CHAPTER XII

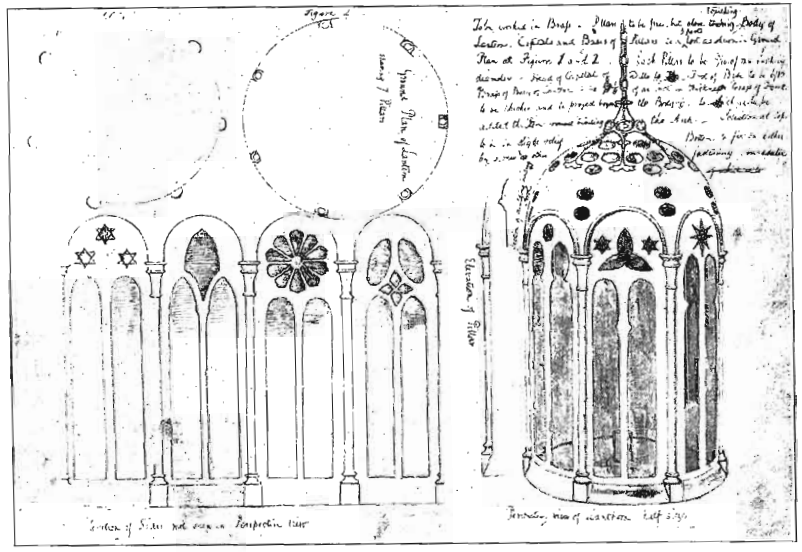
1852

For God is Perfection, and whoever strives for Perfection strives for something that is God-like.—MICHAEL ANGELO.

NATURALLY all my friends came to see the work done in the country. Gabriel felicitated me upon the choice of sacred subject, saying he had quite recently read the whole Testament through from the first word to the last, in the hope of finding some hitherto untreated circumstances suitable for painting, and he had not noticed the text in Revelation. Other friends made comments that were in their way worthy of attention. Miss Siddal came in turn to let me study the effect of the light and shade on her beautiful copper-coloured locks. She called again to tell me that she had just seen a small print in a Catholic book shop illustrating "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," which was in every particular exactly like my conception of the night effect, the closed overgrown door, the orchard, and the fruit fallen on the ground, even the flitting bat, Christ crowned and robed, with a connecting breastplate, and carrying a lantern.

The statement was highly provocative of fear that at least some of my original thoughts had been anticipated. I therefore took the first opportunity of going to see the print, when lo! it proved that the only resemblance was in the fact that the Saviour was standing and knocking at a door. The scene was in daylight; the Saviour

was uncrowned, He had no priestly robes or breastplate, He carried no lantern, the door was not overgrown, there was no orchard outside and no bat, and in truth all the accessories which had given value in my eyes to the subject did not exist at all, but had been transplanted from my picture by the imaginative lady to the Overbeckian design. One of my first duties now was to design the lantern



DESIGN FOR LANTERN IN "THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

which was to be carried by the Saviour ; the windows and openings had to be carefully studied in relation to the rays of light they would emit from the central light. It had to be made in metal ; it seemed to me that tin might serve the purpose, which could be lacquered to represent gold. A metal worker agreed to make it for a small sum, but afterwards represented that the cost would not be much extra if made in brass, and as this seemed too trifling to be considered, I assented, but was not a little dismayed eventually at having to pay over seven pounds.

Had I gone to a brass ornamentalist in the first instance it is probable that his price would have been less, and the work much better.

On moonlight nights at Chelsea I was able by some dried clinging tendrils of ivy, which I had brought from the door in Surrey and fastened to an old board, to advance what I had done on the spot itself. Until the place of the figure and drapery could be decided I had been unable to paint this part of the background. In the daytime I worked on "The Hireling Shepherd," and in the intervals I was directing my new pupil exactly on the system I had adopted with Rossetti. Thus Martineau's work progressed beyond expectation. The monthly instalments for "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" from Mr. M'Cracken became after this date sadly intermittent, and as I could not agree to delay, the correspondence grew vexatious.

As a pleasant and cheering distraction I occasionally dined with the Collins family. Nothing could well exceed the jollity of these little dinners. Edward Ward and his pleasant wife would sometimes be of the party. In any case Mrs. Collins did not often make our smoking after the meal a reason for her absence from our company. We were all hard-worked people enjoying one another's society, and we talked as only such can. Many of the stories that were told were of artists and authors of the last generation. Verily a man has not played his full part when he is buried. While yet his contemporaries old or young have tongues wherewith to re-echo and reanimate his unforgettable personality, he is still often called upon to come forth and repeat his rôle. David Wilkie, with his simplicity, his absent mindedness, and his strong Scotch accent ; Turner, with his unpolished exterior and his direct and piquant speech ; Constable, with his contempt for the sophistication of Nature, and, besides these, others who had been of mark only for a passing season, not infrequently came before us. Bailey the sculptor, to wit, was a man who took an ephemeral

success as one betokening unending glory for himself, and on the strength of this prospect drove about in handsome equipages until one day he discovered that the summer warmth on his brilliant wings had gone by for ever. The view of Morland lying brutally unconscious in drink was revealed to us; his was an eternity, not of innocent yet unrealised joy, but of debasing slavery, a warning to all men sent out on the mission of life; and how one's emotions changed their notes in the successive scenes that came before us! Of the records as imperishable as the life of the figures on Keats's Greek urn. In talking of painters like Romney, Constable, Turner, and Leslie, who had found friends and patrons in Lord de Tabley and Lord Egremont, full recognition was made of the services of those lovers of painting in opening a way for British art outside of portraiture, to which at first it seemed confined. "Do not, however," said Wilkie Collins, "think that these noblemen were any but signal exceptions in their attitude towards art. Of the English aristocracy the majority have no care for their country's art. The works of the old masters, done for the satisfaction of the Church centuries ago, which some of them collected, might all have been bought for English collections without advancing British art one whit. The men who really opened the way for you painters were the manufacturers when finding themselves rich enough to indulge in the refinements of life. 'We want works that will be within our own intelligence and that are akin to our own interests,' they said. 'Jupiter, Venus, and Minerva, and such gentlemen and ladies may be proper to high society, and the pictures of the Virgin and Child, as also subjects of apocryphal tradition, are strictly in the vogue, but we want beautiful works for our own living rooms, and we prefer those which treat of matters within our own comprehension, which we can only get from men of our own time and our own national sentiments.' Those were the appreciators who founded English art, and they showed their good British common-sense. You artists

