CHAPTER V

1847

Persist if thou wouldst reach thine ends,
For failures oft are but advising friends.
Every failure is a step advanced
To him who will consider how it chanced.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Whenever you have to do a favour, do not, as some are tempted to do, dwell upon the greatness of the sacrifice you make ; but on receiving a kindness do not omit to recognise your benefactor's generosity.—HINTS ON ETIQUETTE BY A LADY OF QUALITY (1840).

AT twenty, one may not only be happy in a garret, but all the opportunities of life come more richly and the hours last longer for effort than in later days. Backward as I was with my intended contribution to the Academy of "The Eve of St. Agnes," I saw no reason at first to give up my attendance at the evening Life School. Coming home at nine, I worked on my canvas by the light of a lamp. The architecture I had to paint with but little help of solid models, but the bough of mistletoe was hung up so that I might get the approximate night effect upon it ; the bloodhounds I painted from a couple possessed by my friend, Mr. J. B. Price ; my fellow-student, James Key, sat to me for the figure of the sleeping page and for the hands of Porphyro, so I was enabled to advance the picture with but little outlay. Still I was pinched both for want of time and money. Some days in each week I had to sacrifice to paint a

The Eve of St. Agnes.

portrait. When I was able to work at home in the morning, a visitor who had been brought by Mr. F. G. Stephens occasionally came; he used to sit by the fire without giving any sign that he cared for my painting. His discourse was of country places, of old churches and their architectural features, of brasses, monuments, and other antiquarian matters of rare interest to me. Yet it seemed unaccountable that he should find any pleasure in coming to warm and air his memory at my glow-worm of a hearth; but blind as his choice was, it seemed impelled by kind Fate, as the sequel in time showed. The date for sending in works came alarmingly near. Millais had progressed more bravely than I, but he had yet more to do, and we agreed that neither of us could finish without working far into, and even all through, the last nights. For company's sake, he invited me to bring my picture to his studio; his parents also urged this, and so we worked, encouraging one another hour by hour. On one occasion, becoming fatigued, he suddenly, with boyish whim, conceived a prejudice against the task of painting some drapery about the figures which had still to be done, and entreated me to relieve him. "Do, like a dear fellow, work out these folds for me; you shan't lose time, for I'll do one of the heads of your revellers for you." His father was called in as his model, and I can to this day distinguish the part he did for me, adapting his handling to my manipulation by precise touch. The head of the baron in the host's chair at the table, and the left hand of the man throwing his body back towards the spectator, were his work, while I did a part of the drapery of the Iphigenia.

When all the inmates of the house were sleeping we were still steadily working. Occasionally we refreshed ourselves with a little coffee; it was this, perhaps, which gave us extra energy for talk about the new views we had ventured to form of the art which in other circles was esteemed as above judgment, and of the ideals we were raising up for ourselves. There was perhaps much boyish

bumptiousness in our verdicts upon the old art, and in our aspirations for the new, but we wrought out the reason of each question, intending that it should be tried in the fire. We revealed all our innermost thoughts to each other, and used our conclusions to form ardent resolves for the future. It is on quiet and confidential occasions such as this that burning convictions are tested and refined, and ours at this time were beaten upon the anvil of what experience we had already had. Here the scaling dross was shaken off, and the pure iron converted into tempered steel.

Often when standing before them we had talked over Raphael's cartoons; now we again reviewed our judgment of these noble designs. We did so fearlessly, but even when most daring we never forgot their claim to be honoured; we did not bow to the chorus of the blind, for when we advanced to our judgment on "The Transfiguration" we condemned it for its grandiose disregard of the simplicity of truth, the pompous posturing of the Apostles, and the unspiritual attitudinising of the Saviour. Treating of the strained and meaningless action of the epileptic, I quoted the arguments of Sir Charles Bell, saying, "You must read them for yourself."[1] In our final estimation this picture

[1] "Two of our greatest painters, Raphael and Domenichino, have painted demoniacal boys. In the convent of Grotto Ferraba, in the neighbourhood of Rome, Domenichino has represented St. Nilus in the act of relieving a lad possessed. The Saint, an old man, is on his knees in prayer; the lad is raised and held up by an aged man, the mother with a child is waiting the consummation of the miracle. Convulsions have seized the lad; he is rigidly bent back, the lower limbs spasmodically extended so that only his toes rest on the ground; the eyes are distorted; the pupils turned up under the eyelids. This would be the position of Opisthotonos, were not the hands spread abroad, the palms and fingers open, and the jaw fallen. Had the representation been perfectly true to nature, the jaws would have been clenched and the teeth grinding. But then the miracle could not have been represented, for one, under the direction of the Saint, has the finger of his left hand in the boy's mouth, and the other holds a vessel of oil with which the tongue is to be touched, and the grandeur of the old man makes this one of the most admired paintings in Italy.

"I have here given a sketch of the true Opisthotonos, where it is seen that all the muscles are rigidly contracted, the more powerful flexors prevailing over the extensors. Were the painter to represent every circumstance faithfully, the effect might be too painful, and something must be left to the taste and imagination. The original sketch is in the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. I took it from soldiers wounded in the head at the battle of Corunna. Three men were similarly hurt, and in short successive intervals similarly affected, so that the character could not be mistaken.

"In the same painter's great picture of 'The Transfiguration' in the Vatican there is a lad possessed, and in convulsions. I hope I am not insensible to the beauties of that picture, nor presumptuous in saying that the figure is not natural. A physician would conclude that this youth was feigning. He is, I presume, convulsed; he is stiffened with contractions and his eyes are turned in their sockets. But no child was ever so affected. In real convulsions the extensor muscles yield to the more powerful contractions of the flexor muscles; whereas, in the picture, the lad extends his arms, and the fingers of the left hand are stretched unnaturally backwards. Nor do the lower extremities correspond with truth; he stands firm; the eyes are not natural; they should have been turned more inwards, as looking into the head, and partially buried under the forehead. The mouth, too, is open, which is quite at variance with the general condition, and without the apology which Domenichino had. The muscles of the arms are exaggerated to a degree which Michael Angelo never attempted; and still it is the extensors and supinators, and not the flexors, which are thus prominent."—Bell's *Anatomy of Expression*.

was a signal step in the decadence of Italian art. When we had advanced this opinion to other students, they as a *reductio ad absurdam* had said, "Then you are Pre-Raphaelite." Referring to this as we worked side by side, Millais and I laughingly agreed that the designation must be accepted.

On the date for receiving the works of outsiders at the Academy, our pictures were forwarded, literally at the eleventh hour of the night, and very glad each of us was to go to his long-neglected bed.

