

CHAPTER VI

1856-57-58

Write me as one who loved his fellow men.—LEIGH HUNT.

BROWN's suggestion, before I moved from Pimlico, that we should found a colony of artists where all our Body should reside and have a common room and a general dining-room, never got beyond the initial stage of good intention. It was a scheme which I think only Brown entertained seriously. He was fully persuaded of its practicability and of the advantages to be gained by it, declaring that the distance from London which would be an evil to one man alone would be no disadvantage to a company of painters. Brown argued that the colony would quickly acquire such a reputation in the world that all people in society would compete to procure invitations to its dinners and fête days. I asked with levity whether the lady members might not exercise themselves in getting up quarrels. He, after indulging himself in a good-natured laugh, admitted that with ordinary women such would undoubtedly be the case, but that our sisters and wives would be so truly superior in comparison with others that no such calamity need be feared; but that, on the contrary, they would set so high an example of gentleness as could not fail to spread abroad. Having had to discourage Brown in his Utopian plan, I felt obliged to agree to become a member of the Hogarth Club. We fixed

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upon this name to do homage to the stalwart founder of Modern English art.

Probably it was to check a tendency to disruption in our ranks that this Club was founded. The idea was to have a meeting-place for artists and amateurs in sympathy with us, and to use the walls for exhibiting our sketches and pictures to members and friendly visitors. It was further claimed by its founders that the Club would promote harmony among the younger members of the profession at large; but the most that I expected of it was that it would show the degree of combination that was possible among the non-members of the Academy, and this, when established, it did very negatively.

When the first collection was brought together, Gabriel sent two excellent examples of his last oil work. He had now completely changed his philosophy, which he showed in his art, leaving Stoicism for Epicureanism, and after a pause, which was devoted to design in water-colour, had again taken to oil-painting. He executed heads of women of voluptuous nature with such richness of ornamental trapping and decoration that they were a surprise, coming from the hand which had hitherto indulged itself in austerities. Mr. Combe, at my instigation, possessed himself of one of his water-colours, "Dante drawing the Angel." Sir Walter Trevelyan, Ruskin, and Colonel Gillum also bought many of his early designs, and to the kindness of the latter I am indebted for permission to reproduce some examples; but at the time spoken of, when the Hogarth Club came to life, his whole spirit as to his early friendships was changing. The Committee applied to me to use my interest with the possessor of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" to contribute it. To prove myself a good clubman I took pains to persuade Mr. Fairbairn to lend the picture; but on seeing it on the walls, Rossetti immediately had his works removed. The Club was conducted from the beginning in this envious spirit. Brown, on one occasion, not being satisfied with his treatment, arrived at breakfast-time, took down

all his contributions, and drove off with them in a cab. In balloting for new members the decisions were directed by prejudice—not against the candidate, but his nominator and supporters. Notwithstanding this dissension, the little exhibition was a very notable one. Burne-Jones there—for perhaps the first time in public—displayed his wonderful faculty of accomplished design in drawing and colour, and astonished all by his extraordinary advance since he had been in Gabriel's hands. Leighton here exhibited a pathetic and exquisite outline of a simple group composed of a deformed likeness of the Godhead mournfully looking up, as he passes by, at the statue of a beautiful Antinous, and oh, the pity of it!

Leighton had been placed originally, as he told me, under a German painter, whose portrait is in the Uffizzi. He considered that this pupilage had been a serious misfortune to him, which he had made great effort to counteract in his subsequent practice. What was the source of his later style was not explained. His first exhibited painting was distinctly continental, but it reflected the best type of the fashion abroad; and it would be difficult to point to his definite teacher, though, when Carbanell's works were seen, it was impossible not to feel that the same influence had affected both. The work of both may be classed as of courtly classical character. The party in the Academy which had been most hostile to our movement at first greeted his work with loud acclamation of praise, but noting that the continuance of this generosity would involve them in danger of another innovation on their humdrum domains, they bestirred themselves to oppose him also, and when these circumventing members were in power they treated Leighton's contributions in a manner that would prevent them from attracting attention. His pictures for a few years were unequal, and occasionally he fell below the level of his first work. Yet while feeling for new possibilities he never lost his way. His power might be compared to that of an elegant yacht of dainty and finished capacity



The Tuscan Straw Plaiter.

for pleasure service, without pretensions to serve as a transport carrying men bent on tragic purpose, but one to sail among summer islands and bring back dainty cargoes of beautiful flowers and fruits. He may eventually win even greater recognition for some of his best work than he has yet gained. He deserves comparison with the accomplished of any age, perhaps even more for his sculpture than for his painting. In his early days he had the advantage, seized most wisely, of his father's support, in the final years of his life it could not but be regretted that the weight of official duties interfered with the full exercise of his genius. Loyalty to innate classicalism was his religion, and in the end of the fifties it was still difficult to decide how far he would develop. Once, when I went round to him at Orme Square, where he had six paintings ready for Exhibition, after I had made my sincere congratulations and was hurrying away to my own work, he caught me at the door saying, "Now I want you to return and tell me which of my set you most approve." I pointed out three or four that were distinctly decorative. "And have you no words to say for these others?" he asked. "Very many, of envious admiration for the charming ability with which they are done," I replied. "Now," he returned with unconcealed pain, "I call this mortifying. You pick out for praise those which have cost me no serious effort whatever, and those which I have really expended my deepest feelings upon, you only praise as being done with facility." I declared with warmth that I perhaps was wrong, but that I was sure he would find many fully as appreciative of the one set of pictures as I was of the other.