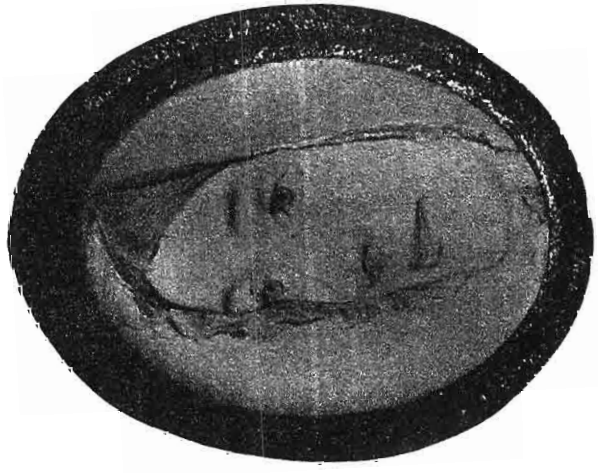
and the whole country owe them a debt of gratitude for having done it. Beforehand English painters rarely found employment except in doctoring old masters suffering from decay." Wilkie Collins had knowledge of the interests of art for more than one past generation; thus he spoke with authority on the matter.

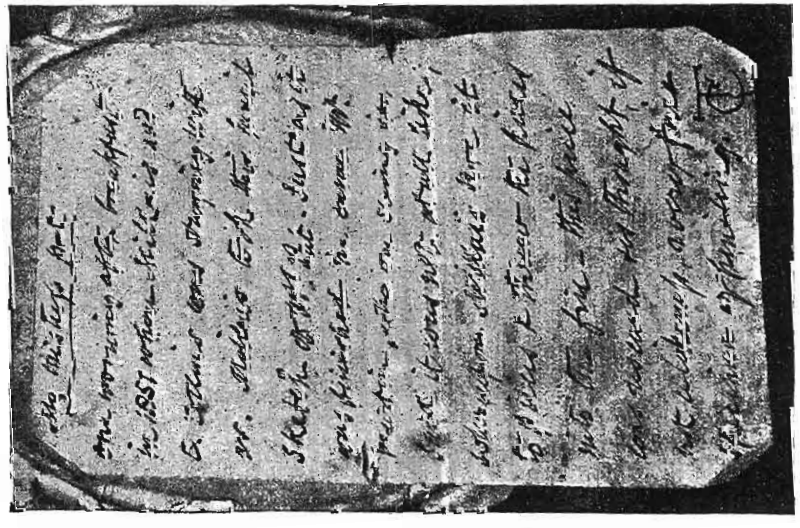
Amongst my few visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Combe. They invited me to spend Christmas with them and join in the Oxford festivities, particularly the celebration in Magdalen Hall. I gladly availed myself of this pleasant opportunity; it was evident that they overflowed with good thoughts for me, as for all their protégés. Mr. Combe had, some few years before, been appointed head of the University Press. When he came into control the printing of Bibles and Prayer-Books and the publishing of a few choice classics, although a business monopoly, was in a languishing condition, and occasioned an annual loss to the University, but his energy and capacity had already changed the deficit into a gain. He resided in one of the two conjoined houses in the quadrangle. The architecture of the group of buildings was as bare as it could well be, but by means of a circular basin in the courtyard, with a fountain shaded by a weeping willow, the luxuriant growth of deciduous and perennial plants and flowers around the confines of the square, with the occasional visits of peacocks from a yard behind, a park-like look was given to the small enclosure. The sitting-room had ranges of books at one end, and many choice prints and drawings about it. A fragment of a beautiful drawing of Mrs. Combe was framed over the mantelpiece. It had been done with great care by Millais, and was just completed when Dr. Martin entered. The doctor was the link which had brought the new friends together, and he was at once asked to pronounce on the likeness. It happened to provoke some merry strictures, on which the draughtsman snatched it away, tore it in bits, and threw them into the fire; the face was rescued by Mr. Combe. Mrs. Combe, though still

young, was the foster-mother of the whole parish; she knew the troubles of every house, and left neither good, bad, nor indifferent without her solid sympathy. I had not been long her guest before Dr. Acland and John Hungerford Pollen called upon me, and so began life-long friendships; both were at the time amateur artists, the latter having already painted the roof of Merton College Chapel.

I had looked forward to my Oxford visit with no little nervousness. It seemed appalling to face the learned fellows and dignitaries of this University, and I knew that my introduction would be to them rather than to the undergraduates. The apprehension of their stiff exclusiveness made my experience of their genial and unaffected hospitality the more enjoyable. My estimable friends had won me favour, and on my presentation it seemed that every elder had put on his suit of youth, and had hidden away all his just claims to importance. I received a shower of invitations.

One morning at a college breakfast with many dons present, each of whom had soon become warmly engaged in general conversation, my neighbour quietly asked me to reveal to him the true purpose of Pre-Raphaelitism. I essayed it in confidential tones, charging him to dismiss all explanations published in the Press, and went on to say that British art when installed under George III. was encouraged by what seemed the best judgment to take the highest development of Italian art as the particular object of its own emulative ambition. Reynolds, in 1769, it must be remembered, was then the spokesman of the new Academy just founded by the King; he declared his belief that the result of this school would be so glorious that its work would soon eclipse that of all present art, and he was thus prejudiced to look upon the founders of all Academies, not excepting Le Brun, as the grand luminaries of past art. The requirements of the passing day and the special character of our race were equally ignored; but the genius our painters





PORTRAIT OF MRS. COMBE

J. E. Millais.

displayed was not in any degree owing to the exotic system they were obliged to adopt; the "grand style" had no atmosphere in which to flourish. The first President pronounced that rules are not the fetters of genius, but only of those who have none. When he worked at his highest he proved a force, in each of the double meanings of his words, for although he observed the rules, his inventiveness came from the independent working of his own mind. In accepting traditional convention he certainly expedited the course of each work incalculably, and may also have satisfied his educated conscience; undoubtedly he humoured the prejudices of the conventional connoisseur, but unbiassed mankind was not gained by his *one-eighth of pure light* and his *seven-eighths* of scientifically modulated bituminous dark, but by his new truths from Nature.[1] The untutored, from his own kinship with Nature as depicted by Reynolds, is ever moved with delight at this painter's seizure of graces and charms which no one before him had secured; his rivals also were great when inspired by the same faculty of awakening attention to divine innocence in creation. Still the academic dogma had been preached, and it became a merit in the dull and pretentious to show their fetters by rivalling the artificialities of the grand masters. Art was to be kept in bounds from fear of incendiarism, and so it was kept without fuel. In painting landscape and portraits it was impossible for any with full degree of observant sense not to catch some aspect of Nature, but when imaginative

[1] "When I was in Venice the method I took to avail myself of their principle was this. When I observed an extraordinary effect of light and shade in any picture, I took a leaf of my pocket-book and darkened every part of it in the same gradation of light and shade as in the picture, leaving the white paper untouched to represent the light, and this without any attention to the subject or to the drawing of the figures. A few trials of this kind will be sufficient to give the method of their conduct in the management of their lights. After a few experiments I found the paper blotted nearly alike; their general practice appeared to be to allow not above a quarter of the picture for the light, including in this portion both the principal and the secondary lights; another quarter to be as dark as possible; and the remaining half to be kept in mezzotint or half shadow."—*Notes to Du Fresnoy.*

work was demanded, no aid was sought from this eternal source of all inspiration; thus even now the heaviness of authoritative dogma has been never fully counterbalanced.

