

## CHAPTER VI

1848

I believe it is no wrong observation that persons of genius, and those who are capable of art, are always most fond of Nature, as such are chiefly sensible that art consists in the imitation and study of Nature. On the contrary, people of the common level of understanding are principally delighted with the niceties and fantastic operations of art, and constantly think that finest which is least natural.—POPE.

I say to painters, Never imitate the manner of another ; for thereby you become the grandson instead of the son of Nature.—*Trattato della Pittura*, cap. lxxxii., L. DA VINCI.

NOT alone was the work that we were bent on producing to be more persistently derived from Nature than any having a dramatic significance yet done in the world ; not simply were our productions to establish a more frank study of creation as their initial intention, but the name adopted by us negatived the suspicion of any servile antiquarianism. Pre-Raphaelitism is not Pre-Raphaelism. Raphael in his prime was an artist of the most independent and daring course as to conventions. He had adopted his principle, it is true, from the store of wisdom gained by long years of toil, experiment, renunciation of used-up thought, and repeated efforts of artists, his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. What had cost Perugino, Fra Bartolomeo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michael Angelo more years to develop than Raphael lived, he seized in a day—nay, in one single inspection of his precursors' achievements. His rapacity was

atoned for by his never-stinted acknowledgments of his indebtedness, and by the reverent and philosophical use in his work of the conquests he had made. He inherited the booty like a prince, and, like Prince Hal, he retained his prize against all disputants; his plagiarism was the wielding of power in order to be royally free. Secrets and tricks were not what he stole; he accepted the lessons it had been the pride of his masters to teach, and they suffered no hardship at his hands. What he gained beyond enfranchisement was his master's use of enfranchisement, the power to prove that the human figure was of nobler proportion, that it had grander capabilities of action than seen by the casual eye, and that for large work, expression must mainly depend upon movement of the body. Further also, he tacitly demonstrated that there was no fast rule of composition to trammel the arrangement dictated to the artist's will by the theme. Yet, indeed, it may be questioned whether, before the twelve glorious years had come to an end after his sight of the Sixtine chapel ceiling, he did not stumble and fall like a high-mettled steed tethered in a fat pasture who knows not that his freedom is measured. The musing reader of history, however ordinarily sceptical of divine over-rule, may, on the revelation of a catastrophe altogether masqued till the fulness of time, involuntarily proclaim the finger of God pointing behind to some forgotten trespass committed in haste to gain the coveted end. There is no need here to trace any failure in Raphael's career; but the prodigality of his productiveness, and his training of many assistants, compelled him to lay down rules and manners of work; and his followers, even before they were left alone, accentuated his poses into postures. They caricatured the turns of his heads and the lines of his limbs, so that figures were drawn in patterns; they twisted companies of men into pyramids, and placed them like pieces on the chess-board of the foreground. The master himself, at the last, was not exempt from furnishing examples of such convention-

alities. Whoever were the transgressors, the artists who thus servilely travestied this prince of painters at his prime were Raphaelites. And although certain rare geniuses since then have dared to burst the fetters forged in Raphael's decline, I here venture to repeat, what we said in the days of our youth, that the traditions that went on through the Bolognese Academy, which were introduced at the foundation of all later schools and enforced by Le Brun, Du Fresnoy, Raphael Mengs, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, to our own time were lethal in their influence, tending to stifle the breath of design. The name Pre-Raphaelite excludes the influence of such corrupters of perfection, even though Raphael, by reason of some of his works, be in the list, while it accepts that of his more sincere forerunners.

It is needless to trace the fall which followed pride in other schools; the Roman case is the typical one. At the present day it is sometimes remarked that with such simple aims we ought to have used no other designation than that of art naturalists. I see no reason, however, to regret our choice of a name. Every art adventurer, however immature he may be in art lore, or whatever his tortuousness of theory, declares that Nature is the inspirer of his principles. All who call themselves *self-taught* are either barbarians, or else are ignoring indirect teaching. Life is not long enough in art for any one who starts from the beginning, to arrive beyond the wide outposts. Wise students accept the mastership of the great of earlier ages. True judgment directed us to choose an educational outflow from a channel where the stream had no trace of the pollution of egoism, and was innocent of pandering to corrupt thoughts and passions. We drew from this fountain source, and strove to add strength to its further meanderings by the inflow of new streams from nature and scientific knowledge. Our work was condemned by established artists for its daring innovation. Now unobservant critics, seeing that certain after-works of our elders possess the characteristics which these



elders, amongst others, originally cavilled at, call them our teachers. At the time of our boyish combination we had no thought that such pretensions could ever be made; we were too strongly engrossed with the desire to supply a defect in modern training to think of personal penalties.