Every season his treatment at the hands of the Academy became more severe, and this continued till, in 1863, when giving evidence before the Royal Commission as to the condition of the Academy,¹ I instanced the way in which his paintings in the last Exhibition were disadvantageously hung, as convincing illustration of the

¹ See *Blue Book*, 1863.

manner in which certain artists were pursued with injurious prejudice. Soon after this, he began to surmount Academic displeasure, and was elected a member of the Body. But in anticipating the story of Leighton's first decade, we have gone some years beyond the last days of the Hogarth Club.

A year or two before this, meeting me one day, Leighton spoke excitedly, saying that on finding out, as he did at some meeting at which I was absent, that the real object of the Hogarth Club was to attack and upset the Academy, he had at once sent in his resignation. He concluded by saying, "I would not believe this was your intention until one of the members asserted it in so many words. I will have nothing to do with any such programme, and utterly disapprove of it."

I told him that he never heard me say anything of the sort. I wanted no one to shape his course by mine, that I would go the way that seemed to me right and proper for myself, innocent of plots. "As to the Club," I said, "my connection with it is eminently passive."

When the Hogarth broke up, Brown came and rated me severely for being the cause of its ruin. "In what way?" I asked, "I've tried to avoid all the quarrels; and in fact the little I did in exhibiting and attending was really only in compliance with your expressed desire."

"That is exactly what I complain of. You made it too evident you had no interest in the Club," he said.

The next Academy season came round, and I had no contribution ready; so precious life sped, making my dream of returning to the East an ever-increasing mockery to me.

Mr. and Mrs. Combe now agreed that I had been right in my judgment of the course that I should take towards the Academy, and they then told me what had induced them the more to wish me to court the protection of the powerful Institution. Mrs. Combe in the previous year had been in London on the artists' show day, and Mrs. Collins, the widow of the Academician, undertook

to take her to the leading studios: as they entered the room of one of the favourite members, crowded with amateurs and picture buyers, the artist received the lady he knew with, "Ah, Mrs. Collins, now you are the very person to tell us whether it is true that Holman Hunt has found some fool to give him 400 guineas for that absurd picture which he calls 'The Light of the World'?"

"It is quite true," was the reply of the lady, who had a spirit of humour now not unmixed with asperity. "And



W. H. H.

THE WIFE'S DEATH.

you will perhaps permit me to introduce you to the wife of 'the fool,' who will confirm the statement."

As a further illustration of the spirit of the art world of that day, the following story will serve.

A picture dealer with a large business was entertaining a bachelor party, and a *posse* of painters in one corner were inveighing against the errors of Pre-Raphaelitism, when one of the company, the more remarkable that he was a member of the Academy, took up our cause, and declared that he approved our greater exactness in the rendering of outdoor nature, and that so far was he converted by our example that he intended in the picture that now occupied him to paint the vegetation

out of doors direct from nature. The room was evidently an effective whispering gallery, it carried the words to the opposite side, and almost as quickly the host strode across, saying, "Well, Mr. P——, you were painting your present picture for me; after what I've heard I decline it."

Nevertheless, established artists who had been adverse were converted to the principles which we had advocated and practised; more than one of the best men had painted with truth from nature, with acknowledgments to us, and there were but few members who had not attempted to mend their ways in respect to thoroughness, and franker attention to the great masters.

Too often I had to be reconciled to the sight of my "Temple" picture turned to the wall while I was giving my time to work which would pay next quarter's bills, for when the insult of my non-election was bruited abroad, the verdict of adverse critics became more unqualified. I had no choice, therefore, but to persevere with replicas and with illustrations for poorly-paid current periodicals and books.

It will be seen that the election of Millais had not brought him a full measure of justice, but it had the advantage of persuading picture-buyers to believe that the judgment which had condemned him at first was now appeased by some imaginary submission to the arch authority of the recognised institution on matters of art, and the early hesitation in purchasing his original works was greatly put aside. I had still to suffer the disadvantage of my more than two years' absence from England, and change of subject still hampered me.

When Henry Vaux's gatherings came to an end, Arthur Lewis started more sumptuous smoking evenings at his chambers in Jermyn Street. At the beginning of the sixties he took possession of Moray Lodge on Campden Hill, a house with spacious gardens and lawn in the lane leading to Holland Park; on the left-hand side of this lane stood the house which had belonged to the Marquis of