While thus speaking I noticed that my neighbour to the right, having found a break in the chat with his gossip, turned to hear my treason, and then his companion joined our little circle. From a lingering bashfulness of youth I felt the more need of hushed privacy in my discourse, till suddenly there was a distinct turn all along the table, and a doctor from afar in the most sedately polite manner asked whether I would have the kindness to speak somewhat louder, as he was sure he was not alone in wishing to hear an exposition of Pre-Raphaelitism. Oh, modest reader, did you ever in youth have such an experience? If so, add to your own cause of trepidation the many that I had in all the irregularity of my education, and imagine my tremor in unexpectedly finding myself discoursing to more than a dozen of the most learned of the University. For a moment I wavered, but a supreme effort sent me on once more, in bungling manner, doubtless; the proposition that had to be urged was that while artists must ever be beholden to examples from the past for their tuition, the theme that they treat must ever be new, or they must make it so by an infiltration of thoughts belonging to their own time. In our art, as in all others of the ever advancing human mind, there are continually new prizes to be found.

> The fair new forms
> That float about the threshold of an age,
> Like truths of science waiting to be caught,
> Crying, "catch me who can," and make the catcher crowned.

"Stop, pray," said a don, "please tell us whom you quote?"

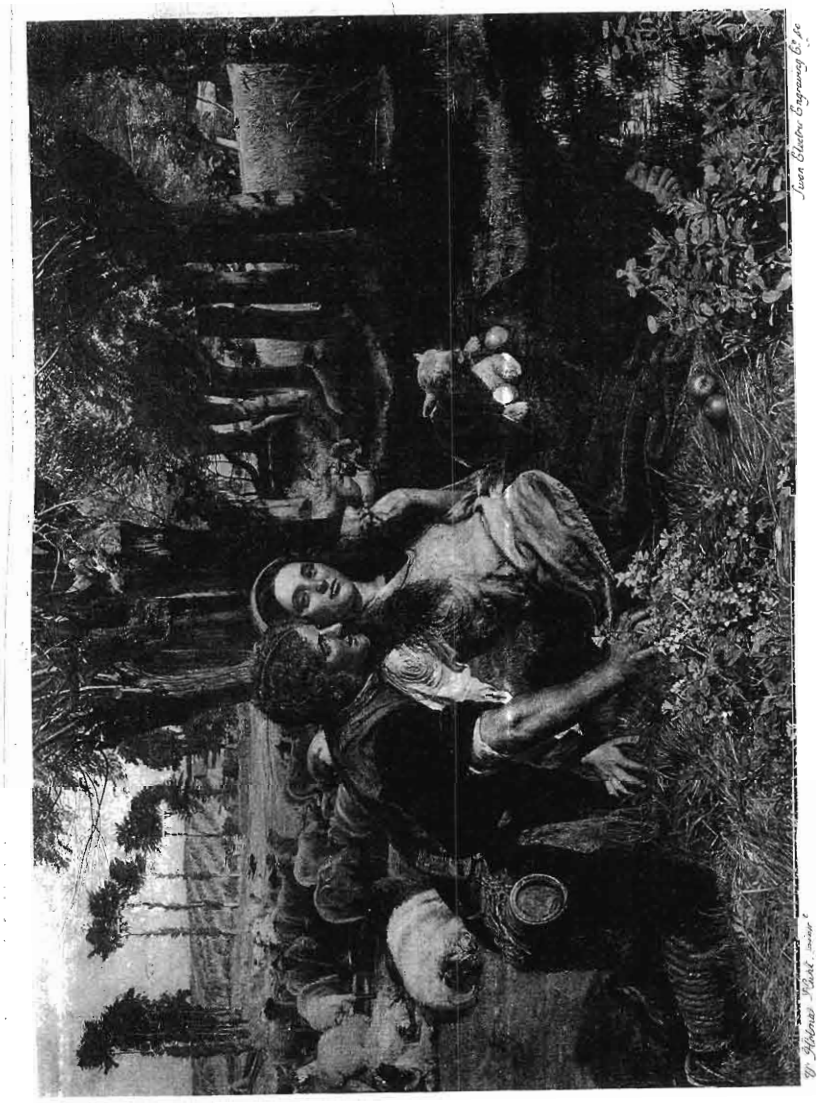
"I was quoting a passage from Tennyson's *Golden Year*, which expresses my meaning better than anything I could say," I replied.

"Tennyson!" was the chorus from several voices.

"You don't regard Tennyson as a poet," and some lines from *The May Queen* were cited to settle the question. I gave up that poem as infantile, but tried to justify my admiration by adducing others. The digression went on warmly, and soon all the church clocks rang out our dismissal. Throughout the whole of the polite and pleasant converse with friends whose acquaintances I was happy enough to make in Oxford there was but one man, a fellow of Jesus, who endorsed my enthusiastic defence of Tennyson. I was often after invited to various high tables to continue my arguments as to the need of a reform in art, but this was not until I had been introduced as more eccentric in being a champion of the poet than in defending Pre-Raphaelitism. It is singular that there was less disposition to yield to me on the point of the excellence of the future poet laureate and D.C.L. than on the reasonableness of the views of our new school of art. Whatever my most cordial hosts conceded to me was overridden by their love of Ary Scheffer and Overbeck, examples of whose works were displayed with pride on the walls of the most advanced of art admirers. To me these grew more unpleasing every day, but when I revealed my prejudice, and tried to point out the sickliness of character in the designs, only few indications of change of conviction appeared on the faces of my friends, who naturally regarded my rebellion to authority—at least on this point—as an example of youthful narrowness.

Yet before I left the University I had cordial invitations to come and see my disputants at the Commemoration, to which the Combes had kindly pressed me to return.