In the ages intervening between the great Italian triumvirate of art and our own there had been many attempts—some with noble results—to get down, Antæus-like, to the solid earth again; but the profit had been only for individuals. The marriage between the Gothic and the Renaissance occurred while art was still of one household; there were emulations in the family, but these were as the rivalries of brethren; what each gained in strength and riches was added to the parental store. This happy unity was gradually dissolved, and never since in any nation has there existed a perfect system of handing on to the young the wisdom of the elder.

Millais and I had thought at first of husbanding only our own fields, but the outspoken zeal of our companions raised the prospect of winning waste lands, and of gaining for English art a new realm from the wilds, such as should be worthy of the race; for, manly and poetic as single painters had been, the means had been lacking of handing on their lifelong experience to their successors; still less had there been an opportunity of improving upon it, so each young artist began his struggle without the guidance of affectionate initiation, and therefore without an advancing standpoint.

To those who look upon art as a pretty toy, the earnestness of the notes which were passing through the minds of some of us at this critical time, and which I recall, may seem out of place even as sacred music at a ball. Such objections reveal the idle regard for art which is the natural outcome of fitful and unnational ambition of our disunited forerunners. Our impetuous hope was to replace this mere egotistical whim for art by a patriotic enthusiasm.

We were to work out our several natures not the less independently for our union. Millais was the best trained of all; he had a precocious capacity for both drawing and colouring. Not an hour of his life had been lost to his purpose of being a painter. The need of groping after systems by philosophic research and deductions was superseded in him by a quick instinct which enabled him to pounce as an eagle upon the prize he searched for. Favoured and young as he was, he had passed through an early tempering which left him firmer in will than many men ever become. This steadfastness was softened by generous enthusiasm, a sweet reasonableness, and a strong sense of the ridiculous. It was strange how from behind his practical qualities an inspiration to convey a poetic meaning would take possession of him, which was not less mystic genius because he could give no logical reason for it, or because no type of it could be found in earlier art. He felt the fire of his message; it seemed to make his face shine, so that Rossetti, to justify an expression of his in "Hand and Soul," said that when he looked at Millais in full, his face was that of an angel. The expression marks Rossetti's exaltation of mind when in his more earnest moods. He possessed, as was already proved in his black and white designs, a true novice's devotion to poetic mysticism and beauty, and a power of invention the exercise of which is meat and drink to the real artist. In this day there would seem to have been no merit in our early confidence in his artistic future; he is judged now by what he did later, but then it needed the bold gift of prophecy to decide that he would ever discipline himself enough to become a real painter. Since he had re-committed himself to the pursuit, he ceased to express fear of defeat. It will be seen he entertained equal confidence for others, for he was with all his heart a proselytizer, and for those who had gone even less far on the painter's road than himself, he made light of difficulties; but Millais and I, it must be confessed, often doubted,



spite of our friendly probation of the unproved candidates, whether Gabriel did not unduly overlook the argument against their success in the evidence that their indifference to art so far did not show the want of natural instinct for it; his unfaltering certainty in their future shamed our scepticism. No one, however, could be more sudden or wholesale in correction of a too favourable estimate of his impulsively recommended protégés, whether they were those we had adopted, or outsiders over whom



THE PRE-RAPHAELITE MEETING, 1848, BY ARTHUR HUGHES, FROM SKETCH BY W. H. H.

he at times went into paroxysms of wild laudation, until the disillusion came. In fact, he was then as extreme in his condemnation as he had been in his too extravagant praise.

