterwards Lord Aberdare, who had undertaken to draw out the Chelsea sage. There was a large company, some of whom I did not know. Mrs. Carlyle was the lady allotted to me. She sat on my left, and Carlyle was exactly opposite. Mrs. Carlyle assailed me for my opinion anent the marriage of Millais with Mrs. Ruskin; I defended him strenuously, saying that the lady had ceased to be Mrs. Ruskin by the nullification of her marriage as declared by the Scotch Court. Millais had not run away with her, I said, but had waited to claim her in her father's house, a full year after the day she left Ruskin. "If because husband and wife are not in accord they should separate, many marriages would be annulled," she argued.

I had not been able to turn to the lady on my right, nor had I been able to listen to the torrent of talk on the opposite side of the table, which proceeded almost exclusively from the modern seer.

When the ladies rose from table and we were again seated, I found that the man on my right was rather short, with thick black hair growing up, in what, from French Revolutionary times, was called the Brutus fashion; he sidled up to me, and in an undertone inquired if I knew the name of "the gentleman who talked so much." "Yes," I whispered, "he is Thomas Carlyle"; then after a short pause he inquired, "What does he do?" "He is the celebrated writer." At this my new friend muttered, "Ah, yes. He's the atheist!" "No," I corrected him, with voice directed low, "you are thinking of another man of the same name who has been dead some years. He was a professed atheist.

Thomas Carlyle says it is better to have Mumbo-Jumbo than no God at all." My interrogator then asked me to tell him what works Carlyle had written. I spoke of his translations from the German, of *The French Revolution*, of *The Life and Letters of Cromwell*, of *The Latter-day Pamphlets*. To satisfy his curiosity still further he drew himself up to scrutinise the object of his inquiry. At the moment Henry Bruce spoke across the table to my neighbour, "Sir Colin Campbell! my friend Mr. Carlyle is at the present time engaged upon a history in which acquaintance with military life is much called for. I am quite sure that if you would be good enough to recount to us some of your own adventures in the field, it would be of value to Mr. Carlyle, and of not less interest to the rest of us." This appeal helped me to identify my quiet neighbour, and I looked at him with suspense; his reply was curtly conclusive, "But I've nothing to tell."

"Sir Colin," returned Mr. Bruce, "it is reported in the history of your campaign in the Peshawur district, that when in command of 700 men you had marched through a defile and had debouched into the plain, you were suddenly informed that a force of 30,000 native troops were only a couple of hours behind you, and that they were hastening to destroy your company. You then, it is said, immediately turned your troops about and made them scale the heights and march unseen until you were in the rear of your enemy, and then you, to their great dismay, appeared on the heights and surprised them by a bold descent on to their rear. The enemy, concluding that there must be a large army in front, were seized by sudden panic, became confused and disordered, and were then quickly defeated by your small contingent. Now, may I ask whether this account of your action is correct?"

Sir Colin Campbell had no choice but to reply in some form; while all were intent on listening he simply said, "Well, there was nothing else to do."

The persevering Mr. Bruce could make nothing more out of the taciturn hero. He then appealed to Carlyle to say what he thought of Froude's defence of Henry VIII. in his *History of England*.

"For that matter," replied the Chelsea philosopher, "I cannot say much, for I have not yet read it, but I've always esteemed Henry to be a much maligned man. When I look into that broad yeoman-built face and see those brave blue eyes of his, as they are seen in the Holbein portrait, I must conclude that an honest soul resided within his sturdy body." Raising his voice then to a treble, he continued, "He certainly had much trouble with his wives. I won't pretend to decide anything for or against his divorce from Katherine, or the execution of the others; whether or not they deserved it depends upon evidence that I have not seen: this is a personal matter; but the great charge against the man is, that he had seventy thousand men hung for no ostensible crime whatever, merely because they were rogues and vagabonds. Now that seems like a serious incrimination, but then we have to consider the state of the country at the time. Until thirty years before the whole country had only a waste population ready to be engaged on one side or the other of the York and Lancaster wars, to cut one another's throats. Such a national fury it is difficult to quench. Stalwart rascals were roving about, ready to do any unholy thing, and a good ruler was bound to eradicate marauders of all kinds. Henry would not tolerate them. He ordained that any man brought up who could not prove that he gained his living by useful work should be branded with a hot iron, and for a second offence ordered straight off to the gallows."