I worked steadily at "The Hireling Shepherd" till the sending-in day. With this gone I devoted myself to finish the original coloured studies of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" to make it marketable, and the sketch of "Claudio and Isabella," which promised remunerative recompense; the work, however, much exceeded my calculation in the time taxed for its fastidious elaboration.



The Hireling Shepherd.
(Larger version.)

A certain amateur dealer came when these works were standing in their frames. He announced his intention of opening an exhibition of sketches, and, having chanced to hear of mine, he had to ask me to contribute them to his collection. I explained that I must defer reply until I had shown them to an experienced friend, because in both cases I had counted upon obtaining more than usual payment, as they had engaged me much longer than I had

W. H. H.

STUDY OF SHEPHERD'S HEAD.

anticipated ; the smaller I had hoped to finish in a week and to sell for five pounds ; but notwithstanding incessant diligence it had employed me for three weeks. It had been a bad venture for me, and I must now ascertain how far I could raise the price. My visitor urged that I should send both to his rooms ; the Valentine he would strive to sell for me for my price, forty pounds, and if I would fix a small additional sum, say two pounds, on the "Claudio and Isabella," he would take it at once. I repeated my desire first to gain a professional opinion of the market value, but on his insistence that he had only

a small amount to expend, and that he must settle the question ere he went to see the other artists' sketches, I closed with him for seven pounds ten shillings.

The next day Egg called saying that a friend of his had asked whether I would finish my original study of the "Claudio and Isabella" for him. I explained how I had finished and sold it. He hoped that I had gained a good price, as this kind of work was the most paying of all. My story made him indignant with "the old sharper," for his friend had proposed to give forty pounds. On the private view of the sketches, the secretary informed me that the Valentine was bought by his principal for forty pounds, but reduced by ten per cent commission.[1]

The "Ophelia" and "The Huguenot" were both finished by Millais for the Royal Academy of this year. They were hung well, and were received with whispering respect and even with enthusiasm. My "Hireling Shepherd" was also hung on the line in a good place, and certainly it won many converts on the varnishing morning. I was sorry to see that Madox Brown's "Christ washing Peter's Feet" was posted up above the line in a most unworthy place; even there it looked like a great work, but the artist was very sore about its treatment. While standing near me, pouting and frowning more than he knew perhaps, Mr. Francis Grant came up to him and somewhat abruptly said he had been deputed by his fellow-members to state how much the picture was admired by them, and to explain that the committee had been caused anxiety by the fact that certain deeply coated thick madder lake used in some drapery, which was not dry on its arrival, was found, on the canvas being turned round, to have streamed in a long crimson line over the lower part; that one of the members had cautiously removed the colour, and with the same care had used a soft rag to

[1] "Claudio and Isabella" was sold at Foster's Auction Rooms some months after for one hundred and ten pounds, and in another year or two for two hundred and ten pounds.

rub away the remaining stain; and finally, they were glad to congratulate him on the picture. The practical outcome of this professed admiration was more than Brown's temper could bear. He glowered at the speaker till the last word, then pivoted on his heels without uttering a remark. The body of the Saviour in his picture was perfectly nude at the time, Brown having interpreted the passage, "He laid aside His garments," as meaning this. The picture had been mainly painted on the system which Millais and I had revealed to him at the farm. This was more conspicuous when the figure was nude, but any discriminating observer will now see it in the face, arms, and hands of the Saviour, which were left uncovered as they were at first, whilst the body is clothed in a grey dress, added some years later.[1] In all of the exposed parts it may be seen that the transparent colour was put on in streaks, with evidences that the brushes used for the carnations were long and round in shape and were less flat than we should have used, and the opportunity was lost, while the layer was still wet, of blending it with soft cross touches; notwithstanding the want of this mystery, the effect at a short distance was rich and good. Brown's mastery in colour and form made all fall into beautiful concord.

The beautifully painted copper bowl will further elucidate the use of our *secret* of working over wet white. The hair and the face in part were painted from Miss Siddal, with the guidance also of a sitting from F. G. Stephens. The picture was in Brown's possession for several years, during which he frequently worked on it, and as frequently improved it, until it became the glorious example of design and colouring we now see.[2]

[1] It was in the year 1856 that he took up this picture to cover the body with drapery and make other changes. He did this to its manifest advantage, as was always the case when he retouched his pictures. See Hueffer's *Life of F. M. Brown*, chap. vii. p. 182.

[2] See Hueffer's *Life and Works of F. M. Brown*, chap. xix. p. 413, remarkable for its conscientious care, as also for its occasional too modest estimate of the artist's genius.

His "Pretty Baa Lambs" had been "skied" in the Octagon Room; this, indeed, was serious to him; he had lately married again, and his moderate annuity needed increase. He was about thirty-two years of age, and so far his profession had been only an expense to him; never again did he appear at the Academy.

My pupil Martineau had his picture of "Kit's Writing

R. B. Martineau.

KIT'S LESSON.

Lesson" very luckily placed for a first work; it was purchased by Mr. Mudie.

With these pictures of Brown and Martineau were many others evidencing the influence of our example. Maclise had a painting of "King Alfred in the Danish Camp," in which an overhanging May tree had blossoms elaborated with the utmost precision and frankness. Arthur Hughes, who had been a steady disciple from the

beginning, had a painting of "Ophelia," but this was placed too high to be seen without a ladder, from the steps of which Millais expressed warm congratulation of the poetic younger artist. Many others also were (some with, and others without, avowal) working in our spirit. The system of painting over a wet white ground was tested afterwards throughout the profession. Frith told me a few years later that he had tried it on a cap in the "Derby Day," and that after persevering for a few hours he produced the most hopeless mess he had ever seen before on any canvas; he therefore wiped it out and painted it in the ordinary way.