The first use which Millais and I made of our release from the pressure of work on a succeeding morning was to accompany the noted Chartist procession; it marched from Russell Square across Blackfriars Bridge to Kennington Common; we did not venture on to the grass with the agitators, but, standing up on the cross rails outside the enclosure, we could see the gesticulations of the orators as they came forward on the van drawn up in the centre of the green. When the address was beginning to evoke tumultuous cheers, a solitary policeman, square and tall, appeared from the northern corner, walked through the dense artisan crowd to the foremost stand, and beckoned to Fergus O'Connor to return with him to the Superintendent of Police, under assurance of non-

detention. I felt respect for both men and for the crowd as the speaker quietly descended, and a lane was made by the thousands present, while the two walked over the common as staidly as though they alone were on the ground. The Chartist champion was detained only a few minutes. He came back by himself, knowing that concealed measures had been taken to quell any outbreak of disturbance, and that the roofs of the neighbouring houses were manned with riflemen. On re-ascending the van, he advised the law-abiding people to disperse, which they did without delay. We essayed to return by the road we had come, but at Blackfriars Bridge a cordon of police barred further passage. We turned towards Bankside. Here at the entrance a set of stalwart roughs armed with bludgeons were determined to have their fight, and we heard, as we were about to pass, the sound of bloody strife. Who that has heard such even in its mildest form can forget the hurtle? We felt the temptation to see the issue, and Millais could scarcely resist pressing forward, but I knew how in a moment all present might be involved in a fatal penalty. I had promised to keep him out of wanton danger, but it was not without urgent persuasion that I could get him away. We went along, accompanied by but few of the crowd, till we reached London Bridge; passing this we arrived at the Bank of England and the Mansion House, crested with sand-bags to mask the soldiery. We succeeded on our round in gaining a thorough knowledge of the state of affairs. Returning by way of Holborn, the sombre sky opened its silent artillery on us with spots of rain as large as grape shot, and cleared the streets of agitators, mischief-makers, and idlers alike. With the last we scampered home as swiftly as any of the reformers.

Neither of us lost time. Millais, with his ready power of drawing, was impatient to produce some new composition. We were each of us members of the Cyclographic Club; according to the rules, a design had to be furnished about once every month, together with a criticism upon

the drawings of other members; this criticism was taken out by the artist with his drawing when the portfolio came back for a further contribution. For some reason I had never attended any meetings, nor did I hear of any from Millais or other members.

William Rossetti, however, speaks of a meeting which he attended with his brother. I know it was about this date that when the portfolio was opened at Millais' house, some designs of D. G. Rossetti's attracted our regard as

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RUTH AND BOAZ.

an exception to the general level of the contributions, which could not be considered high in character; indeed the Club was already in danger of splitting up, owing to the glaring incompetence of about three-quarters of its members, and the too unrestrained ridicule of the remainder.

Millais had now become as ardent an admirer of Keats as myself, and we soon resolved to begin a series of illustrations in slightly shaded outline; we worked these with a fine brush in line in preference to a pen for the sake of greater freedom. The drawings were to be preparations

for copperplate etchings in illustration of the magnificent poem of *Isabella*. Before I could attend to such work, I had to replenish my empty purse by portrait painting of the dullest kind ; and the design for Rienzi, which I had determined upon as the subject of my next picture, being more urgent than the etching designs, I devoted the first hours I could steal, to its composition and to making an independent sketch in oil of its colour scheme. While I had made thus but scant progress with my Keats outline, Millais had completed his. We could not apply ourselves to finishing the whole Keats series until we could hope to tempt a publisher to co-operate with us in the venture.

Living near the British Museum, I went there whenever I could ; I was now advanced enough to make riper use of it than when I first began to draw there ; the rooms were then thronged with a band of youths so warmly intimate, that they seemed destined to be companions for life ; but already their haunts knew them no more, and their places were taken by blank staring strangers.

When, after the lapse of fifty years, I walk again among the unchangeable masterpieces of antiquity, all the old familiar faces of my fellow-students are close around me. I see them still with their imagined futures unopened ; and then a second scroll unrolls with those whom I have known in later life, in which the circumstances of the actual lives appear, and the younger and the older man seem strangers to one another.

My first art friend, James Key, I met originally at the city portrait painter's ; later I walked with him to and from Montague House,[1] not without profit to myself. Eventually he went into the Wesleyan Church ; now he is pastor at St. Petersburg, and a man of most estimable influence. Another fellow-pupil in the city studio was a youth, a year or two our senior ; he had large prominent eyes, full features, swarthy complexion,

[1] Montague House, out of which was then being formed the British Museum.

and was of Semitic type. He talked proudly of his privileges behind the scenes of theatres with a somewhat precocious manliness. His name has since become of repute as the author of *The Dead Heart*. I met him later, and found him then ambitious of literary as well as artistic fame ; yet I did not at that time see signs of that publicity which Watts Phillips, as a dramatist, was to achieve in the end, and which indeed did not come fully till some years after his death. At the Museum there was one tall, handsome youth, with full yellow hair and clear blue eyes, who could never be forgotten ; he drew with great earnestness, capacity, and modesty. His name was Tom Muloch ; and frequently his sister Dinah, the authoress of *John Halifax*, would sit by his side. He died quite young.

When the Academy Hanging Committee had completed their work I was surprised and distressed to learn that Millais' painting of "Cymon and Iphigenia" had not been placed. The only justification could have been that the work was incomplete. He was exceedingly brave about the disappointment, and—as was characteristic with him throughout life on encountering any check to success—he was very reticent on the subject, and now he hid the picture away. My picture of "The Eve of St. Agnes," being not nearly so large, had more easily met with better fortune, notwithstanding the absence of close finish. It was hung somewhat high up in the Architectural Room, but in a good light, as was proved on the touching-up morning by the amount of attention which fellow-exhibitors bestowed upon it.

Millais had gone out of town at this time—partly, if I remember right, to arrange about a commission for the execution of a series of paintings in monochrome at Leeds. Before returning to town he stayed at Oxford and Shotover till the end of summer.

Rossetti came up to me, repeating with emphasis his praise, and loudly declaring that my picture of "The Eve of St. Agnes" was the best in the collection. Probably the

fact that the subject was taken from Keats made him the more unrestrained, for I think no one had ever before painted any subject from this still little-known poet.

No other copies of his works than those published in his lifetime had yet appeared. These were in mill-board covers, and I had found mine in book-bins labelled "this lot 4d."[1] Rossetti frankly proposed to come and see me. Before this I had been only on nodding terms with him in the schools, to which he came but rarely and irregularly. He had always attracted there a following of clamorous students, who, like Millais' throng, were rewarded with original sketches. Rossetti's subjects were of a different class from Millais, not of newly culled facts, but of knights rescuing ladies, of lovers in mediæval dress, illustrating stirring incidents of romantic poets; in manner they resembled Gilbert's book designs.[2] His flock of impatient petitioners had always barred me from approaching him. Once indeed I had found him alone, perched on some steps stretched across my path, drawing in his sketch-book a single female figure from the gates of Ghiberti. I had recently been attentively drawing some of the groups for their expression and arrangement, and I told Rossetti then how eloquent the Keeper had been in his comments on seeing me at work from the group of "The Finding of the Cup in Benjamin's Sack," saying that Ghiberti's principles of composition were in advance of his time in their variety of groupings, and that his great successors had all profoundly profited by these examples. As an instance he had pointed out how Raphael in the cartoon of "The Charge to St. Peter" had put a little quirk of drapery projecting out under the elbow of the last disciple on the right to break the vertical line of the figure,

[1] In the article I wrote in the *Contemporary Review* I mentioned that the volume had been lost by lending. A hitherto unknown friend, on reading this statement, most generously made me the possessor of a daintily bound volume in place of my original copy.

G. F. Watts had quoted some lines of Keats to his exquisite figure of "Echo."

[2] A later recurrence to this manner of drawing may be found on page 115.

just as Ghiberti had here introduced the ass with projecting pannier for the same purpose. The Keeper for these reasons regretted that the gates were not more often studied by young painters. Thus chatting and dilating on these quattrocento epochal masterpieces and their fascinating merits gave us subject for a few minutes' talk; but our common enthusiasm for Keats brought us into intimate relations.