Bute, and which was now tenanted by the amateur painter, Sir John, and Lady Constance Leslie. The second house belonged to Lord Airlie, the third to Lord Macaulay, and the last was that of the Duke of Argyll. The gates leading to these had posts surmounted by lamps, which at night spread a stately but sombre light over the road. The lane narrowed, and was barred to all but pedestrians beyond this point. In summer, when garden parties were given, and on "Moray Minstrel" nights, it was a merry crew that greeted one another as they drove up to the Lewis domain. The host always welcomed his guests with cheery greetings. He was a widely accomplished man and an ardent lover of music. In his boyhood he had desired to be a painter, but his father, at a turning-point in his life, explained to him the lucrative nature of the silk-mercantile business he would be rejecting, and this decided him to forego his artistic enthusiasm; but he indulged his taste as an amateur, and in time became able to produce excellent etchings and studies from nature. He sat the saddle like a master, and his accomplished driving of his four-in-hand made many passers-by pause and turn. He was a cordial host, but however late his hospitality kept him at night, he was always seen arriving from Campden Hill by 8.30 at his place of business. At Moray Lodge his taste was proved to be of good character by a fine group in bronze of "The Wrestling Duellists," executed by a Swedish sculptor, which Lewis had selected from a great Exhibition, and also by some paintings, prominent among which were Arthur Hughes' poetic picture entitled "April Love," the first picture seen here by Joseph Israel of a drowned fisherman carried from the boat over the beach by his companions, and a small picture by Millais of a Highlander reading his letter from home in the trenches.

One signal, even national, service which Lewis rendered was the counsel he gave to a widow who appealed to him to exercise his power to introduce her son to some business career, the more desired because of his

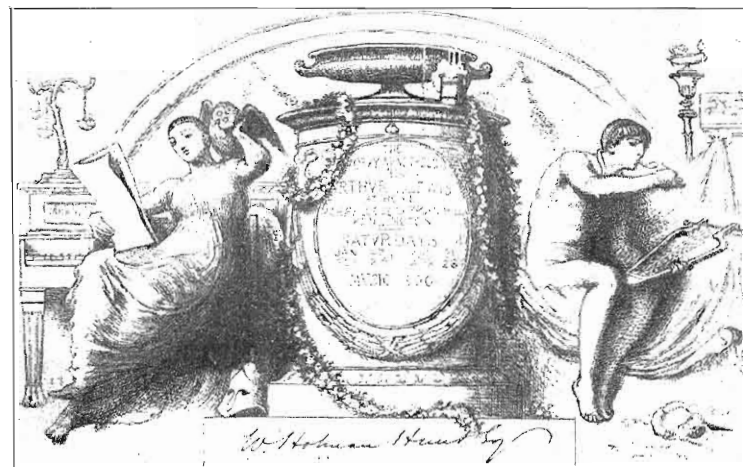
great love of drawing, and the consequent danger that he might become an artist. Lewis, on seeing the designs of this boy, proved to her that it would be unjustifiable to prevent him following his bent. This was the beginning of the artistic career of Fred Walker, one of the most poetic painters of the nineteenth century. His life, by Marks, is an excellent memoir, but the



FREDERICK WALKER'S DESIGN.

man was so important that any additional reminiscences from the observations or records of friends are of interest. He was a small and fragile man, not more than five feet four, and truly delicate in the double sense of the word. His face was beautifully modelled, of a classical build, not apparent to the casual observer, owing to an occasional marring of his complexion, resulting probably from incessant smoking and late hours. Observing the feebleness of his frame, one naturally desired to remonstrate with him about the overtaxing of his fretful constitution

by feverish habits. Once or twice when I met him in the street in the small hours of darkness, he seemed to suspect possible admonitions, and hurried by as though to evade them. He was constant as a guest at Lewis' parties, and was ever conspicuous in a knot composed of Calderon, Storey, Wallis, Du Maurier, and Stacey Marks; the two latter often delivered humorous recitals. Burne-Jones, who was then steadily growing in reputation in private circles and at the old Water Colour Society, was



FREDERICK WALKER'S DESIGN FOR INVITATION CARD.

an occasional visitor; and later the youthful W. B. Richmond. It was a strange mixture of company that might be found at these meetings in Lewis' house, for the entertainments became famous, and men of all classes were pleased to go into Bohemia for the night. There might be seen Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Lord Houghton, Edmund Yates, Millais, Leighton, Arthur Sullivan, Canon Harford, John Leech, Dicky Doyle, Tom Taylor, Jopling, the first winner of the Wimbledon prize, the Severns, Mike Halliday, Sandys, Val Prinsep, Poole the tailor, who helped to found the renewed French

Empire, by lending £10,000 to Louis Napoleon, and Tattersall the horse-dealer.

On Sunday afternoons I not infrequently went to Sydenham to visit my friends, Mr. and Mrs. George Grove and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Phillips, and we would pass the afternoon lounging in the courts and grounds of the Crystal Palace, with which Fergusson and Grove had been connected from the beginning, and had helped to make it the wonder it was when newly established. At my hosts' table many friends met who adjourned by a ten o'clock train to the Cosmopolitan Club in Berkeley Square, where free and friendly converse often continued till morning's small hours.