In my own studio soon after the initiation of the Brotherhood, when I was talking with Rossetti about our ideal intention, I noticed that he still retained the habit he had contracted with Ford Madox Brown of speaking of the new principles of art as "Early Christian." I objected to the term as attached to a school as far from vitality as was modern classicalism, and I insisted upon the designation "Pre-Raphaelite" as more radically exact,

and as expressing what we had already agreed should be our principle. The second question, what our corporation itself should be called, was raised by the increase of our company. Gabriel improved upon previous suggestion with the word Brotherhood, overruling the objection



E. Landseer.

MONKEYANA.

that it savoured of clericalism. When we agreed to use the letters P.R.B. as our insignia, we made each member solemnly promise to keep its meaning strictly secret, foreseeing the danger of offending the reigning powers of the time. It is strange that with this precaution against dangers from outside our Body, we



took such small care to guard ourselves against those that might assail us from within. The name of our Body was meant to keep in our minds our determination ever to do battle against the frivolous art of the day, which had for its ambition "Monkeyana" ideas, "Books of Beauty," Chorister Boys, whose forms were those of melted wax with drapery of no tangible texture. The illustrations to Holy Writ were feeble enough to incline a sensible public to revulsion of sentiment. Equally shallow were the approved imitations of the Greeks, and paintings that would ape Michael Angelo and Titian, with, as the latest innovation, through the Germans, designs that affected without sincerity the naïveté of Perugino and the early Flemings.

The designs for the etchings to Keats's *Isabella* by Millais and myself were made to explain the position of the lover in the house of the two brothers. In spare hours I made progress with my black and white design of Lorenzo at his desk in the warehouse. In this my business experiences were of some help, as Gabriel, when I was blaming my fate for having taken me away from school so early, and having placed me so long in the City, pointed out soothingly, that the knowledge of men and human ways which it gave was not the only example of what I had obtained as equivalent to the loss of early acquirements gained from teachers, labelled by him at the moment as "of very little use in life." Rossetti proposed to combine with us in the series, but he never produced his contribution.

Before leaving my last studio I had already painted the face of Rienzi in my picture from a fellow-student with a fine head, but soon I became convinced that the racial character would be more satisfying if Gabriel would serve as my model. This he good-naturedly did, and accordingly I cleaned the canvas and made the new head a portrait of him, as far as the expression needed would allow, and as the character of the strong man of action I had to represent would warrant.



"HE KNEW WHOSE GENTLE HAND WAS AT THE LATCH  
BEFORE THE DOOR HAD GIVEN HER TO HIS EYES."—KEATS.



Monthly meetings held in turn at the studios of the members were our means of considering the progress of affairs and the manner of extending our operations. In my notebook of the time I come upon a scribble of the six other members when they happened to have arranged themselves in a form that seemed worth impressing upon the memory.<sup>1</sup>

To no one at this period did Rossetti reveal himself with less reserve than to me. I have to report of matters connected with his art career alone. If I am ever led outside the margin of this interest with him as with other friends, it is because other writers have already passed this sacred barrier of reticence, and have given false impressions which I alone am left to correct. The pictures and the poems that Rossetti published will ever render him a personage of real interest, worthy of keen study in all points in which his life was public and professional.

Rossetti is before my mind's eye now, as daily communion with him at the most impressionable period of life made him appear. Imagine, then, a young man of decidedly Southern breed and aspect, about five feet seven in height, with long brown hair touching his shoulders, not caring to walk erect, but rolling carelessly as he slouched along, pouting with parted lips, searching with dreaming eyes; the openings large and oval; grey eyes, looking directly only when arrested by external interest, otherwise gazing listlessly about, the iris not reaching the lower lid, the ball of the eye somewhat prominent by its fulness, although not by lack of depth in the orbits; the lids above and below tawny coloured. His nose was aquiline, delicate, with a depression from the frontal sinus shaping the bridge; the nostrils full, the brow rounded and prominent, and the line of the jaw angular and marked, while still uncovered with beard. His shoulders were not square, and only just masculine in shape. His singularity of gait depended upon his width of hip, which was unusual. Altogether, he was a lightly built man, with delicate hands and feet;

<sup>1</sup> Page 140.