A few days more, and Rossetti was in my studio. I showed him all my pictures and studies, even those I had put aside for the nonce, which, at the stage I had entered upon of advance by leaps and bounds, often involved final abandonment; for in youth a month, and even a day in some cases, is an age in which, for all inventive purpose, the past acts as a sepulchre to its idea. My last designs and experiments I rejoiced to display before a man of his poetic instincts; and it was pleasant to hear him repeat my propositions and theories in his own richer phrase. I showed him my new picture of "Rienzi," in the painting of which at the outset I was putting in practice the principle of rejection of conventional dogma, and pursuing that of direct application to Nature for each feature, however humble a part of foreground or background this might be. I justified the doing of this thoroughly as the only sure means of eradicating the stereotyped tricks of decadent schools, and of any conventions not recommended by experienced personal judgment.

While engaged on the question of the practice of painting, he confessed to me that he was very disheartened about his position. He had, some short time ago, applied to Madox Brown to take him as a pupil. This the established artist had generously agreed to do on terms of amity. In accordance with all sound precedent, the master had set him to copy a painting of his own of two cherub angels watching the crown of thorns, and this he had managed to finish. The next task was a study of still life from a group of bottles[1] and other

[1] See p. 108.

objects which happened to be lying about in the studio. This discipline Rossetti had found so abhorrent that it had tormented his soul beyond power of endurance.

STUDY OF BOTTLES, BY D. G. ROSSETTI UNDER F. M. BROWN, WITH FIGURE SKETCHED YEARS AFTERWARDS.

Thus disheartened, he had given up painting for the time and had turned for counsel to Leigh Hunt, asking him to read his small collection of poems, and to tell him whether

he might not hope to rely upon poetry for his bread. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness." My namesake had replied about the verses in the most appreciative manner, but implored him, if he had any prospect whatever as a painter, on no account to give it up, since the fortunes of an unfriended poet in modern days were too pitiable to be risked.[1] Rossetti had thus been again driven to painting. In subsequent visits I learnt that he had not returned to Brown, but had been working alone at the studio of Hancock, a sculptor fellow-student, and there he had broken down again. "Was it necessary," he asked plaintively, "to go again to still life?" I assured him of my great deference to the judgment of his master, adding that although, in ordinary cases, I should prescribe the same course to any pupil, for him I should try whether the object might not be gained by leaving him to choose one of his recent designs (seen and admired by Millais and myself as they had come round in the folio of the Cyclographic Club), and that with the composition put upon canvas, the painting should be begun with the still life. I believed that invested with vital interest

[1] W. M. Rossetti in the Life of his brother, commenting upon the above statement, shows that Leigh Hunt's reply—which he gives—was dated March 31, 1848, and in it he excuses his delay in writing, and explains that Gabriel's letter to Brown was only sent in March. He adds, "Looking at these dates, I rather question whether his communication to Leigh Hunt could have been consequent upon his affliction over the pickle jars." Now let us scrutinise the possibilities. Say the elder poet had received Gabriel's letter on the 20th, this would quite account for the phrase "at length" used in the answer, seeing that it was written from only one postal district to another on the same side of London, and then there would have been twenty days for the young pupil to have received Brown's visit and to have grown impatient at the discipline imposed, and W. M. R. will agree that if other youths were slow in making up their minds about the abhorrent nature of a task, his brother was not. The visit to me would not have been earlier than the 10th May, so that after Leigh Hunt's counsel to return to painting, Rossetti would have had another six weeks of bitter experience and despairing cogitation upon the possibility of enduring Brown's tedious discipline. The dates, in fact, show why the question was such a burning one with him. I am glad of this occasion to point out that, with desire to be concise in the articles referred to by Mr. W. M. Rossetti (the first of which was of necessity corrected for the printers only by Mr. Quilter), the appeal which D. G. Rossetti made to me to take him as a pupil may have appeared to anticipate the request made by him at a later date.

as links in an idea to be welded together, he would find each day's labour interesting and instructive until he had acquired sufficient proficiency to paint the figures in the picture. This suggestion he accepted with unbounded delight, and wanted at once to put it in practice, asking whether he might come and be directed in my studio. For many reasons it was then impossible to agree to this proposal, principally because I had already a professed painting pupil, whose family had conjured me to help him, and it would have been impossible to do my own work with two *habitués* together; but I promised to come to him, and explain all from time to time as he progressed.

I was then living with my parents in a house, in the lower part of which was an upholsterer's show-room. The articles and the furniture and hangings there displayed could not but challenge observation as wanting in artistic taste to a degree greater than could be found in any previous age or country whatever. With my practical experience in designing patterns for fabrics, I had grown to regard all decorative design as part of a true artist's ambition, and I declared that until our craft again employed itself in devising beautiful forms, taste in furniture, in costume, and even in architecture would remain as bad as, or grow worse than it had been for the last fifty years, during which time the practice of design had been left to tradesmen only. The employment of Flaxman and Stothard fifty years before was the last example of artistic devotion to decorative design, and since then painters and sculptors had given their attention exclusively to imitative art.

In the interval of chat upon questions of our profession Rossetti produced a manuscript copy of his own poems, amongst others *The Blessed Damozel*, *My Sister's Sleep*, and *Jenny*. They were not so complete as in their later forms, the first poem being shorter. He urged that I should read them critically, and give him my frank opinion of them. He drew the confession from me that I wrote verses, which indeed I did only to

record impressions of Nature, in simple couplets, or at the most in the Spenserian stanza, and these would not here be mentioned except as prelude to the avowal that his advanced proficiency, and what seemed to me professional facility, had the effect of preventing my further indulgence in verse of any form.

To provide funds, I had again to apply myself to portrait painting, but when the list of Art Union prize-holders was published, there seemed a possibility of good fortune in the fact that Mr. Bridger, my idle visitor during the progress of "The Eve of St. Agnes," had obtained a prize of £70 with which to purchase a picture from the current exhibitions. The amount being the exact price I had instructed the Secretary to put on my picture, I wrote thereupon to the prize-owner pointing out the coincidence, and saying that it would make me very happy if he did me the honour of selecting my work. His reply was, curtly, that he should look at all the pictures, that if any other was better he should select that; otherwise he might take mine. This left me under pressure to work for immediate means, but in the end Mr. Bridger bought the picture.

My uncle having generously refused to accept repayment of the money he had provided for the frame of the Keats picture, I now had funds—about seventy-eight pounds—with which to make a start in life. I had not, however, lost the summer for my picture, for seeing that there was a fig tree in the garden of Mr. Stephens's father at Lambeth, I had accepted an invitation to bring the canvas there, and had painted the tree direct upon it, its leaves and branches in full sunlight, with what was then unprecedented exactness. In the foreground I painted also a patch of grass with dandelion puffs and blossoms, and over one of these last a bumble-bee hovered with gold and dun banded body; this was afterwards held up by the orthodox as a mark of the pettiness of our aims, and by less impatient critics it was asked whether it did not stand for the last letter in our mystic monogram P.R.B. Being determined that the new picture should go further in

obedience to my advancing aims, instead of the meaningless spread of whitey brown which usually served for the near ground, I represented gravelly variations and pebbles, all diverse in tints and shapes as found in Nature. While the fine weather still lasted, I also gained the opportunity to paint a row of young saplings on a sloping hillside of grass spangled with blossoms and flowers run to seed. Beyond the line of the slanting field I introduced the top of a foliated tree; these latter features were painted at Hampstead. They were done thus directly and frankly, not merely for the charm of minute finish, but as a means of studying more deeply Nature's principles of design, and to escape the conventional treatment of landscape backgrounds.