Although I refused myself autumn holidays or visit to the country not necessary for painting accessories in small pictures, the "Finding in the Temple" remained sometimes for months without a single day's work added to it. Season after season thus went by, while others were steadily adding to their fame. Millais appeared in town with three pictures, the most important of which was the "Knight crossing the Ford"; this was notable for poetic conception and realisation direct from Nature herself. That portion of the world of men who never recognise poetry unless it presents itself with a strong likeness to something already sanctified by usage were slow to see in this picture how sterling a poet the painter was. I was sure, however, that one oversight in the work would be a stumbling-block to indiscriminating appreciation. When first I saw the picture at the studio it struck me that the horse was glaringly too large; the room was full of visitors and I did not argue the question then, but in the evening I would not give up my candour, and I assured Millais that the exquisite beauty and the idea of the painting would be seriously marred to the impatient world if the work were exhibited without correction. He fought every inch of the ground, not liking that the exhibition of the work should be postponed for the proposed alteration, and the success promised for the picture delayed till

next year, but eventually relented so far that he promised to go down and see the Guards exercising the next morning, thus to check the relative size of horse and rider, and if he found the proportion so much out as I said, he would keep the picture back. The next evening I inquired what he had decided. "Oh," said he, "as to those Guards, I never saw anything so ridiculous in my life, and with a Society pretending to exist for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals! Every soldier ought to be prosecuted, for all had their feet nearly reaching the ground like old-fashioned dandy-horse riders; they ought to be compelled to get off and walk, and not torment the poor little creatures they bestride. No—I will tell you I have been talking to Tom Taylor about it, and he has written a verse in imitation of an old ballad. The size of the horse will now be a merit."

In this resolution the picture was exhibited with the following verse:—

The goode hors that the knyghte bestrode,
I trow his backe it was full brode,
And wighte and warie still he yode,
Noght reckinge of rivere :
He was so mickle and so stronge,
And thereto so wonderlich longe
In londe was none his peer.
N'as hors but by him seemed smalle,
The knyghte him cleped Launcival ;
But lords at borde and groomes in stalle,
Cleped him Graund Destrere.

On its appearance a storm of ridicule arose, and Ruskin in his *Academy Notes* was unboundedly denunciatory. There were but few independent enough to disregard the voice of the majority, and one who did so was Charles Reade the novelist, who bought the picture at the end of the Exhibition for £400, the painter for his own satisfaction erasing the horse and painting it again of smaller proportions. Late in that season a caricature of the picture appeared in print-sellers' windows with some verses underneath, indicating that the horse was Ruskin

bearing on his back Millais as the knight, with Rossetti and myself as the two children being carried over the stream. I saw a crowd in Fleet Street trying to settle that Sir Robert Peel was the knight, the child in front Disraeli, and the hindermost Lord John Russell; but as the street spectators had not seen the original picture, they could not see what the satire was. This drawing was done by Frederick Sandys on a new system of etching which soon entailed the destruction of the plate, so that the impressions are now, I believe, rare. Another print satirical of our school had appeared some time before, in which the wicked artists were represented as porcelain poodles, but the point was so difficult to make out, that the public gave it up, and so did the print-sellers; still these pasquinades all tended to keep up the rancour against us.

Ford Madox Brown, acute with certain angularities, as he presented himself, was esteemed most by those who knew him best. He had often had differences with others, which sometimes ended in quarrels, but he was one of those dear and highly endowed fellows from whom, early in intimacy, it was easy to determine never to take offence, though I could not shut my eyes to his curious crotchets. About this date Mr. and Mrs. Combe, with whom I had spoken warmly of him as one they ought to know, and who, I felt sure, were disposed to appreciate him, came to town quite suddenly, as was their wont, and asked me to go out with them for the day. I took them to his house, and was sorry to find he was not at home. As I was speaking with the servant, his daughter Lucy came to us, and on introducing my friends, I said I had been anxious to show her father's works. At which Miss Madox Brown assured me we might all venture upstairs, and that she would show the paintings. The principal picture was "Work." They greatly admired its execution, but it was not, I knew, of a kind they would wish to possess. The other paintings helped to increase their interest in the painter;



W. H. H.

THE LENT JEWELL (ILLUSTRATING DEAN TRENCH'S POEM).

but afterwards I received the following letter from Brown :—

And as I have never derived anything but disgust (except in the case of personal friends) from artistic meetings, I mean to keep at home and never talk of art or show my pictures except to those who I know come to buy. I am obliged to tell you this, because I have now made a strict rule in the house, that no one is ever allowed in my studio while I am out—which, were it not explained to you as part of a general plan, might on some future occasion take you by surprise or appear unfriendly.

The soreness that he thus revealed was a great bar to the possibility of making my friends of service to him. We have already seen to what lengths of generosity in the recognition of a competitor's merits Brown could go ; it is not unfair now to his dear memory to show how, under stress of continued rebuff, he could allow himself to express mistrust and suspicion at acts which could only have been directed by kindness on the part of his friend. I had proposed that he should allow me to offer him as a candidate for the Cosmopolitan Club, but this also failed. The following story serves as an example how the gentlest and kindest of men can be soured by continued ill-treatment, neglect, and misunderstanding. One evening I met him at Patmore's, and in walking home from Finchley, I made inquiries about the progress of his protracted picture "Work." He thereupon told me that he was wanting the two intellectual workers contemplating their brothers labouring with bodily strength to be Rev. F. D. Maurice and Thomas Carlyle, but that he found the latter difficult to obtain as a sitter. Whereupon I said that perhaps I might help him, because Carlyle had promised that he would give me the opportunity to paint his portrait, and the sittings were to be given when first I was free, and that under this obliging bond I might ask the Philosopher to sit to Brown in the interim. A few days afterwards I received the following letter :—

May 1, 1859.