although neither weak nor fragile in constitution, he was altogether unaffected by athletic exercise. He was careless in his dress, which was, as then not very unusual with professional men, black and of evening cut. So indifferent was he to the accepted requirements of society, that he would allow spots of mud to remain dry on his clothes for several days. He wore a brown overcoat, and, with his pushing stride and careless exclamations, a special scrutiny would have been needed to discern the refinement and tenderness that dwelt in the breast of the defiant youth; but any one who approached and addressed him was struck with surprise to find all critical impressions dissipated in a moment, for the language of the painter was wealthy and polished, and he proved to be courteous, gentle, and winsome, generous in compliment, rich in interest in the pursuits of others, while he talked much about his own, and in every respect, as far as could be shown by outward manner, a cultured gentleman. He delighted most in those poems for which the world then had shown but little appreciation. *Sordello* and *Paracelsus* he would give from memory by twenty pages at a time, and in turn came the shorter inventions of Browning, which were more within the compass of attention suddenly appealed to. Then would follow the grand rhetoric from Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, in the scene between the herald and the Court at Ghent, with Philip in reply, a scene very much to my taste, with my picture standing on the easel designed to show the sword of Justice, inevitable in the fulness of time, on all such as being strong scourge the weak, and being rich rob the poor, and "change the sweat of nature's brow to blood." To this would follow the pathetic strains of W. B. Scott's *Rosabel* (which latter I have always thought originated Rossetti's interest in the area of reflection to which belonged the subject called "Found"). Patmore's *Woodman's Daughter* was a novel interest to all of us eager to find new poems. Tennyson's

You might have won the Poet's crown,  
If such be worth the winning now,



came out at the very time, and nowhere was its scorn more profoundly echoed than round our hearth. Poe's *Raven*, his *Ulalume*, and other of the woeful singer's polished strains succeeded, with countless varied examples of melodious pathos; all showed a wide field of interest as to poetic models, but it will be noted that these were nearly all of sad or tragic tenor.

He told me the story of his parentage, which, as far as I can remember, ran thus. His father, Giuseppe Rossetti, was born in the Abruzzi about the time of the first French Republic; in his early years he went to Naples when one of the many revolts under the Bourbon kings broke out. He had come as a young poet, writing songs for the people of inflammatory discontent and roseate promise in reform. The king's government recognised that Giuseppe's strains encouraged the rebellious to prolonged resistance, and when the army gained the mastery the police were directed to apprehend the writer. He was in hiding, and an English admiral who was cruising in the Bay received information of his plight and his place of retreat. A company of sailors was landed, and marched through the city as if to see the sights. In anticipation a suit of sailor's clothes had been sent to the place of refuge, and the concealed offender had arrayed himself as a British tar. As the real seamen were marking time, as if retarded in their progress, in front of the house, Giuseppe slipped into their ranks; imitating his new comrades, he followed down to the quay, where all descended into the gig which was waiting, and the fugitive was soon on board the English flag-ship. Shortly after, a summons was received from the government to deliver up the proscribed poet. The answer was that he was now under the English flag; soon the sails bore him to England, where he quickly found friends. The post of Italian professor was given him at University College, London, and he prospered as a private teacher. The Polidori family was already established here, and the escaped revolutionist proved the innate love of peace

in his breast by winning one of the daughters, who became the mother of Maria, Gabriel, William, and Christina.

Giuseppe had written a commentary on Dante, in which he interpreted the story as altogether allegorical. He naturally possessed a large store of trecento poems; thus Gabriel and the other children had grown up familiar with the imagination of the earliest Italian poets, and a strong although vague inclination towards early art.

It may be doubted whether the Rossettis knew that an accomplished painter of their name flourished in the cinquecento. His picture of "The Deposition" is an excellent work; to be seen at Volterra.

Native disposition had not led Gabriel to profess respect for natural science; never would he evince any regard for the remote stages of creative development or the lower steps of human progress. He regarded questions on such points as altogether foreign to poetry. The language used in early times to describe the appearances of Nature he accepted as the sanctified and ever-sufficient formulæ. Modern scientific discoveries had no charms for him; neither had the changed conditions of the people who were to be touched by art any claim for special consideration; for when men were different from the cultured of mediæval days they were not poetic in his eyes; they had no right to be different from the people of Dante's time.

I have no intention of criticising his philosophy. It was inherent in him; the character of the literature he had most dwelt upon had fostered it, and Brown's taste for chivalric personages and his recent indulgence in quaint mediævalism had confirmed the predilection.

It was impossible then to decide whether the determination he expressed was altogether final, for at the same time he proclaimed that the radical want in modern art was a stricter study of Nature. Our estimate of the genius he already showed and our confidence in the leading



of the new inspiration had removed all doubt of his fitness for combination with us.