I had now determined to quit my father's house, so as to be more free for my work. Immediately Rossetti heard of my resolution he again broached the project of working under me for my hourly superintendence and instruction in painting. He had, so far, made no way in the new plan of work. This he accounted for by his want of confidence in himself; he did not believe that my daily visits to his house alone would serve. He proposed now that he should pay half the rent of the studio and so reduce my expenses; but I had provided myself with a turn-down couch to sleep upon in my studio, and I wished to adhere to my plan without further explanation to any one. However, at a later interview I gave way to his insistence, and arranged to make the required additional space by taking a bedroom in the upper storey of the house, he paying a portion of the studio rent.

While we were giving orders for the preparation of the room, Rossetti, whose enthusiasm for our principles grew with greater familiarity, talked much of Woolner as one to whom he had explained the resolution of Millais and myself to turn more devotedly to Nature as the one means of purifying modern art, and said that Woolner had declared the system to be the only one that could reform sculpture, and that therefore he wished to be enrolled with

us. Woolner occupied the next studio to that of Hancock, the young sculptor who had allowed Rossetti to paint in his workroom. Woolner was somewhat beyond me in

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STUDY OF MILLAIS FOR RIENZI PICTURE.

age, about five feet eight in height, and of robust build; he had thick blond hair inclining to brown, and with his dark eyes he was a well-looking youth; I recognised him as one whom I had seen visiting the Elgin Room at the

British Museum. He had an expression of great self-confidence, which his manner and talk accentuated. He turned from a bust that he was carving, chisel in hand, and as daylight had not yet gone, marble dust could be seen upon his face and clothes. He was then working for a fashionable bust-maker, who had allowed him to bring the block of marble with the cast to his own studio ; he divided the room, which was large, with another sculptor, Bernard Smith, whose massive size formed a great contrast to the small bas-reliefs he was designing.

Woolner, on the other hand, had erected a giant figure ten feet high, abandoned for the nonce and swathed in its damp cloth ; some smaller work (a model of Puck, for example) he showed us with much paternal fondness. When darkness came on we talked about the varieties of poetry, and travestied by joint composition the most blatant and vapid of its kind.

My new quarters had to be put in order. The white-washing and colour-washing still not being completed by the expected date, we spent one day in a visit to Rochester Castle, and on the morrow we went down the Thames to Greenwich (reading Monckton Milne's *Life and Letters of Keats* on the way), and thence to Black-heath to sketch ; Rossetti began, but soon turned to writing poetry. After this holiday I resumed work in the renovated painting-room at the end of August 1848, with Rossetti as my painting pupil and companion.

The subject for my new picture was suggested by Bulwer's romance, which gives, with but little garnishing, the facts of Rienzi's early life. Like most young men, I was stirred by the spirit of freedom of the passing revolutionary time. The appeal to Heaven against the tyranny exercised over the poor and helpless seemed well fitted for pictorial treatment. "How long, O Lord!" many bleeding souls were crying at that time. The composition of the picture necessitated patient working out of parts in separate studies. For the sake of get-ting the foreground and hillside completed while the

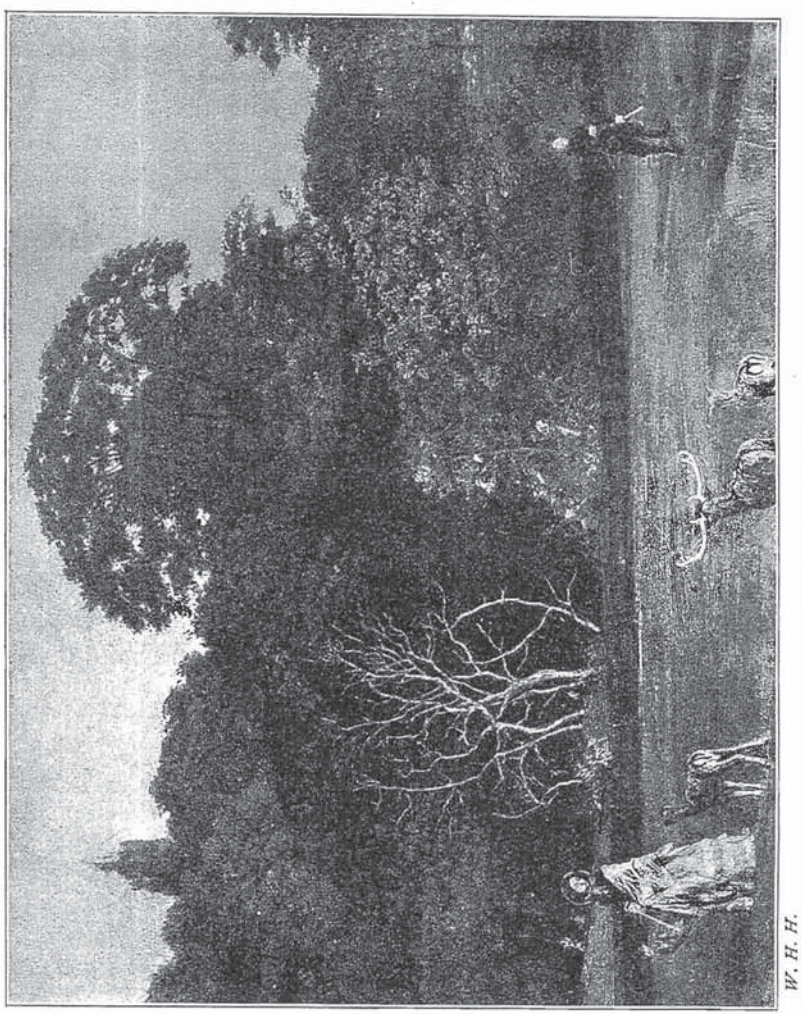
summer lasted, I had deferred drawing some of the figures from the nude, and these I now set myself to do. The costumes, armour, and distant architecture needed research, and this made the task longer and more costly than many that might have been undertaken. My good friend, who had helped me with originals for blood-hounds in my last picture, now supplied me with models for the horses. For the shields and spears I went with my canvas to the Tower.

SKETCH BY D. G. ROSSETTI (1848).

Before Rossetti had well got to work in my studio, and while the autumn still left light for the evening meal, I once returned from the Academy class at dusk and found Gabriel—for this was his name when his brother was also of the circle—and Thomas Woolner in possession. When I entered, the latter was finishing the survey of my abandoned picture of "Christ and the Two Maries," which Gabriel, without my having authorised him to do, had turned round for inspection. I felt so much irritation at this unforeseen consequence of having a pupil as a fellow-tenant, that I would scarcely trust myself to notice this

breach of etiquette; I turned the canvas again to the wall, and talked on other topics.