MY DEAR HUNT—The evening at Patmore's when you mentioned the fact of your having obtained a promise from Carlyle not to sit for his portrait to any one else than you, and at the same time offered to speak to him on my behalf, I was taken so completely by surprise that I made an immediate resolve not to say a word on the subject till I had time to revolve the matter in my mind and make sure of the circumstances. I must now beg as a favour that you will not mention my name on the subject to him. I should have doubts of the success of your mediation ; and indeed, from the step you have taken, you must be aware that the chances of my ever getting him to sit for the portrait of him in my large picture are now smaller than ever (if only from the mere disgust of being so frequently requested as a subject for an art he despises), and such as they are can only be bettered by their being worked against yours and not possibly in unison with. Remains, of course, to you the right of pushing your interests in the matter how and when you like. However, I must pay you the compliment to tell you frankly (and only in the case of such an old friend as you could I take *direct* notice of such a thing), that your practice has been a *little too sharp* in this case considering the stake I had in the matter.—Believe me ever, yours most sincerely,
FORD MADDOX BROWN.

The fact of Brown's continuing difficulty was that when Carlyle saw the preparatory sketch of his face on the canvas, he was not flattered, and had no desire to help the artist with the grimacing distortion of his features, which gave Brown his fond opportunity of representing a gap in the upper row of teeth, a defect which I must say I never detected in the philosopher, even when haranguing most vehemently. I can only believe that Brown must actually for the time have persuaded himself that, instead of my having Carlyle's promise before I went to the East two or more years ago, I had gone to Carlyle after he had revealed his wish to introduce him into his picture.

The building of the Oxford Museum was progressing without gaining much admiration from any one. Ruskin had already in his writings upon architecture pointed out in unanswerable manner that the old carvings in porches,

on cathedral columns, and choir stalls had been executed by the Gothic ornamentalists from their own invention, uncontrolled by the architect. It was determined, in pursuance of this idea, to employ stone-masons to work independently on the Museum. Alas! it had not been well considered that the ancient carvers were, in taste and training, contemporaneous with the builders. In the nineteenth-century Museum at Oxford the architect had endeavoured to make himself a fourteenth-century man; the carver chosen was an amusing Irishman named O'Shea, an unmitigated nineteenth-century stone-chiseller of great cleverness, who had previously perhaps only carved tombstones to suit village taste, and cornucopias of flowers for summer-houses. O'Shea became the admired of the enthusiasts who watched the decorating of the spaces destined to be enriched, yet a few unconverted ones would not be charmed with the work in any degree.

When I went to Oxford now it was to get brief repose by painting landscape from the Godstow meadows. I had but few collegiate friends remaining, these always moving on, but I generally visited my valued friend Dr. Acland, and with him I went to the new buildings, which I watched with the greater interest as Woolner had accepted a commission to carve a figure of Lord Bacon there; Tupper also had in hand one of Linnæus; and Munro had a third (all possibly working in hope of future patronage, for the pay was less than meagre). Mr. Woodward, the architect, could not be very energetic in his supervision owing to weakness from an advanced stage of consumption. While Ruskin was absent Dr. Acland was left as supervisor of the decorative work. One morning O'Shea was busily engrossed chipping to his heart's content at an ambitiously composed but not very well prepared design, when the President of Trinity, one of the unconverted trustees of the building, which in his eyes every day displayed some new eccentricity, paused as he passed below. "What are you doing there now, sir?" he

demanding in a loud, querulous voice. "Eh, your honour? in faith it's some cats." "How dare you destroy the University property in such shameful manner! Come down this instant. I will have no cats there; you shall not do another stroke to them. Come down, sir." Such a tone disconcerted the much-appreciated mason; but now there was no question of remonstrances or justification, and soon he was on the ground, incredulously contemplating his despised *chef-d'œuvre*. In his chagrin he bethought him of Dr. Acland, his possible defender, and hurried to the house in the Corn Market, where he explained his grievance. The young doctor was thoroughly perplexed; this he avowed after careful consideration, and dropped into a brown study. O'Shea, driven back on his own resources, suddenly had a brilliant inspiration; he jumped up, exclaiming as he rushed out, "I've got it, your honour." In the evening the President of Trinity was again walking round the building for further supervision, and to his astonishment found O'Shea at the same frieze hammering away as determinedly as before. The President was out of all patience. "You impudent fellow there, did not I tell you this morning that I would not permit you to disgrace the University Museum with your detestable cats?" "Yer did, your honour, but, an' if you please, they are not cats any longer, they're monkeys." And so as monkeys they remain to this day.

My good friend Mr. Thomas Fairbairn was one of the Council of the Manchester Loan Exhibition, and a guarantor. The collection was partly hung by my true defender, Augustus L. Egg, who had placed all my pictures well. Mr. Fairbairn had taken great interest in my Eastern work as well as in my earlier pictures, and invited me to stay with him and to visit the collection. I walked with him into Manchester every morning, and we talked frequently about art and artists. Before starting one day he showed me some marble busts of members of his family, and inquired whether they were not very good. I spoke of Woolner, who had just done the bust