Carlyle's emphasis had gradually subsided, but again he raised his voice, saying, "If any one here would like to come to me at Chelsea to-morrow morning I would undertake to lead him to a spot, a hundred yards from my door, where we should find thirty vagabonds leaning

against the rail which divides the river from the road, and although these men have never been, as far as I know, convicted of any particular crime whatever, I will not hesitate to affirm that they would be all the better for hanging, both for their own sakes and for every one concerned. Now, if you'll consider with me that I am only pointing out the case of one particular parish in London, or a part of it, and if you will calculate the number of parishes there are in the metropolis alone, and then extend your view over the whole country, you will agree that seventy thousand men was not by any means an extravagant number of irredeemable ne'er-do-wells whose suppression was put down to poor Henry's evil account." The silent guest, the slayer of hundreds in open warfare, who had interrogated me, stared with wide eyes at the eloquent talker as he condemned this number of hapless men to death, while in fact he would never have killed a fly. Underlying all his idea of justice was the law that if a man will not work neither shall he live. The judgment upon the negro question in Jamaica was actuated by this feeling, and he seemed more impelled to enforce the principle, because there were many *doctrinaires* prating that men should be encouraged to regard labour as a degrading affliction rather than an ennobling blessing. It was the more interesting to me to remember the above colloquy, when a few months later Sir Colin Campbell was called upon by the Government to go out and "do," when "there was nothing else to do," what he did in quelling the Indian Mutiny.

Every time I visited Oxford I heard more of the sensation Rossetti was making there. Ruskin was taking the responsibility of directing the architect Woodward, who, with his partner Deane, was engaged in building the new Museum, and it was still said that Rossetti would return to Oxford to paint some of the walls. But as the building was not yet ready, and the rooms of the Union built by the same architects were advanced to the stage at which the bare walls were temptingly

smooth and white, Rossetti had volunteered to paint upon them the story of King Arthur with no other charge but for the materials. Arthur Hughes was helping him in this enterprise. It was in character with Rossetti's sanguine enthusiasm that he induced many undergraduates, with little or no previous training, to undertake to cover certain spaces. Edward Burne Jones, William Morris, and Spencer Stanhope were persuaded to take part in the work, the last only, having had any preliminary training. I saw my name inscribed on a fine blank panel, and nothing would have delighted me more than to have contributed my share to the decorations, but I had too many stronger claims to allow me to undertake this mural work. Some of those connected with the Council of the Union, I heard, saw little to be grateful for in the generosity of the young decorators, and expressed themselves discourteously; perhaps it was this, coming to Rossetti's ears, that disenchanted him with his design, for he left it abruptly half-finished and returned to town, refusing all allurements of Ruskin and others to carry it further. Without previous experience of wall-painting, and disregarding the character of the pigments, the work of the group was doomed to change and perish speedily, and nothing of it now remains. Rossetti had lighted upon remarkable undergraduates of great genius, to which choice band was added Swinburne of poetic genius.

Calling one day on Gabriel at his rooms in Blackfriars, I saw, sitting at a second easel, an ingenuous and particularly gentle young man whose modest bearing and enthusiasm at once charmed. He was introduced to me as Jones, and was called "Ned."

Although what Rossetti had painted at Oxford had not pleased the persons most immediately concerned, his reputation grew there with those reputed to be connoisseurs in taste. The fame that his poetry had won for him enlarged the faith in his art powers. His five or six years of seniority over his disciples gave him a voice

of authority over them, and Ruskin's ever-increasing praise perhaps did more than all in spreading the idea of what his brother calls his "leadership." Retirement, therefore, from the outward struggle was no longer a disadvantage, but a boundless gain to him, for when any uninitiated commentator on the works of Millais, which appeared year by year, expressed his opinion about the progress of our reform movement, he was at once told that what Millais or any other had done towards it was only a vulgar reflection of Rossetti's purpose, that Rossetti disapproved of public exhibition, and that his studio could be visited only by a favoured few.

From this time he avoided Millais, Woolner, and myself to a degree that proved to be more than unstudied. Woolner did not accept this new attitude passively. He told me that on the occasion of a walk with Gabriel in the fields at Hampstead the latter spoke of his position so much as that of originator or head of the Brotherhood that Woolner, although, in allusion to his mediævalism, he had habitually addressed him as the "Arch Pre-Raphaelite," said, "I wasn't going to humour his seriously making such a preposterous claim, so I told him that it was against all the known facts of the case. At which he became moody and displeased, and so went home alone." This is a sad page of my record, but in friendly combinations for a particular object such revulsions from harmony, which could not have been foreseen, are in accordance with the experience of all ages.