Woolner, who had lately returned from a brief visit to Paris, produced a case of brown wood bound with bright brass, and containing an elegant clay pipe, stamped on the heel of the bowl 46, a number held sacred, as was explained, by student smokers in the French capital. Of Caparal tobacco he had still a precious remnant; he took out the prized calumet with a dainty care such as a lady displays in handling a fragile jewel; his flexible fingers and thumbs were developed by habit of delicate manipulation as a sculptor. The merit of the elegant clay it was natural for a modeller to appreciate, but the love for the rank tobacco was artistic only in the proof it gave of Parisian Bohemian taste. He expressed enthusiastic admiration of the works of Ary Scheffer, and was proud of having spoken to the artist himself. From the first there could be no doubt of Woolner's gifts as a *raconteur*, but the art for which he entertained such admiration left it yet uncertain whether he had the spirit to swim against the stream. In the Westminster Hall competition the sculptor, then quite a youngster, had sent a small model of Queen Eleanor sucking the poison from the king's arm, and this had given him an opportunity of making acquaintance with some distinguished men, who were of great interest to young artists like ourselves. He told stories which brought these stars into tangible shape and substance, but his telescopic powers reached even further, and the illumination he shed on the heroes more remote from our ken equally delighted us. Of his master Behnes he expressed the highest appreciation as an artist, an opinion which he justified by reference to early work, such as the bust of the Queen as a child. While Woolner was still a boy in Behnes's studio, Haydon was leaving after a visit, and the pupil reverently hastened to hold the door open to him as an honoured guest; the painter, not satisfied at simply acknowledging this courtesy, turned and examined the boy's cranium, and based on



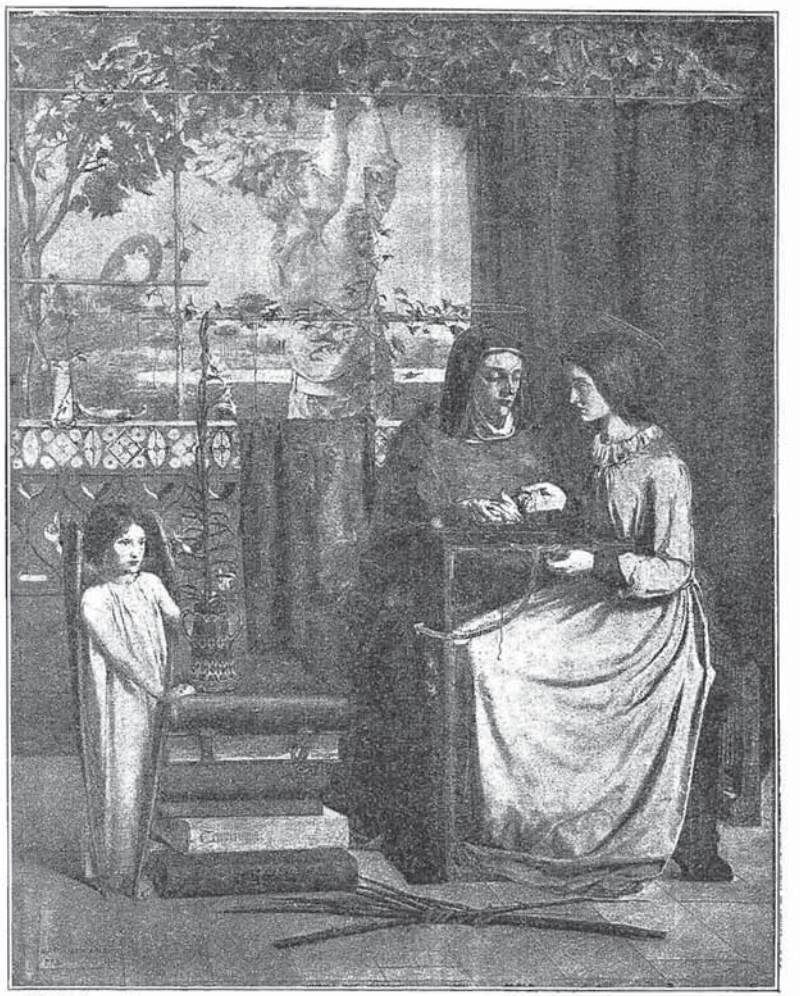
BLACKHEATH PARK.

W. H. H.

its bumps words of encouragement as to his future possibilities.

G. F. Watts, who had gone to Italy, had become a mystery to us ; he had been a fellow-student at the Academy with Woolner, who, to our gratification, soon removed the obscurity investing him. Of all artists of the same standing, F. R. Pickersgill had won Woolner's highest admiration. His worship, however, was given then, and indeed afterwards, to Mulready of all English artists, and he spoke of works of his which I had not then seen. The one called "Train up a Child in the Way he should go," he pronounced as unsurpassable, particularly for the beauty of the women; personally I also think much may be said of the charm of certain passages in its colour. He related stories of a painter, Duncan, who had died young, but who had been known to be of the most brilliant genius. At his death his designs had fallen into the hands of his surviving compeers, who had by their use gained reputations quite beyond their powers to keep up. Woolner was thus early constantly challenging our poorer credulity, but beyond doubt our new friend was an entertaining reporter of the professional opinions of the time, while the unswerving faith he expressed in his own intended purpose did not fail to impress us with confidence in his future.

Rossetti had chosen his subject for painting from three prepared designs, "Margaret in Church" from Goethe's *Faust*, "The Girlhood of the Virgin," and Coleridge's "Genevieve"; he had preferred the second. The first step for him was to make studies from the nude of all the figures, and transfer these to the canvas. To induce him to put the perspective right was, from this stage throughout, a business needing constant argument. In general terms he denounced the science, and objected strongly to each result of its application, declaring that what it proved to be wrong was obviously better. The painting process was commenced with the architectural wall and pavement, and Gabriel brought weighty tomes



D. G. Rossetti.

GIRLHOOD OF THE VIRGIN.

from home for the books on which the vase with its lily stood. When a little advance was thus made, I advised him, ere the season grew too late, to find a conservatory in which he could paint the vine, and for this part of his work he was absent about a week. He brought the painting back with foliage bearing clear evidence in the intensity of its hue that the paint he had used was too crudely emerald green, but it was resolved that this should stand unmodified for a time while he progressed with the embroidery and its frame. So far the plan of work for Rossetti promised all that we had hoped of it.

To Rossetti's occasional expressions of unbounded enthusiasm for Brown's past works I could not always give unmodified approval. I had seen his cartoon of "The Body of Harold brought before William the Conqueror," and had greatly admired the artistic qualities of the work; the drawing was robust and nervous, and the costume was treated with manly taste, giving actuality to the historic scene; the colour as seen in the large study painted with wax was honest and acceptable, and although without mysterious charm of hue, altogether appropriate and sound. These merits were not alone powerful in fixing the design on the memory, but Brown had adopted a glaringly unreasonable reading of the fact that William went into battle with the bones of the saints round his neck, over which relics Harold had made his renunciation of the crown. Instead of painting a reliquary, he had hung femur, tibia, humerus, and other large bones dangling loose on the hero's breast, surely a formidable encumbrance both to riding and fighting. In the lower corner of the picture were a Norman and Saxon engaged in a final struggle, the uppermost biting the throat of the lower, while the latter, with both arms stretched around his foe, was drawing with all his force the blade of a huge dagger deep into his enemy's back. These grotesque incidents in the first of his works seen by me somewhat counterbalanced the merits I saw in the conception, and tended to puzzle spectators by no means narrow in taste.

His other contribution to Westminster Hall was a cartoon of about 14 feet in height, illustrating the Spirit of Justice; the upper portion of the composition was occupied by Justice and her attendant virtues personified; these were well designed and drawn gracefully. The lower part of the cartoon was devoted to the accused and the accusers, and in these much demanded admiration, but attention was distracted by the Gothic quaintness of the central design, in which figured four knights armed *cap-à-pie*, and arranged at equal distances symmetrically in a row across the picture, their faces covered by large tilting-helms inclined alternately to the right and left; but even to those who saw these peculiarities as defects, the whole design had the counterbalancing merit of grace and vitality.