The opening day went by without inquiries after the price of my picture, but it was evident that people were wavering. Weeks passed, and it seemed as though again success was to be indefinitely postponed, when a very courteous letter arrived from an unknown gentleman, stating that he was an enthusiastic admirer of the picture, but could not afford the price, three hundred guineas. He did not think this too much, but he wished to know for what sum I would repeat the group of the sheep by itself. I proposed seventy guineas, and he agreed. The same gentleman, Mr. Charles Maude of Bath, then wrote to say that a friend of his had no less enthusiasm for the "Hireling Shepherd" than himself, and that he trusted I would excuse him for proposing whether I could agree to take the money for it in instalments, one hundred and fifty pounds in a first payment, and the remainder as his friend received his own stipend, quarterly, in sums of about sixty pounds; if so, he would be ready to purchase it. I at once closed with this offer. The same polite gentleman wrote then to say that his friend was his cousin, Mr. Broderip, the magistrate and naturalist, from whom he conveyed to me an invitation to lunch, and this gave me the opportunity of seeing two of the most pleasant old gentlemen I ever had the felicity to meet. Nor was this all, for Mr. Broderip then said that his great and valued friend, Professor Owen (since Sir Richard, K.C.B.) wished to

know me, and had asked him to drive me down on an early day to pass the afternoon with him, a proposal which I felt it a great honour to accept. Accordingly, with an explanation on the way that our host had been one of my stoutest champions throughout, I was introduced on a sunny summer noon into the portals of the sweet little cottage in Richmond Park which Her Majesty had given him for life.

It so happened on that afternoon there was another painter visiting the Professor. I had not met him before, but he turned out to be genial and pleasant. He was, however, quite of the conventional faith ; and spite of the fact that the battle over our principles had been raging for three years in the press, he at length, as we were assembled in the sunny little drawing-room, asked, as if it were quite a novel idea, whether I could explain on what grounds I put aside the canons of art which laid down the need of a restricted focus as the scheme of chiaroscuro in a picture, and why I disregarded other laws of effect discovered and composition practised by the greatest masters. Even up to this date I had retained a boyish tendency to break into uncontrollable laughter when a situation amused me. It was now only by giving weight to the fact that my interrogator was an older man than myself, and that the scholarly listeners might well expect me to acquit myself soberly, that I could assume a sufficiently grave demeanour. I had entered upon a preamble, when suddenly the host held up his hand as by a happy surprise, saying, "By the bye, I must now, while the sun still shines, be allowed to show Mr. Holman Hunt my bees," and he dragged me out to the end of the garden, where, with his large eyes turned on me, he said, "You know, Mr. Painter is a most excellent gentleman, and I am glad to see him here at times, but what he says about art cannot be of interest to any one whatever, and it is certainly not worth your answering, so you must excuse me for interrupting you," on which he invited my pity for a poor bumble bee, so hopelessly intoxicated in a canterbury bell that when we made a show of catching him he could only put up one of his inebriated legs and say, plain as plain could be, "You leave me alone, can't you ?"

The time for my Commemoration visit was now at hand, and I gladly went down again to see my friends at Oxford. One of the Fellows of Christchurch, whose acquaintance I had been happy enough to make, was the Rev. J. Gordon, who had been the tutor of Ruskin. He gave me many interesting accounts of his pupil's time at the University ; and it was sad to hear that Ruskin had been made the subject of a great deal of horse-play by the other undergraduates of the college on account of his avoidance of all the sports and fun in which these young gentlemen were disposed to indulge. Ruskin, at the time referred to, had temporarily lamed his ankle. Ryman, the print-seller, had a rich collection of Turner prints and some drawings, so in the place of exercise Ruskin obtained permission from the tradesman to go into the back shop and make sketches from some of Turner's pictures. Mr. Ryman was intimate with Turner, and as it happened the latter, coming to Oxford at the time, entered the shop, and seeing the Gentleman Commoner engaged in copying one of his works, asked Ryman who the young man was thus wasting his time. Ryman replied that the stranger was a most enthusiastic admirer of Turner's work, and that nothing would delight him more than to be introduced, at which Turner went forward ; thus began the personal friendship between the two.

I was at the very centre of the then High Church party in Oxford ; what they had done hitherto in introducing certain changes in the furniture of churches and in breaking down what may be called the beadledom of Church Service was altogether to my taste ; but many serious men were anxious about the end these ecclesiastics had in view, and certainly there were words uttered which seemed ominous of impending priestcraft. One of the new schism, for example, praising the Martyrs' Memorial, deplored that so beautiful a monument should

be erected in honour of such rank Protestants as Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer; yet I could not then believe any Englishmen would so far forget their national character as to desire in sober mind to suppress liberty of conscience. Certainly reversion to blind authority would affect true living art, as indeed it would British character in every respect. Two independent movements affecting the future of the University influence on national and external interests were active at the time, and both of these had been offensive to the conservative spirit of Alma Mater.

The older of the innovations was directed to abolishing the taste for classical architecture, the first example of which was the porch of St. Mary's Church, built in 1637 under Laud's influence. The fashion then established in Oxford slowly degenerated in character to a square style of architecture that might be called Hanoverian, without any grace of the Renaissance or further elegance of decoration; bald and heavy, and constructed of stone doomed to unsightly decay. In London, from Inigo Jones and Christopher Wren to Adams and Chambers—with admirable ornamental designs in wood, stone, and metal, carrying out the architect's details—the choice of classicalism had fully justified itself. Although now throughout England it had ceased to be a vital force, standing as the heavy structures did side by side in the University town with ancient Gothic edifices, it was not wonderful that the determination should have been hastily made under the influence of literary reversion to feudal poetry and picturesqueness, that for new buildings nothing could be better than imitation of the mediæval forms; and perhaps the resolution was strengthened by knowledge that the lovely cloisters of Magdalen only escaped destruction because there were not funds at the time for the completion of the projected quadrangle. Perhaps Blore's staircase at Christchurch was the first effort of the attempt at Gothic revivalism. The favour for classical taste died hard, and, it may be said, not without a certain honour, in the erection of the Taylor Buildings by Cockerell.

About 1850 the University taste for modern Gothic was established beyond recall; and every don, and indeed every undergraduate, discanted of the features of their Gothic buildings like a glossary, and each took care to discriminate nicely between the different dates of construction, and to speak with pity of all that was not of the "correct period." They did this with no toleration for other varieties of styles, professing desire to do away with everything else; so that in Oxford and elsewhere, as the graduates spread all over the country as squires and parsons, every church and mediæval building of "incorrect date" in whole or part was, under their influence, improved off the face of the earth. Much beautiful and historically interesting Perpendicular, Tudor, Jacobean, and Carolian building and furniture fittings were destroyed to make way for restorations of the approved pattern, so that more destruction was wrought than had been suffered by the historical architecture of England since the havoc made by Henry VIII. or by the Puritans. With the dislike of all but one type of design for new edifices, every detail was expected to conform with the approved pattern; and I could only conclude that when pictures might be desired for their embellishment, works of revivalish character would be sought for rather than those with fresh truth and meaning in them.