We often trenched on scientific and historic grounds, for my previous reading and cogitations, without making me profound, had led me to love these interests and to regard them as of the greatest poetic and pictorial importance for modern art; I argued that the appeal we made could be strengthened by adopting the knowledge which human penetration had discovered.

In my boyhood, when first opening the volume of Shakespeare with misgiving of my ability to understand the reasonings of the master, I was astonished at the condescension of his mind, and it gave me infinite encouragement to find that many of his fancies had passed through my own idle brain, and had so moved me that I had attempted to express them to my intimates with nothing gained thereby but derision. As a dramatic teacher he did not despise the groundlings; indeed I concluded that the great measure of welcome awarded to this kingly genius was but a just response to his own large-hearted sympathy with his fellows of every class; he catered for the unlearned not less than for the profoundest philosopher. In *Hamlet*, for instance, the plot is made so clear that it enthralled the mind of the child who yet for many years cannot understand its reflections on the mysterious problems of life, problems which no other teacher conceives so healthily or expresses so richly.

The charity of his example had led me to rate lightly that kind of art devised only for the initiated, and to suspect all philosophies which assume that the vulgar are to be left for ever unredeemed. Dantesque shapes of imagery became Rossetti's alphabet of art, and in his designs, as in his poems, his mind expressed itself in a form independent of new life and joy in nature. This partiality had never been counterbalanced by rough experience of the battle of life; he spurned new fields of interest for the work of either poet or painter, and disputed my contention that the aid of inexhaustible science should be

used to convey new messages of hope to fresh broods of men. It surprised me that Rossetti, of Italian blood, had no longing to satisfy his eyes with the sight of native soil sanctified by great memories, just as did also his indifference to the actuality of a poetic subject; it was the finished phraseology, the mode of delineation, that dominated him.

We yearn most for what seems denied to us. Long and bitter to me had been the days when, turning eyes from book visions of the renowned cities of Greece, of Italy, and of Egypt, I saw only blank walls, unchangeable summer and winter, and the threat thereon written large, that my fate was to know only through others of the sky-piercing mountains, of the sea calm and wild by turns, and of adventures by flood and field. The trial had been borne sadly; my father had endured it before me, and yet had delight in the wonders of the world. A prison many a time has become a study and a workshop; in my old office I had found some geometrical and mathematical books, and my master had helped me with the problems; he had also set me to do geological and astronomical diagrams, and these studies seemed to me full of poetic suggestion. But Rossetti despised such inquiries; what could it matter, he said, whether the earth moved round the sun or the sun circled about the earth, and in the question of the antiquity of man and his origin he refused to be interested. This led up to the view which he expressed, that attention to chronological costume, to the types of different races of men, to climatic features and influences, were of no value in any painter's work, and that therefore oriental proprieties in the treatment of Scriptural subjects were calculated to destroy the poetic nature of a design. He instanced Horace Vernet's Bible pictures treated orientally, "Rebecca giving Eleazer to drink," and some others, to justify his opinion. I insisted that Vernet, though a remarkably skilful composer and executant, being destitute of poetic fire, was not, and could not under any conditions or systems enchant any but the dull. It was the question of the value of my plan, carried



out five years later, of going to Syria to paint sacred subjects which brought this discussion to a head. My contention was that more exact truth was distinctly called for by the additional knowledge and longings of the modern mind, and that it was not outside the lines of the noblest art; however, in wishing for more liberty of judgment for myself, I would not, as many reformers do, stint that of others.

Despite differences, we both agreed that a man's work must be the reflex of a living image in his own mind, and not the icy double of the facts themselves. It will be seen that we were never realists. I think art would have ceased to have the slightest interest for any of us had the object been only to make a representation, elaborate or unelaborate, of a fact in nature. Independently of the conviction that such a system would put out of operation the faculty making man "like a God," it was apparent that a mere imitator gradually comes to see nature claylike and finite, as it seems when illness brings a cloud before the eyes. Art dominated by this spirit makes us esteem the world as without design or finish, unbalanced, unfitting, and unlovely, not interpreted into beauty as true art makes it. It is needless to give modern examples; alas! they have multiplied of late. I can instance Polembourg as one of the old landscapists who made God's sky look hideous, although his handling and surface were careful; we once all agreed that a bright March sky was too crude, and too much like this man's work to be painted.