I had neither the time nor the means of visiting stray exhibitions to follow up Brown's works, but somewhere I saw his earlier large painting of "The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots." There were parts in this justifying the early expectations of him, but it had lugubrious elements of tragedy without stirring an emotion of pity. The painting was burdened with black velvet robes and over-sized pearls. The surface had what, at the time, marked the Baron Wappers School, a greasy sheen rather than the crystalline lustre of varnish, and had to be accepted as a Continental big boy aspiration inspired by the fashion for such subjects as the executions of monarchs being then the rage even in England.

In the British Institution, where I also exhibited, I next saw Brown's picture of "Parisina." It had been painted, as was then usual on the Continent, for lamplight effects, with the subject lit up in an inner chamber, the canvas being outside in daylight, a condition which forced the artist to give a hot glare on the group much in excess of that observable when estimating the tone in the lamplight itself. The painting throughout was accomplished and facile; the drawing defied criticism as to correctness, but not as to grace and beauty. The surface was less

unctuous in its sheen than was the earlier picture, but the gloom was without mystery or transparency; the style was a combination of that of Rembrandt and Rubens as interpreted by the then leaders of the Belgian School. The subject, objectionable even in verse, was incalculably more so when realised on canvas. From his Flemish manner he turned to that then flourishing in Munich, and, lastly, faced about to the opposite of his Antwerpian mode, to the new school under Overbeck and others, who set themselves to imitate all the child-like immaturities and limitations of the German and Italian quattrocentists. Brown, however, added quaintnesses which marked his strong vitality, but often did so without calm judgment, which left many of his true appreciators to wonder if he was not mocking them. There were in Brown two incongruous spirits, one, desire for combination with a power in favour with the world, the other in open defiance of sedate taste; with all his variableness it was certainly not then notable that he had become a seeker after new truths. It must be remembered that the originator of a new character of work does not attain to the perfection of his idea in a sudden revulsion from a previous practice, but, following a new conviction, he must test his way, advancing only by gradual steps until he reaches the new standard of excellence he has in mind. *The early Christian style*—the term used by himself—was first shown by him in two of his compositions, one an elaborate drawing some three feet in height and two in breadth, now entitled "Our Lady of Good Children," then known paradoxically as "Our Lady of Saturday Night," and a painting here reproduced from Rossetti's copy, "Cherub Angels watching the Crown of Thorns."

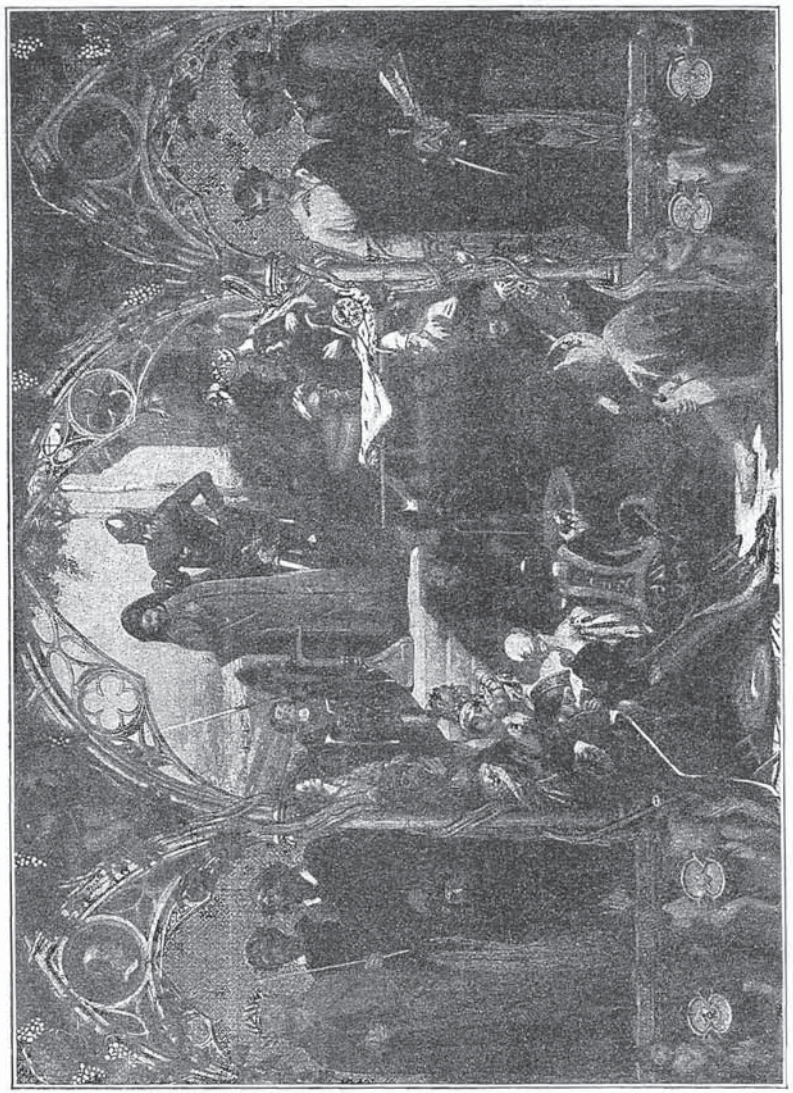
It will thus be seen that I had to form an estimate of Brown from much more meagre data than that which connoisseurs have at hand in our day. Rossetti's outbursts of enthusiasm, tempered as they were by frequent merriment and volleys of laughter at his late master's eccentricities, were received by me with due reserve.

However, the nervous force of Brown's first works had so impressed me that I felt there was under all his vagaries a strong manly independence, and I was glad when Gabriel suggested that we should go over and see him in his studio in Clipstone Street. He was my senior by about seven years. Being a widower, he lived alone in lodgings close at hand, while his infant daughter Lucy was nursed in the country by relatives. He had a small annuity which provided him with means to meet the expenses of his profession.

Gabriel's tone in speaking of Brown's present work was not so actively eulogistic as that adopted towards his earlier productions, although he had followed the master in his latest change of manner. His enthusiasm for certain of Brown's designs, made two or three years back, which illustrated Shakespeare's tragedy of *King Lear*, was expressed in the fullest measure.

The studio was down a mews, and had originally been a carpenter's workshop. The roof was made up in great part by a skylight, and the front was principally of glass. Brown managed with hangings and blinds to let the light in or keep it out as he wanted it. The painting in hand was "Chaucer reading his Poems to the Court of Edward the Third." The canvas occupied one angle of the studio from the floor to the ceiling; against the wall were two wings to the central composition, each about six feet wide and as high as the middle compartment. The surfaces of the last-named canvases were divided into Gothic arches to enshrine figures of poets of classic fame treated statuesquely; below were quatrefoil recesses, in which the names of other celebrities were displayed on medallions.

The story of Brown's first meeting with Gabriel, told me by the latter at the time, and narrated fully further on, will illustrate a certain captiousness and suspicion in the painter's temper, while it also shows the generous warmth of his heart. His deliberate manner of speech and the reserve of his demeanour at this first interview suggested



Ford Madox Brown. CHAUCER READING HIS POEMS AT THE COURT OF EDWARD III.

to me that he was offended at the manner of my intrusion between him and his former pupil. He had spoken generously to Rossetti of exhibited works of mine, so that I knew he had no former prejudice against me. I was too awkward and bashful to attempt to explain how unsought for on my part was my position as teacher of one whose pupilage under him had proved to be of but short duration. I now have my doubts as to whether Gabriel had deemed it expedient to explain the new arrangement at all; in any case, Brown's growing cordiality soon made it clear that no unfriendliness was intended.