The second movement, of later origin, was for the establishment of scientific teaching in the University. Dr. Acland was the representative of the proposed reform, and he worked with both discretion and courage. His artistic instincts made him love the picturesqueness of Gothic architecture. The danger from the blindness with which its champions had introduced it was not yet foreseen, and when the building of the Museum was canvassed he joined force with those who favoured one of mediæval design. When, shortly afterwards, the building by Woodward and Deane was in progress, many powerful elders expressed discontent in no measured terms.

The Literature and Art of an age are ever inspired

by a kindred spirit, the latter faithfully following the former.

My championship of Tennyson was still challenged, but I have reason to believe that had the name of the author of *Ulysses*, *In Memoriam*, and the manly *Sir Galahad* been uttered in a company of undergraduates at the University at the time, its reception would have been very different from that which their elders gave it. The wholesome tenor of his poetry was in concord with that of his predecessors, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other protestors against adoration of licence and outlawry. The fashion for making robbers, regicides, corsairs, betrayers of homes and innocence, heroes of romance, which Byron, Schiller, Goethe, and Shelley had followed, still captivated the elder world. This rebellious fashion was provoked in natural reaction from the hollowness of pious sentiment expressed in monotonous diction by previous rhymers, and found favour by the great genius of its reckless exponents. The lovers of disorder had commanded rich sound and metre to their service, and made rivalry in the race for outrageous liberty fascinating. Thus while weak readers were left to follow out the sentiment in practice, the elect in taste acquiesced that poetry should not be judged by standards of right morals or common-sense, though when they put down the affecting volume of sonorous verse and took up the newspaper, or engaged in their duties as members of society, they felt unparalleled horror at records in the newspapers of the same wickedness, the suffering of penalty for the like of which had drawn tears not yet dry on the perusal of the poet's verses. In the first years of the nineteenth century the young, having been enslaved by this bombastic and false heroism, had grown old at the time I speak of, and still unquestioningly retained this taste, while a newer generation had found in Keats, Wordsworth, and Coleridge the mental matter of robust honesty which Henry Taylor, Tennyson, and Browning utilised to teach the manliness and heroism of simple goodness, a basis

which Chaucer and the early English poets had made as that on which our poetry should be built.

Taking literature generally (although in the middle of the nineteenth century a strain of tawdry sentiment occasionally mingled with the love of truth and gentleness), there was in the best of it a manly disdain of licentiousness, and with this was retained the one healthy spirit of its immediate predecessors, contempt for the caterers of hackneyed pharisaism. Yet to the public at large, and especially to those of them who took an interest in art, outward marks of the stereotyped profession of religious sentiment were not distasteful, and thus a puerile display of false pathos and religion still lingered both in literature and painting, and often so far mingled with sterling purpose that the difficulty arose of sifting the true from the false. It was high time for the winnowing of chaff from grain. Thackeray was a most uncompromising satirist of the mawkish authors who indulged in sickly pathos and fevered sentimentality. He had barely yet won general recognition among the Oxford elders, but from subsequent signs it was obvious that the undergraduates accepted the bracing influence which he, Carlyle, and Browning were exercising. The pendulum was sure before long to bring justice to the preachers of virile virtue; it was, alas! also sure, from the inevitable rebound of a succeeding generation, to bring a return of licence in one form or the other.

It was not long after my return from Oxford to London that I had the pleasure of going to old Mr. and Mrs. Millais and paying the remainder of my debt. After this I could work both on "Claudio and Isabella" and "The Light of the World" without a trying calculation of the cost, but the new commission demanded attention. Seeing that I was removed from the keen money pressure which had made me agree to the repetition of the group of sheep in "The Hireling Shepherd," I longed to paint an original picture instead of a copy, and when I made this proposal to Mr. Maude he agreed without hesitation.

About this time Robert Martineau spoke to me of Edward Lear, and gave me an invitation to his chambers in Stratford Place to see his numberless drawings, which were in outline, with little to indicate light or shade. Lear overflowed with geniality, and at the same time betrayed anxiety as we turned over the drawings, avowing that he had not the ability to carry out the subjects in oil; in some parts of them he had written in phonetic spelling the character of the points which the outlines would not explain—"Rox," "Korn," "Ski," indulging his love of fun with these vagaries.

When I was about to take leave he frankly inquired of me what I should do to make use of such material, whether, in short, I could, as Roberts and Stanfield did, realize enough to paint pictures from their pencil sketches. "For when I set myself to try," he added, "I often break down in despair."

"To speak candidly," I replied, "I could not and would not attempt to paint pictures in a studio from such mere skeleton outlines."

He looked dejected and said, "What can I do?" To which I replied, "Let us consider a particular one," and took up a drawing of "The Quarries of Syracuse." I said, "Now the rocks forming this were, you tell me, of limestone. Without going back to Sicily you would have to find some weatherworn escarpments of this particular stone, and choose a place where figs grow, for on your drawing you have written over the foreground tangle, 'figs.' Under the open sky, with the sun shining, you would have little difficulty in giving an air of reality to this part of the scene. For distant fields and the hills again you could easily find Nature near at hand, only these would have to be adapted to suit the form given in your outlines. Nature would in the summer soon supply clouds and azure firmament for your sky without calling too much on your memory. Now what more do you want? You have indicated the presence of innumerable rooks. These you

could easily paint in the open air without leaving England."

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "I will do this at once, but I should want you to direct me."

"Well," I said, "I am about to begin a picture of sheep, with the cliffs at Fairlight as a background, and I am going down when free from a few days' work here to take a lodging in some farmhouse."

"But," he said, "let me save you the trouble. I will go down and find apartments, and we will lodge together." And we parted with this understanding. In two days I received a letter from him saying that he had found accommodation for both of us at Clivevale Farm, mentioning the rent, and asking whether I would agree. I did so, and soon came assurance that the lodging was taken, and that he was already there. Just a day or two before I started, a further letter came from him of a perplexing nature, saying that it was unwise to do things on the impulse of the moment, and that he felt we ought at once to take precautions not to make our living together a cause of possible discord; that we should arrange to divide the house and each have his own sitting-room, only meeting at meals. I was too busy to give special attention to this caprice, and acceded. William Rossetti, having a week's vacation, had agreed to come with me, and we went down together. It was curious to see the unexpected guardedness of Lear's reception of us, but he gradually thawed, and by the end of dinner he was laughing and telling good stories. When the cloth was cleared he said, "Now I had intended to go to my own room, but, if you do not mind, I'll bring down some of my drawings and pen them out here, so that we may all be together." This was agreed to, and while going over his pencil lines with ink he continued his conversation with William in Italian, principally in order to begin a course of lessons which he found I was desirous to receive. The proposed separate apartments soon became a joke, and then he explained laughingly

that a dread had suddenly seized him that I might be a great lover of bulldogs, and that I might come down with two devoted pets of this breed. Dogs of all kinds, small and especially great, were his terror by night and day.