In furnishing my new house I was determined, as far as possible, to eschew the vulgar furniture of the day. Articles for constant practical use were somewhat regulated by necessity; but in the living rooms I could exercise control. For ordinary seats Windsor chairs satisfied me, but I kept these in countenance by a handsome arm-chair of old English form, and devised an ornamental scroll and shield, with my monogram to give it individuality. A more independent effort

THE MILL FOND.

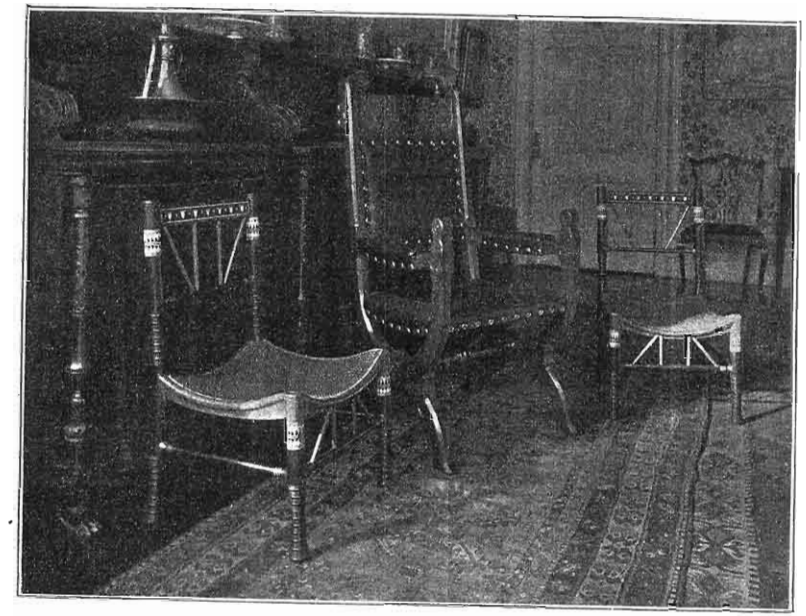
R. Spencer Stanhope.

was the designing of a chair, based on the character of an Egyptian stool in the British Museum, to serve as a permanent piece of beautiful furniture. All these were excellently made by Messrs. Crace ; to these was added the sideboard given by my generous friend, Augustus Egg, in recognition of my love of pure form in furniture. In course of time I added to these a Portuguese cabinet and a Spanish one for my studio. I had here to restrain further expenditure, still, I had done as much as I could to prove my theory that the designing of furniture is the legitimate work of the artist. When I showed my small group of household joys to my P.R.B. friends the contagion spread, and Brown, who idolised the Egyptian chairs, set a carpenter to work to make some of similar proportions. In showing them he proposed to introduce his newly-found carpenter to me as a much more economical manufacturer than my own, able to make me a sadly-needed table. He offered his own excellent design for one, which, with a few substantial modifications, I gratefully accepted. After this the rage for designing furniture was taken up by others of our circle until the fashion grew to importance.

It was now evident that progress with "The Finding in the Temple" was to be in slow steps, for with my increased responsibilities I had to busy myself with any small replica work that dealers were waiting to take. One welcome boon was the sale of the copyright of "Claudio and Isabella" for two hundred pounds, which gave me breathing space for a short time.

The bachelor parties organised by Henry Vaux, the Assyriologist, were of value, not alone for their entertainment, but also in the opportunity they afforded to meet so many of the men who were marked out as the peaceful soldiers of the coming era, and who in one way or the other were emulous to engage in the campaign of the world, to bring in fuller knowledge, wisdom, and refinement. We were all self-appointed, with little care how long deferred official recognition might be, or if it came

at all ; but we each had an earnest desire to be accepted by one another, and to decide who were the competitors bearing the credentials of mutual recognition. Music intoxicated us above selfish considerations. As the celestial rhythms of Purcell, Handel, Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin floated through the room, the notes breathed inspiration to pursuers of the higher ideals.



SIDEBOARD AND CHAIRS.

A life school had been started at Kensington, to meet three evenings a week ; the early list of members included Barlow, Augustus Egg, Frith, Leighton, Val Prinsep, John Phillip, to which the septuagenarian student, Mulready, was eventually added. Often at the beginning and end of each evening there was a good deal of "banter" between a member of the Academy who openly ridiculed the aims of our reform and myself ; one evening he reminded me that the Council of the Academy had met the previous

night to elect the new associates, and my playful railer undertook to supply news of the result. He spoke across the room thus, "I was very nigh last night doing you an injustice; in the list of candidates was the name of one Hunt,[1] and the question was started whether you were the painter named. I declared that I was sure it could not be so, as you had told me you regarded the elections as actuated by great prejudice and narrowness of spirit, and that you had instanced some artists who ought to have been elected, mentioning specially Ford Madox Brown, and that when I had asked whether you intended to compete you stated distinctly that you would not stand while he was left outside; after I had said this the voting proceeded and the choice fell upon others. The ballot was announced, and when all was supposed to be settled, Mr. Knight got up saying he had just learned that the voting had taken place with the understanding that the name of Hunt was not that of the Pre-Raphaelite, and that this was a mistake, because you had yourself left your name with him; on this it was decided the votes should be re-taken; it was done, but as you only gained one vote the result was all the same."