of Tennyson, but otherwise had had little opportunity to prove his ability, and I pointed out to what a low level sculpture had sunk. "You are now in a position to take a leading course in art matters," I said; "were it not so, I should have avoided lowering your satisfaction in these family portraits, which are fair examples of the sculpture of the day. But you ought to have better works of art, and I think I shall convince you that you can get much superior work from a fellow-student of ours who was one of our Brotherhood; his name is Woolner, and I must tell you more about him." Fairbairn laughed good-naturedly, replying, "That you shall." And as we went along I told him of Woolner's early struggles; of his competition for the Wordsworth statue, and the disappointing verdict upon it; of his emigration to the gold diggings, and his resumption of artistic work in Australia; of his return to England, and fresh disappointment over the Wentworth competition, and of his present position. I dwelt upon the excellence of the Tennyson bust, and of the medallions and heads he was then doing in his studio, and urged Fairbairn to let me take him, when next in town, to see Woolner. He was interested, and revived the subject frequently. On an early evening after this talk, when we had retired to the smoking-room, my host began thus: "I have thought over the case of your friend the sculptor, and have spoken of it to Mrs. Fairbairn, and she is much interested. You know we have two children who are deaf and dumb; it was a great affliction to us at first, but as they grew up, and the singular difference of themselves from the rest of the world struck them, a confiding affection for one another showed itself in the children, which brought us great consolation, and my wife and I often confessed that we should like to have some memento of the sweet sympathy in their isolation. We have now agreed that we will have a marble group done of them by your friend, and when you go home you may prepare him for our visit to give him the commission."

I could only say that this would be a splendid oppor-

tunity for Woolner to prove his powers, and that I hoped he would make a great success.

I had suggested to Woolner that the weakness of his claim for just recognition consisted in his having nothing of an imaginative kind to show on full scale, and I had urged him to undertake some simple group that would prove he had the power to express beauty in dramatic interest, but he had pointed out that he had no patron. When I urged that I made pictures and trusted to find the patron afterwards, he would not allow that he could do the same, because no one took notice of a mere plaster cast of a design, and he could not afford to risk the cost of marble and assistants' work.

So important a commission from Mr. Fairbairn was more than I had expected to obtain for Woolner, but my generous friends when the large group was advanced, even exceeded their original proposal by commissioning the sculptor also to make busts and medallions of Rajah Brooke, of Sir William Fairbairn, the great engineer, and other important friends.

Woolner was in some respects a mystery to me. I had been championing him in many quarters, and had often cited him as an example of the injustice done to English sculpture, by the rage, then as ever rampant among the dilettanti, for adoring foreign sculptors. Marochetti really had the support of all the aristocracy for public commissions, and once I heard in a club a talker of great influence declare, that since our climate or our nature made it hopeless to produce a native genius, we should aim at gaining honour,—as our predecessors had done in the cases of Torrigiano and the painters Holbein, Antonio More, Rubens, Vandyck, and others—by giving our fullest appreciation and support to so great a sculptor as the Italian who had come to live amongst us. I said that it was by such folly that there was temporary ground for saying that the country which had produced Flaxman was incapable of genius. Such

prejudice clearly existed in Canova's time, but it was not shared by him, since he expressed surprise that in all the London circles to which he was invited the great English designer—renowned all over the Continent for his excellence—was never met. Marochetti had executed effective statues abroad, and had done some striking works in England, where perhaps a certain strain of theatricality did not lower the estimate formed of him. Assuming for the nonce that the unqualified admiration which the English extended to him was fully justified, it cannot be denied that had the Baron commenced his career in a country where all the commissions for statuary were given to foreigners, he would have had no opportunity of attaining the position he had now won.

I often instanced Woolner's bust of Tennyson as distinctly better than any male head Marochetti had ever done, and no one ventured to dispute the point; but when they asked me what Woolner could show, or what designs could be seen of a poetic kind, I had to confess that my friend had never had an opportunity of realising female grace and beauty.

Woolner, when introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Fairbairn, had perfectly charmed them by his enthusiastic responsiveness. He went down to Manchester shortly after to make sketches for the group.

The works of our school were received so favourably by the Manchester potentates that I assumed they had become converted to our views. Once when talking to my host about modern art I did not hesitate to refer to our school as Pre-Raphaelite in contradistinction to others. He stopped the conversation with a serious countenance and said: "Let me advise you, when talking to Manchester people about the works of your school, not to use that term; they are disposed to admire individual examples, but the *term* has to them become one of such confirmed ridicule that they cannot accept it calmly!" As the thinking circles in London had so generally ceased to adopt this tone, it

was enlightening to me to find that the prejudice still lingered with such rancour in the North. F. Madox Brown's picture "Christ washing Peter's Feet" was among the works exhibited, being well seen, although above the line. The body of the Saviour, originally nude, was at this time clothed. I wrote to him saying that I thought if he came to Manchester he might make valuable friends; but on his appearance I was sorry that I had pressed him to come, because it so distressed him to find his picture not on the line, a vexation I had not anticipated.