The Martineaus lived close by, and had at that time a handsome dog called Cæsar, a large Newfoundland, and a great favourite of the family. When they went on excursions it used to bound about them, jumping up to induce them to throw a stick or stone for it to scamper after. To Lear, a man of nearly six feet, with shoulders in width equal to those of Odysseus, the freaks of this dog were truly exasperating. "How can the family," said he, "ask me to call upon them when they keep a raging animal like that, who has ever his jaws wide open and his teeth ready to tear helpless strangers to pieces? They say it is only his play. Why, in the paper I lately read of a poor old woman who was set on by just such a beast! It was only his play, they said. Yes, but the poor old creature died of it nevertheless; such monsters should not be allowed to go at large. In Albania and Greece the shepherds have dogs for guarding their sheep from wolves and wild beasts, and when one is in such countries one cannot wonder if these ferocious creatures sometimes attack strangers, but to keep them as family pets is not to be borne." In the early morning he occupied himself in a most extensive correspondence; sometimes he would write as many as thirty letters before breakfast. For the first week or ten days he accompanied me to the cliffs, painting the same landscape which I was using for my background. Thus he obtained acquaintance with my manner of work, professing himself satisfied with this; he soon after found some limestone rocks that had been extensively cut away, which served exactly for the principal feature of his "Quarries of Syracuse." He began this on a canvas some five feet in length, and his occupation separated us till the evening meal. Later, in the intervals of his other work, with a great deal of joking he exercised me in Italian, and beat out new

Nonsense Rhymes which afterwards found a place in his well known volumes.

Lear certainly showed no sign of delicacy at first sight, although he had only saved his health by making

W. H. H.

EDWARD LEAR, AGED 50.

Rome his home for thirteen years. He was twenty years my senior, but this did not prevent him from addressing me as "Pa," and enacting the part of a son.

Certainly fate could not have sent me a more agreeable or profitable companion to prepare me for my settled purpose of painting in Egypt and Syria. He had

not then been to either of these countries, but he had travelled throughout Calabria, Albania, and Greece, and he had hundreds of drawings of the sacred spots in these places, which he brought forth from portfolios each evening to make permanent the pencil outlines, describing the localities and their relation to one another. While we were at work out of doors he would tell stories of the incidents of his many wanderings, and surprised me by showing that he was uncombative as a tender girl, while at the same time the most indomitable being in encountering danger and hardship. Nothing daunted him, and yet no one could be more fearful than he of certain difficulties he had to face as the fixed conditions of travelling. He would rather be killed than fire a pistol or gun; horses he regarded as savage griffins; revolutionists, who were plentiful just then, he looked upon as demons, and Custom officers were of the army of Beelzebub. On the other hand, he had the most unquenchable love of the humorous wherever it was found. Recognition of what was ridiculous made him a declared enemy to cant and pretension, and an entire disbeliever in posturers and apers of genius either in mien or in the cut of the coat and affectation of manners. When we were seated together after dinner he varied our occupation for half an hour by writing what he entitled "Ye Booke of Hunte," in which he wrote down my answers to inquiries as to the pigments and system I should use in the different features of a landscape. I hazarded my replies with many protests against their standing as more than the formula of a system, to be modified in every case by conditions and circumstances. While thus satisfying him, he exercised me with funny sentences in Italian of every variety.

While the singer of nonsense rhymes and I were busy working, a letter from Millais announced that he would come down on Saturday night and spend Sunday with us. Lear had not seen him, but he was anxious to know what manner of man this already widely renowned one was in person. I had described him so glowingly

that Lear remarked he was indeed a fit being to bring in the "Millaisneum" of art, but he inquired, "Is he disposed to lord it over others?" "Well," I replied, "you know there are men who are good-nature itself, but who have a knack of always making others carry their parcels." "Oh, but I won't carry his!" said Lear. "Yes, you will," I returned. "You won't be able to refuse."

When the visitor arrived good comradeship was quickly established. The next day was perfect for a good walk, and we started early to reach Winchelsea and Rye, and take our chance for luncheon at the inn. We descended to the beach by Fairlight Cliffs, and had not walked far when we came upon cuttlefish bones lying about, clean and unbroken. Millais, when he had picked up a few, declared that he would take them home. The argument that they could be bought at any chemist's in London availed nothing, neither did the remark that with our system of painting they were scarcely wanted. Millais said he had never before seen such good ones, and that a painter never knew when he might find them essential, so he filled a large handkerchief with the spoil. At the end of ten minutes he came up to me and coaxingly said, "I say, carry these for me now, like a good fellow, do." Lear was already exploding with laughter, while I said, "I am not going to spoil you. I will put them down here; no one will take them, and you can get them on our return, or carry them yourself, my dear boy." Millais said, "They might be trodden upon," and could not understand why Lear laughed so helplessly, but his ardent good humour urged Millais to appeal to him, "You carry it for me, King Lear," he said. At which that monarch of merriment, doubled up with laughter, declared that he would take the bundle, which he did with such enjoyment that he was incapable of walking sedately while the memory of my prophecy was upon him. "He doesn't carry his own cuttlefish" passed into a proverb amongst us.

We were all delighted with the locality we had walked to see. We were able to examine the church and the

country about, which made such an impression upon Millais, that two years later he returned, with Mike Halliday as his pupil, and painted "L'Enfant du Regiment" and "The Blind Girl" while he superintended his pupil in painting the background of "Measuring for the Wedding Ring." Both Thackeray and Leach were guests at different times. I took occasion soon after to go again to Winchelsea, and made a pencil drawing of the city gate and the hillside, which I gave to Coventry Patmore.

While Lear and I were happily living thus together he talked with a vivacious enthusiasm of future expeditions. Going up the Nile was his first pet object, and he thought to conjoin with this a visit to Syria, so that he might meet me when I should be able to carry out my plan of working there.

At the end of a fortnight the heavenly weather we began with was broken up by a great storm, and although this disturbance passed away, the interval was followed by a succession of cloudy days, causing woeful interruption to out-of-door work.