It may appear presumptuous that I systematically examined the pretensions of my elders. That I should dare at first introduction to sit in judgment on an artist who had made such profitable use of his advantages may indeed savour of irreverence. I am obliged, therefore, to repeat that the first principle of Pre-Raphaelitism was to eschew all that was conventional in contemporary art, and that this compelled me to scrutinise every artist's productions critically. Impressed as I felt by his work as the product of individual genius, I found nothing indicative of a child-like reversion from existing schools to Nature herself.

The striking characteristic of Madox Brown's design in his large painting is, to use his own word, its architectonic construction. Had the composition he was then employed upon been for a wall divided into a triptych with spandrils on the side panels, the device for filling the spaces might have been approved, and would have defended him from the charge of artificiality of treatment; and the resemblance in the central design to a builder's elevation would not have seemed so uncalled for. In Germany, subject painters had conceived a passion, encouraged by mural practice, for groups built one upon the other and contoured against the background, as if cut out of cardboard. In the composition before us, with figures in the wings, attired conventionally, each part was so studiously balanced by an opposite quantity that the method of

construction forced itself laboriously upon attention, and thus oppressed the mind by the means employed to gain the effect, not at all recognising that only the veiling of the means to this end liberated the spectator's soul for the enjoyment of the idea treated. He ignored the admirable dictum, "Ars est celare artem." Thus this "Chaucer" design failed to represent the unaffected art of past time, and it stood before me as a recent mark of academic ingenuity which Pre-Raphaelitism in its larger power of enfranchisement was framed to overthrow. That no fixed condition as to size or shape of canvas led to the character of the composition was proved by "Wykliffe" Brown's last cabinet picture, in which, though in simpler form, the same symmetrical fashion was prevalent, as was conspicuous in engravings of Bendemann's picture, "Jeremiah weeping over the Ruins of Jerusalem," and Ary Scheffer's "Christ Consolateur," and others seen in every printseller's window at the time.

While I was silently revolving this judgment, Rossetti began a sweeping tirade, with what struck me as scant reverence, against the choice of poets in the side designs; growing quite warm, he declared that Shelley and Keats should have been whole-length full figures instead of Pope and Burns, and the introduction of Kirke White's name, he said, was ridiculous. Brown combated the criticism as unreasonable and new-fangled, but Gabriel urged his point with great heat until we took our leave. On our departure the young poet justified himself, saying that he knew "Bruno" would respect his opinion, because shortly before, when he had read his own poem of "My Sister's Sleep," the listener had been greatly affected.

By Brown's early return visit to my studio I was glad to find that my new acquaintance was not in any way offended with either of us. When he had finished his criticism on his old pupil, I was careful to ask him to give me the advantage of his impressions on my work. Frankly and kindly he made his comments; and as he enlarged upon the theme, he cited certain artists as

unappreciated whom he championed earnestly and humorously in turns, meanwhile indulging in playful irony upon what he termed my "microscopic detail."[1] He was the sincerest knight-errant that ever braved adventure in the search after rectification of vulgar opinion. As a critic he always gave weighty counsel, urged by careful reasoning and naïve anecdote.

As Woolner was a proposed new member of our Brotherhood (the story of the foundation of which has yet to be told), I went with the two Rossettis on a visit to his studio in Stanhope Street, where Bernard Smith remained of the party. Woolner with his work certainly filled more than his equal share of the chamber, which looked vast and boundless by night; he received and guided us through the labyrinth of modelling-stools, pails of clay, plaster moulds, and casts on our way to the stove. On every side were signs of his industry and energy. The colossal figure, never illumined by candle-light much above the knees, stood in mid-space. At this date Woolner was still working as a marble carver for others. While thus engaged, the large clay model, the object of his highest ambition, received attention only morning and night, when the wet cloths were changed and reapplied with the tenderness of a surgeon dressing a wound. It was an illustration to the text, "Lo, one generation passeth away, and another cometh"; the past generation was represented by a figure prostrate on the base, while the advancing epoch was striding over him somewhat disdainfully. The modelling had occupied many months of active study, and the author told us that when working at it in original fervour he had made his

[1] Perhaps a former reference to my acceptance of Brown's frankness of criticism on my pictures, like other frank tributes of mine to my compeers of the time, encouraged the conclusion that Brown was in fact the teacher of all, and that I admitted the pre-eminence of those to whom I paid compliment. This could only be assumed in ignorance of the custom of artists in their studios to invite the criticisms of any intelligent visitor who may, by unprejudiced observation, reveal any oversight which the complexities of the design have temporarily obscured from the eyes of the worker himself.

sleeping chamber of a spacious recess between the covering of the general passage and the rafters of the studio; this economy he had now given up. The many indications of Woolner's energy and his burning ambition to do work of excelling truthfulness and strong poetic spirit expressed in his energetic talk were enough to persuade me that Rossetti's suggestion that he should be made one of our number was a reasonable one; in due course, therefore, Millais having known him at the Academy, he was approved as a member.

The talk at my studio was often on the further extension of our number. In Gabriel's subscription Life School he was soon joined by his brother William, who applied himself at night in a steady manner to the pursuit of drawing, and regularly executed conscientious, although rigid, transcripts of the nude. Gabriel was soon persuaded that, in spite of William's lateness in taking up art, he would shortly become proficient enough to be justified in throwing up his appointment at the Inland Revenue Office and taking to painting, and with this prospect he proposed that we should make room for him in our Body. In addition to this proposal, I agreed to submit to Millais the question of the acceptance of James Collinson, who had already distinguished himself by paintings of the *genre* kind, and was now writing poetry in the highest Church spirit. He promised now to paint in the severe style, declaring himself a convert to our views. The idea of extending our numbers so trustfully was thus originated by Gabriel. Youth is sanguine, and I offered no opposition to the experiment; and when the enthusiastic desire of these fellow-students was declared to be a sure earnest of future zeal and power, I introduced to my friends F. G. Stephens, who had not yet achieved anything as an artist. I urged that he also, with the whirl of enthusiasm in operation, and under seal of promise to us, might become an active artist.

When on Millais' return to town I went to his studio, he shouted out, "Where is your flock? I expected to see

them behind you. Tell me all about it. I can't understand so far what you are after. Are you getting up a regiment to take the Academy by storm? I can quite see why Gabriel Rossetti, if he can paint, should join us, but I didn't know his brother was a painter. Tell me. And then there's Woolner. Collinson 'll certainly make a stalwart leader of a forlorn hope, won't he? And Stephens, too! Does he paint? Is the notion really to be put in practice?"

"Well," I replied, "in order I'll tell you. Gabriel implored me to take him and teach him to paint, and he's such an eager fellow that my one doubt as to his success is that he may be ever beginning and never finishing. He is now working in my studio on a little picture of 'The Virgin and St. Ann,' the most mediæval of his last three designs. You saw the drawing of it. It seems that lately he has seen a great deal of Woolner, and talked to him of our plan of going direct to Nature for all things, and the sculptor expressed a desire to join us. I didn't know him, but now I think he might help to spread our principles in his branch. Probably you know his powers better than I do. Now comes the *forlorn-hoper*; it appears that the Rossettis are much attached to him, and Gabriel, having taken possession of him, declares he can attain to a higher kind of work than he has yet accomplished, and Collinson himself has been pressing me to get him accepted. I like the meek little chap. All I can say is that there was a good idea in his 'Charity Boy,' and that the manipulation was conscientious, so that with higher inspiration he might do something good. I must not forget William Rossetti. Well, Gabriel proposes that he too shall become an artist and join us. It is very late in life; he is as old as you, without having drawn at all yet, but his brother declares that he will soon make up for lost time. Now these are proposed by Rossetti. The numbers grew so fast, and his confidence in our power was so extensive, that I determined to put a limit to the number of probationary members, which I did by adding my nominal painting

pupil Stephens. So far I have not yet been able to awaken in him the novice's indispensable passion, but being treated as a real artist may awaken his ambition."