It would be too confusing to trace in successive steps the details of Rossetti's actions when he had diverged from the combination with the original P.R.B., I therefore continue his story when he had exchanged us for new and younger friends, which anticipates a period of some years. After the publication in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* of "The Burden of Nineveh," Ruskin's appreciation of Rossetti's powers was justly widened, so that instead of claiming for him a sort of equality with Millais and me, as he did in the beginning of his acquaintance with Gabriel, he henceforth spoke of Millais and myself in his notes on the Royal Academy, and elsewhere, as quite secondary in comparison with his newer *protégé*. Millais and I had no leisure to read every pronouncement on our works that was published, we therefore did not heed the terms in which Ruskin compared the different members of our school. It is needful to point this out, or it might be asked why we did not at the time challenge the statement of Rossetti's leadership. For my part, not then contemplating the duty of historian to the Brotherhood, I did not feel called upon to heed Ruskin's verdict. Indeed, I should never argue the point, for it is a matter of small importance which of the three was the originator of our movement, provided that the desired object was attained. But what makes the question vital is, Whether Rossetti's inspiration of ideals and manner of work did represent the original purpose of Pre-Raphaelitism? I do not disparage the genius that Rossetti showed in his

painting any more than that of his poetry, but I shall have to pursue this subject further to prevent a misunderstanding as to what Pre-Raphaelitism was, at the time it was established.

Each laudation by Ruskin of Rossetti was soon bruited abroad by his privileged disciples. I had remonstrated unreservedly with Ruskin over his criticism of the "Sir Isumbras," to argue with him about any special criticism was within my right, but it was not in my province to take up the general question of his judgment of our relative merits; he, as any other arbiter, could formulate his independent opinion and publish the same; critical opinion, as such, I knew would eventually find its proper level. Rossetti was in this turning period of his life making some admirable designs, his Cardiff Cathedral altar-piece was executed at the turning-point from his first severity of style to a more sensuous manner.

Carlyle asked Woolner at this time what was the truth about Ruskin's statement that Rossetti was the greatest genius of the age, and Woolner expressed his bewilderment. Rossetti's undergraduate followers, not having known of the stages of his tardy development as a painter, were easily disposed to ignore any facts which militated against claims to his priority among us.

The spirit of discord was now no longer disguised, and there was no conclave existing to direct the true interests of our reform movement. We had hoped to hand on to later generations the heritage of our own experience; this dream of corporate heredity could no longer be, but there were traditions already secured. In our first start it cannot be said that Gabriel's proselytizing passion had resulted happily, but in these days of disintegration, the men upon whom his choice fell were of the strongest artistic nature, although through the University prejudice of the day, their tendency was for revived Gothic, which Rossetti's mediævalism accepted with more welcome than Millais and I would have approved. Constrained as we had been and still were, we had, however, not left our

effort to re-establish art craftsmanship without record, nor without foundations for further extension.¹

During my patient struggle about ways and means, which I fear to dwell upon unduly, my visits to the Cosmopolitan Club and a circle of literary and artistic friends were a refreshing distraction to me.

Kensington often then rejoiced in a throng on their way to Little Holland House, who were happy in the certainty of there meeting the most interesting leaders of English society. The days of the old India Company were not yet numbered, and naturally the house represented all matters of East Indian concern to an unlimited degree. The national interests in India alone would have impelled senators of all grades to throng a home where the last questions of Indian affairs were discussed, but Watts's numerous friends added to the charm of the company. Aristocrats there were of ministerial dignity, and generals fresh from flood and field, appearing in unpretending habit, talking with the modesty of real genius, and adding an interest to life such as nothing else could give. Mrs. Prinsep was cordiality itself, and surrounded by her sisters, could not but make an Englishman feel proud of the beauty of the race. In the season the company was received out of doors, played bowls and croquet on the lawn at hand, and tables with tea, at which Mrs. Prinsep presided, were placed under shady elms, where in the summer time the dinner-table was occasionally brought out, many artists were present, and literary stars shone in brilliant scintillation.

To enter into the spirit of the times it is necessary to read what had most recently startled the world of letters. Thackeray's *Lectures on the Four Georges* had been greatly admired on one side, while on the other the book was a grave cause of offence. The wife of General Fox, a handsome and natural daughter of William IV., surprisingly sweet tempered, explained her views to be those of most courtly people, that such sarcastic strictures upon

¹ See Chapter xxii.

the "Georges" should never have been delivered while many of their children still lived. It was a pleasure to survey the handsome and very amiable features of this lady. Charley Collins said that to talk with her was like conversing with an old-fashioned half-crown.

One Sunday afternoon, coming along the path from the gate to the house, Thackeray met his old Carthusian schoolfellow Lord Wensleydale. Thackeray saluted him, and Lord W. studiously turned up his head and affected indignation towards the unsycophantic author. Thackeray stopped, and before his quondam friend had got out of hearing, affecting serious concern, but yet in tones of playground raillery said, "Dear, dear me, I'm afraid I've greatly offended my Lord Tuesdaydale!"