One calm morning, on arriving alone at my cliff, there was so thick a sea mist that I could not see the distance. Leaving my picture-case still closed, I spread my rug and took out a little book to read. I was disturbed by advancing footsteps, and, on looking up, a visitor, proved by canvas and portentous easel in hand to be a painter, was close upon me. As I did not wish to encourage interruption, I resumed my study. Soon my brother of the brush stood behind, challenging me with "A fine morning!" I said, somewhat curtly, that it was not much to my taste; but my visitor remained. He inquired whether I was making a sketch of the spot in oil- or water-colour, and I returned that I was trying my hand, when the weather permitted, with oil-colours. He chattered on that many distinguished artists had been working in the neighbourhood lately. Clint had only left last week. Did I know him? "Yes, I do by name," I replied. Tom Danby had also been sketching there.

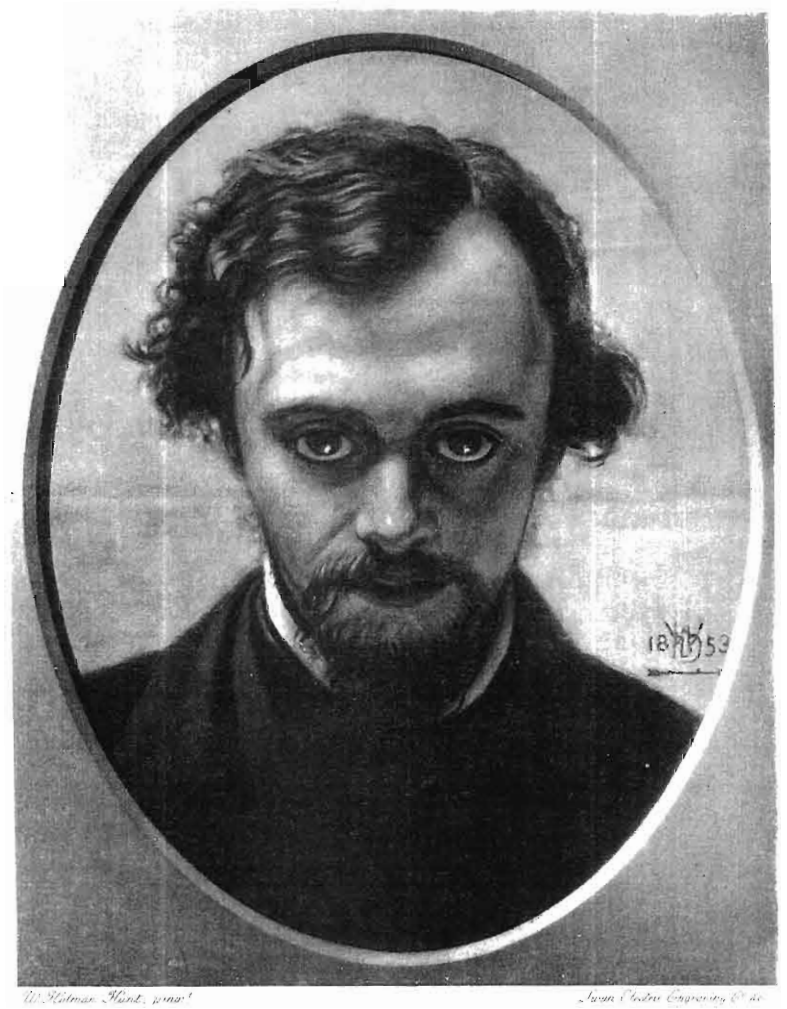
"Do you know *him*?" "Yes; indeed, in my small and choice collection, I am happy in being the possessor of a picture by him," I said. At this his opinion of me seemed to grow, and he talked long of other celebrated artists and of what they were doing, not at all discouraged by my show of desire to continue my reading. At last, to escape the charge of being a downright bear, I remarked that painters recently appeared to make a greater point of working direct from Nature. "Yes," he responded, "all but the Pre-Raphaelites." "Oh! I have been given to understand," I said, "that they make a principle of doing everything from Nature." "That's their humbug; they try to make ignorant people believe it; but, in fact, they do everything in their own studios." At this I looked fully up from my book and said, "Well, I have been assured positively that, whatever their failings and incapacity, they do give themselves the chance of getting at truth by going to the fountain-head, so your statement to the contrary surprises me. May I ask whether you speak this from hearsay or from your own knowledge? For indeed," I added, "I was really made to believe that Millais and Holman Hunt, with Collins, were living together last summer in Surrey, and that there they painted the 'Ophelia,' 'The Huguenot,' and 'The Hireling Shepherd,' which were in the Academy this year." "Not a word of truth in it," he said; "you have been entirely imposed upon. I know them as well as I know myself." "Personally?" I asked, looking fixedly at him. "Yes," he said, "and they are all thorough charlatans. Don't you know how they do their landscapes? I will tell you. I've seen them do it. When they want to paint a tree they have one single leaf brought to them, and a piece of the bark, and they go on repeating these until they have completed their Brummagem tree. They paint a field in the same manner, repeating one single blade of grass until the whole space is covered; and they call that Nature. Once, indeed, I did see the root of a tree fresh from the ground taken into Millais' studio." "By Jupiter!" I

ejaculated, "I am quite surprised to learn that they are such barefaced impostors." Whereupon my visitor wished me "good morning," saying that he was glad he had been able to undeceive me ; and called out as he walked away to a cottage up the glen, where he was painting, "You may take my word for that." His word for it! It was at first-hand too, and quite as good as "the very best authority," quoted often then and now for enforcement of conclusions! I never saw him any more, or I might have become a wiser man. In sending him away without explanation, which might have entailed much trouble upon me, as I had still to return daily to the spot for several weeks, I felt a singular satisfaction in the thought of the pleasant quarter of an hour he would pass in seeing my picture at the Royal Academy Exhibition of the succeeding May.

In the intervals of my attention to the picture from the cliff, I commenced the little landscape of Fairlight Downs. "The Strayed Sheep" was only finished after the equinoctial gales and their suite of rains and wind had often marred the day's work, and my extension of the original limits of the picture had proved a more serious addition to the extent of my work than I had contemplated, so that my rent at home, the bills at my Fairlight lodgings, and the cost of materials and carriage had exceeded the price (seventy guineas) which was to be paid for the picture.

Lear now had to move his place of painting for fresh objects in his picture to the other side of Hastings. He found a spot with an abundance of fig branches rooted in the fissures of the rocks, with rooks in hundreds. Thus he obtained all the materials for his picture. It became an impressive work. It is now the property of Earl Beauchamp.

My fellow-lodger had to return to town before me. He would not leave, however, without first asking if he might call on my father and mother, to assure them of my well-being and the certainty of my success, which he did.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti,
1853.

From the painting by W. Holman Hunt after the pastel drawing made in Millais' Studio, 1853, and kindly lent by W. M. Rossetti, with whom Woolner had exchanged it.