It is now high time to correct one important misapprehension. In agreeing to use the utmost elaboration in painting our first pictures, we never meant more than to insist that the practice was essential for training the eye and hand of the young artist; we should not have admitted that the relinquishment of this habit of work by a matured painter would make him less a Pre-Raphaelite. I can say this the better because I have retained later than either of my companions did, the restrained handling of an experimentalist.

There are reasons why my original account of

Rossetti should not be withdrawn or recast. This was published soon after his death, dictated by a desire to treat his memory with liberal appreciation and gentleness. This has not been met by equivalent recognition of what was due to Rossetti's fellows; my tributes to his honour have been too often interpreted as an acknowledgment of his "leadership," and though this was very far from my intention, yet as my words were strictly accurate, I have no compunction in reprinting them. In some cases, to avoid what would have seemed like egoism, I made reports of his talk without mention of the initiatory programme which had called forth his amplification of the idea. Repeating my tribute I now add other facts which prove to be essential to the correct balance of the story; this would be but of trivial importance if the issue were merely a personal one, to determine whether Millais, Rossetti, or I most had the responsibility of Pre-Raphaelitism, but it involves the question as to the exact purpose of Pre-Raphaelitism. This is so vital in my eyes that if it were decided to mean what the Brown-Rossetti circle and all the critics, native and foreign, inspired by them, continually ascribe to it, Pre-Raphaelitism should certainly not engage my unprofessional pen.

My past experience in pattern designing, and my criticisms upon the base and vulgar forms and incoherent curves in contemporary furniture, to which I drew Rossetti's attention on his first visit to me, encouraged visions of reform in these particulars, and we speculated on improvement in all household objects, furniture, fabrics, and other interior decorations. Nor did we pause till Rossetti enlarged upon the devising of ladies' dresses and the improvement of man's costume, determining to follow the example of early artists not in one branch of taste only, but in all.

For sculpture Gabriel expressed little passion; he professed admiration of many men engaged in plastic work, but he could not understand their devotion to



what in those days never rose to the height of human interest; the fact was, the reason of this baldness lay in neglect of drawing and painting by exercise in which, the great sculptors of old made themselves subtle designers and masters of form, light, shade, and colour. We agreed that architecture also came within the proper work of a painter, who, learning the principles of construction from Nature herself, could apply them by shaping and decorating the material he had to deal with. Music Rossetti regarded as positively offensive; for him it was nothing but a noisy nuisance. It may be that this opinion was not permanent.

In our scheme, when we obtained recognition, each of us was to have a set of studios attached to his house, some for working in ourselves in diverse branches of art, some for showing our productions to admirers, who would be attended to by our pupils when we were too busy to be disturbed. We were also by such means to introduce worthy students, and to make art take its due place in life.

All these castles in the air were pleasing visions; only when Rossetti in bandying hopes extended the grandeur of the dream of our fortunes, I expressed some curiosity to know how due appreciation could be counted on from a people so committed to the idea of subdivision of labour, and so self-complacent in their tastes as were our contemporaries, who had none of that far-seeing spirit which made Locke profess his ignorance in order to learn more. Rossetti dismissed such fears to the winds, asking me if I could not understand that there were hundreds of young aristocrats and millionaires growing up who would be only too glad to get due direction how to make the country as glorious as Greece and Italy had been. I was fain to hope that this view was the correct one, as with his father's experience as a professor among persons of high degree I assumed they had met such modern Mæcenæ; I was glad to encourage in myself the belief that the rich would in time know how to use their influence and to spend their money worthily.

There remain now but a few more personal particulars of the interests of that time to be recorded. Our combination had much of happiness in it. Gabriel had progressed greatly with his picture, and had painted St. Joachim and the draperies of the principal figures. The grey dress of the Virgin gave him trouble because he had, in order to write and design, allowed himself to leave the paint to dry, which while wet had been in good state for completion. On his consulting me, I decided that it should be rubbed off and recommenced, but he was reluctant to resort to such draconian measures, and essayed to treat the half-dried pigment like the tone on a mezzotint plate. Scraping through to the white canvas below with the point of a knife, he hatched and stippled the lights, and then the darks were expressed with touches from a brown brush, so that the effect at a distance was quite happy, and we agreed that it might stand for the nonce. This dry method did not produce lasting satisfaction, and after its first public appearance it was obliterated by a coat of paint applied in the usual way.