Millais' rejoinder was, "Yes; but all this is a heavy undertaking."

"It looks serious, certainly," I said, "but then there is this to be considered. If they fail, I don't see how they can interfere with us; and if they are made truly good artists, our Body will become the stronger, and we may more perfectly revolutionise taste. Remember, however, that the whole question now rests with us, and I have said I can agree to nothing finally till your return to town."

The conference was ended by Millais proposing to ask them all to his studio one evening that he might see how things looked, for he, no more than I, foresaw evil in the plan proposed.

The meeting at Millais' was soon held. We had much to entertain us. Firstly, there was a set of outlines of Führich in the Retzsch manner, but of much larger style. The misfortune of Germans as artists had been that, from the days of Winckelmann, writers had theorised and made systems, as orders, to be carried out by future practitioners in ambitious painting. The result was an art sublimely intellectual in intention, but devoid of personal instinct and often bloodless and dead; but many book illustrators had in varying degrees dared to follow their own fancies, and had escaped the crippling yoke. The illustrations by Führich, we found, had quite remarkable merits. In addition to these modern designs, Millais had a book of engravings of the frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa which had by mere chance been lent to him. Few of us had before seen the complete set of these famous compositions.

The innocent spirit which had directed the invention of the painter was traced point after point with emulation by each of us who were the workers, with the determination that a kindred simplicity should regulate our own ambition, and we insisted that the naïve traits of frank

expression and unaffected grace were what had made Italian art so essentially vigorous and progressive, until the showy followers of Michael Angelo had grafted their Dead Sea fruit on to the vital tree just when it was bearing its choicest autumnal ripeness for the reawakened world.

Every circle of students has its fringe of members who are the most earnest of the whole body in all but actual work, and in lieu of this they offer such liberal substitute of assurances, that it is only much later that the thought of their being practical allies is given up. Together with these are some who exhibit an enchanting gift which may be likened to "la beauté de la jeunesse," inasmuch as it comes as a distinct gift of youth. It enables the endowed to surprise their friends with what seems to be the product of real genius. Later seasons dispel the precocious estimate, and prompt the doubt whether the first-fruits were indeed native products or only gleanings from the profusion of earlier workers, or were only unconsidered trifles picked up by the needy aspirants from their compeers. We were sanguine enough to aim at obtaining for our colleagues men who would be practical workers, who would find their riches at first hand, direct from Nature herself. All that words could express had been accepted by the new candidates, and the examples of unaffected art before us should have made our original purpose the more unmistakable. With the knowledge of the world attained at only twenty and odd years, our hope seemed not unreasonable. To have accepted men who had made even one success would have been over-reckless, but we were making a still more random venture.

Putting aside the question of the thorough purgation of Rossetti from his remaining German revivalism, Woolner had still to give proof of power beyond that of subtlety in his sincere workmanship as a modeller and a carver of marble. In design we trusted more to his profuse enthusiastic anticipations of sublime conceptions yet

to be elaborated. Collinson had done work which proved capacity in painting ; but this stopped short of severity of either invention or treatment. After him in preparedness came Stephens, who had been through the first drawing school of the R.A., but so far had done no practical painting at all, and was yet only a prospective designer in any form. William Rossetti as yet had not drawn at all. For all deficiencies, however, we accepted promises for the future, and persuaded ourselves that they would have authority to represent our aims only in proportion to their future industry and success in art.

Millais would not ratify the initial acceptance of the four candidates without check on their understanding of our purpose, for he feared the distortion of our original doctrine of childlike submission to Nature. The danger at the time arose from the vigour of the rising taste for Gothic art rather than from the classical form of design, whose power was fast waning, having few men of force to support it. For the last thirty or forty years architecture had become mainly mediæval in character, and the fashion for feudal forms had grown altogether slavish. At the introduction of the Renaissance in Italy new life and growth had been imparted to the Greek types chosen ; our manner of adopting Gothic examples had not been so wise. To follow ancient precedent line for line had become a religion. The imitative Gothic which was in fashion demanded that art used in its embellishments should be in accordance with it. To reproduce the English round and pointed styles with the barbarous embellishments wherewith the rudest of ancient masons had often satisfied their patrons, was the limit of modern ambition. The Palace of Westminster was then being fitted up externally with coarse images undeserving the name of statues ; faults of proportion and clumsiness of shape were even a merit in the eyes of the revivalists, and artists with a strong strain of quattrocento antiquarianism were thus preferred for the interior work ; the fashion for this resuscitation had originated in Germany, while the current was so strong

here that all over the country clergymen and gentlemen with public funds in their hands were nursing it, and were busy in putting up in churches stained-glass windows and decorations by painters whose school seemed to have been that of heraldic design interpreted in garish colours. Had all the artists so employed been mere resurrectionists they could have misled only the whimsical, but in fact some of the masters employed at St. Stephen's were men of such elevated capacity that they gave more than a passing charm to their imitations, by unwonted brilliancy of effect and by touches of individual genius, and this made their example a greater snare to the young and timid, who always need the support of precedent.

Millais felt that Collinson's discipleship to Wilkie had ignored the grace which had elevated that master's work ; he wanted more proof of original design in Woolner, and was further avowedly dubious of the other two.

We had recognised as we turned from one print to another that the Campo Santo designs were remarkable for incident derived from attentive observation of inexhaustible Nature, and dwelt on all their quaint charms of invention. We appraised as Chaucerian the sweet humour of Benozzo Gozzoli, which appeared wherever the pathos of the story could by such aid be made to claim greater sympathy, and this English spirit we acclaimed as the standard under which we were to make our advance. Yet we did not curb our amusement at the immature perspective, the undeveloped power of drawing, the feebleness of light and shade, the ignorance of any but mere black and white differences of racial types of men, the stinted varieties of flora, and their geometrical forms in the landscape ; these simplicities, already out of date in the painter's day, we noted as belonging altogether to the past and to the dead revivalists, with whom we had determined to have neither part nor lot. That Millais was in accord with this conviction was clear from his latest designs and from every utterance that came from him with unmistakable heartiness as to his future purpose, and may be understood now

from all his after-work. Rossetti's sentiment of these days is witnessed to, not from his painting in hand (which was from a design made earlier, when he was professedly under the fascination of the Early Christian dogma), but by his daily words put into permanent form in the short prospectus for *The Germ* (2nd series), issued a year or so later, in which Nature was insisted upon as the one element wanting in contemporary art.[1] The work which was already done, including all the landscape on my "Rienzi" picture, and my past steps leading to the new course pursued, spoke for me, and thus was justified the assumption that all our circle knew that deeper devotion to Nature's teaching was the real point at which we were aiming. It will be seen that the learned commentators have ever since declared that our real ambition was to be revivalists and not adventurers into new regions. Why and how this misunderstanding arose it devolves on me henceforth to trace out.

[1] The endeavour held in view throughout the writings on art will be to encourage and enforce an entire adherence to the simplicity of Nature, and also to direct attention, as an auxiliary medium, to the comparatively few works which art has yet produced in this spirit. It need scarcely be added that the chief object of the etched designs will be to illustrate this aim practically, as far as the method of execution will permit, in which purpose they will be produced with the utmost care and completeness.—Preface to *Germ*.