"It was four or five years ago," I replied, "when I spoke to you of Brown's claim, he then exhibited frequently at the Academy, he had been known since 1844 as an important artist; since 1852, when his picture of 'Christ washing Peter's Feet' was hung up near the ceiling, he has only appeared once at the Academy with a picture called 'Waiting,' three pictures that he sent in 1854 were rejected, and he has determined never to send again, or to desire the honours of the Academy. I have gone on steadily sending there, so the case in relation to Brown and myself is changed; however, the decision is in accord with the policy of the schemers in the Institution, who elected Millais to break up our combination. They would now keep me paying court to the Academy until I

[1] The admirable landscape painter, Alfred Hunt, was then only a new exhibitor.

had been induced to give up all originality. I am not made of such stuff, I shall not stand for election any more, unless the Academy be fundamentally reformed, ceasing to be introelective, with membership for life. Instead of this there should be proportionate control by the general profession, and a quinquennial curtailment of membership. Only with such differences could safety be obtained from the manœuvres of those members who know that their fortunes would be doomed by the admission of artists with original ideas. I do not underrate the Academy's power against outsiders, but at this time it is not quite what it used to be. With men like Linnell, Watts, Brown, Rossetti, and Leighton outside, I hope we shall be able to stand. I am grateful to the Academy for the benefits I received from it as a student, and I have great admiration for several of your members, but their little word has but weight against the intriguers within its walls, who pervert the honourable objects of the Institution. An Academy to justify its existence should lead public taste, not follow it."

My assailant here said, that he knew many who on being disappointed had declared that they would never again be candidates, but on the next opportunity had stood for election.

The result of my experiment as a candidate only made me more resolved patiently to go my own way, and trust for some good to come in the future, far or near, from my independence. What it might be I could not tell, but I still intended to follow the example of those outsiders who still exhibited at the Academy.

Were I to be silent about my rejection by the Academy it might be thought that I was anxious to have the world forget. In publishing it I disavow all sort of resentment against the body for their treatment of me. I had dared to think for myself and to make no promise of amendment; in punishing me they acted according to their light. Undoubtedly it made a great increase of trouble in the struggle to overcome the prejudice of patrons, but I had

the consolation through all of feeling that the value of the recognition which my works did or might gain from the public without the Academy's fashionable cachet was more likely to last and to increase in future days than it might do, did it come with encouragement from the powers in authority. I must run the risk of egoism in saying that I thought my claim a strong one. If I am wrong, later generations will justly silence my pretensions with forgetfulness. The unerring future not seldom reverses the verdict of the once-reigning world.

My application of 1856 was made after I had exhibited annually, with two exceptions, since 1845—that is nine times, and in some of these years I had contributed three and four pictures, most of which had attracted as much attention as any works exhibited. I had patiently taken severe treatment so long, that the rancour the Academy had indulged in early days might well have died out. It was not the majority of its members who entertained bitter hostility ; it was the crafty activity of about a dozen men, whose names would not now be recognised as those of artists at all, who directed it. Privately I was on friendly terms with many members. It was then necessary for candidates to offer their names annually. I continued to exhibit at the Academy for many years pictures not secured by dealers for special exhibition, and I did so until I found that the unwritten law was, "Love me all in all or not at all."

Plants which grow afield are scourged with frost and bleak winds and do not early captivate the eye, but when acclimatised, they blossom and bear full flavoured fruit, while the exotic plant is cold-stricken and dies, if the temperature of the conservatory is lost. Yet, as the art world was constituted, with all its prejudices, there could be no blinding one's eyes to the increasing difficulties of my present position. A new associate of the Academy immediately received an accession of demand for his works, and had I been distinguished by the badge of Academy favour, I could have counted upon the prejudice

against my work by rich collectors being turned into approval and patronage. My position now was like that of a huntsman pursued by wolves, having to throw away his belongings one by one to enable him to keep ahead of destruction.