There were frequent days when he would leave his appointed task to engage himself with some other invention in form or in words that had taken possession of his fancy. When he had once sat down, and was engaged in the effort to chase his errant thoughts into an orderly road, and the spectral fancies had all to be kept in his mind's eye, his tongue was hushed, he remained fixed and inattentive to all that went on about him, he rocked himself to and fro, and at times he moaned lowly, or hummed for a brief minute, as though telling off some idea. All this while he peered intently before him, looking hungry and eager, and passing by in his regard any who came before him, as if not seen at all. Then he would often get up and walk out of the room without saying a word. Years afterwards, when he became stout, and people, not without some reason, found a resemblance in him to the bust of Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon, and, later still, when he had outgrown this resemblance, it seemed



to me that it was in his early days only that the soul within had been truly seen in his face. In these days his inner life was untainted to an exemplary degree, and he worthily rejoiced in the poetic atmosphere of sacred and spiritual dreams that then dwelt within him in embryo, though undoubtedly some of his noisy demonstrations hindered many persons from recognising this inspiration at once.

To be a guest at the dinner-table of the Rossettis was a pleasure full of novel interest to me. I was invited soon after their son came to my studio. The old gentleman was then relinquishing the use of English. He was beginning to be an invalid whose sight needed protection by a projecting shade. Gabriel has left an excellent drawing of him at a slightly later date. The mother was the gentle and presiding matron we see Saint Ann to be in "The Girlhood of the Virgin." The elder sister was overflowing with attention to all, expressing interest in each individually, and Miss Christina was exactly the pure and docile-hearted damsel that her brother portrayed God's Virgin pre-elect to be. The father arose to receive me from a group of foreigners around the fire, all escaped revolutionists from the Continent, and addressed me in English in a few words of welcome as "Mr. Madox Brown," a slip on which his eldest daughter rated him pleasantly. He was so engrossed in a warm discussion going on that some minutes afterwards he again made the same mistake. The conversation was in Italian, but occasionally merged into French, with the obvious purpose of taking into the heat of the conference refugees unfamiliar with the former language. The tragic passions of the group around the fire did not in the slightest degree involve either the mother, the daughters, or the sons, except when the latter explained that the objects of the severest denunciations were Bomba, Pio Nono, and Metternich, or, in turn, Count Rosso and his memory; with these execrated names were uttered in different tones those of Mazzini, Garibaldi, and Louis Napoleon, who had once been a visitor at the house. The hearth guests took it in

turn to discourse, and no one had delivered many phrases ere the excitement of speaking made him rise from his chair, advance to the centre of the group, and there gesticulate as I had never seen people do except upon the stage. What I knew then of French was only by reading, and I was surprised to discover that it helped me scarcely at all to follow the native tongue spoken excitedly and quickly. Each orator evidently found difficulty in expressing his full anger, but when passion had done its measure in work and gesture, so that I as a stranger felt pained at not being able to join in practical sympathy, the declaimer went back to his chair, and while another was taking up the words of mourning and appeal to the too tardy heavens, the predecessor kept up the refrain of sighs and groans. When it was impossible for me to ignore the distress of the alien company, Gabriel and William shrugged their shoulders, the latter with a languid sign of commiseration, saying it was generally so. As the dinner was being put on the table some of the strangers persisted, despite invitation, in going; some still stayed round the fire declaring solemnly that they had dined.

It was a novelty to me to begin dinner with macaroni, and there were other dishes and dressings not usual at English tables, but in all respects we had an excellent meal. Our circle conversed in English; the father talked with his friends from the hearth, and at the end of each course he got up and joined them, until he was once more called to the head of the table by the appearance of a new dish. At the conclusion of the meal the brothers and I saw the remainder of the company established at dominoes and chess before the arrival of the other members for the P.R.B. meeting upstairs. We *de facto* members were anxious to see what the probationary ones were preparing for future work to justify our expectation of them. William Rossetti could not yet give up his Inland Revenue clerkship, but he showed us some of his extremely painstaking if very angular outlines from the



life, and these were a proof that he kept in mind his obligation as a P.R.B. to become an artist. Other probationers from whom we expected work, appeared with neither work nor apology, an omission which we tried to construe into evidence that extensive designs were being prepared as a surprise in store.