Children romped over the lawn, diverted from their play for the moment when a certain peer came in followed by a string of twelve French poodles, his own hair curled to match their fantastic coiffure. With such unparalleled success as these representative parties had, it was inevitable that the jealous should have their fling at them. One comment was that "Mrs. P.'s tea-gardens were very popular." Indoors, Joachim and Hallé played, while Piatti and Garcia took their parts, and men were enraptured with Watts's work. Old Thoby Prinsep's hearty laugh filled up the intervals, and was equal to any music. The son, Arthur, was going out to join his regiment in India. Anxious talk there was soon after of mysterious discontent amongst the sepoys. This continued for a month or two, when suddenly news came of the outbreak of the Mutiny. A cloud of fear spread over the house, but Mrs. Prinsep, the mother, still clung to the hope that her son's regiment would be loyal. But word arrived that its sepoys also had killed nearly all their officers on the parade-ground; and this was followed by news that Arthur had galloped off, followed by numerous shots, and losing his shako, had to ride for three days through the burning sun, being refused succour and even a covering for his head by the villagers he passed on his way. These

tidings came from a friend who was then on the station nursing him for sunstroke, from which his glory of hair had not saved him. Every one grieved for the family, and Thackeray wrote some touching verses, which he presented to the mother with his own hand. The music was listened to in silence, and many a father could be seen resting his head upon his hand, the tears defying concealment as they trickled down his fingers. The veteran Henry Taylor, dramatic poet and Government official, was a constant presence in the throng, and shared in sympathy in both personal and national tribulation: he was of statuesque aspect and of demeanour somewhat dramatic. The hearty Tom Hughes, fresh in his "Tom Brown" laurels, and his happy wife shed a cordial spirit about them as they hailed both old and young.

Canvassed as Thackeray was in general society at that time, in his own home he was a figure of loving interest. Once when I had been dining with him, seeing a marble bust of him as a boy, I remembered the reported remark of the housekeeper at Charterhouse (after his pugilistic encounter with Venables). "You have destroyed the good looks of the handsomest boy in the school," she said to his antagonist on seeing the bruise which Thackeray's face had received. The bust was well modelled and carved, and admirable for its open expression. It registered the form of the nose, the sinking of the bridge which distinguished his handsome, dignified face. When I had silently decided this, Thackeray noticed me and exclaimed, "I know what you are wondering at; you want to know whether the bust was done 'before or after'! Well, it was done before." This being so, one could see that his antagonist was properly exonerated from the heavy charge made against him at the time.

Tennyson's unflinching truthfulness of nature was more impressive at every intercourse. Once when he came up in unceremonious guise for a short engagement in town, and was staying with blue-eyed Venables at his chambers in the Temple, suddenly he was invaded by

the not-to-be-refused Mrs. Prinsep, who declared that her brougham was waiting at the gate in Fleet Street to take him back to Kensington. Excuses of want of evening dress were all in vain. He was told that he should have a smoking-room to himself and that he should be invited to see no guests but those of his own asking, so he had to capitulate and be driven westward. At once I was summoned to join him. After some talk he unwarily descended into the garden. There the numerous company proved it to be a gala day, and Tennyson thoughtlessly approached the hostess, who was welcoming a quick succession of guests. Soon he was engulfed in the stream, and Mrs. Prinsep took occasion to present a gentleman as "the Editor of the *Midnight Beacon*." Tennyson silently blinked at him with his head craned. The lady felt need of overcoming the awkwardness of the position, and ejaculated, "Mr. Tennyson is delighted to make your acquaintance!" Tennyson, with the stranger still standing waiting, turned to Mrs. Prinsep and said inquiringly but without petulance, "What made you say that? I did not say that I was delighted to make his acquaintance"; and this query dispersed the little group with the best grace each could assume, leaving Tennyson unintended master of the situation.

The Poet Laureate did not come down from his room again until dinner was announced. He had expected nothing but a family gathering, but it proved to be a large party correctly attired at a long table, and the kind hostess appointed that I should sit immediately opposite to the unconscious lion of the evening, to prime him about the guests and their talk. Every one peered in turn to see the writer of *In Memoriam*, but there were other interests, and soon the hubbub became deafening. Tennyson addressed his sonorous voice to me, saying, "In this company there ought to be Lady Somers, whose beauty I have heard so much extolled. I can't see her anywhere, is she here?" and he looked searchingly along the table. It was a delicate question to answer with

full voice, but I did my best. Tennyson soon showed perplexity, put up his right hand, waved it from side to side, saying, "Your voice sounds like the piping of a little bird in the storm."

Such refreshing change and distraction gave me the more courage to meet the difficulties which obstructed my progress with the Temple picture. My day was an exhausting one; at nine I began my painting, in the course of the day I had to spare time, which frequently extended to an hour or two, directing and amending my sister's practice, and that of the friends who painted with her. When I returned to my own easel, to save my quickly-drying paint, it was needful to exert myself the more determinedly and to continue thus until the darkness stopped me. After dinner I sallied forth to the Life School, and took up my book illustrations. I then had to engage in very extensive correspondence, and not until, in addition, I had attended to housekeeping, had my day's work ceased.

It has been recorded that in the first days of our struggle anonymous and insulting letters came to us. Some nameless correspondents were now of different spirit to these earlier writers; they professed sincere interest in my first works, expressed regret that I should allow so long a time to go by without producing other pictures, and argued in a touching vein of compliment that I owed a duty to the world which I ought not to neglect. My unknown admirers, however, seemed to be poor, for they never concluded their letters with an offer of a commission!

It is not mere art gossip to state that during this period some young adventurers had been doing a roaring trade in manufacturing Pre-Raphaelite pictures for second-class picture dealers at comparatively handsome prices. The success of our imitators tended to make mere acquaintances argue that if the followers had such good fortune the leaders must be affluent; and frequently I was appealed to by honest but impecunious

students and artists for help with advances of money under the conviction that I was a wealthy man. One young man came to me relating that he was in debt, and much wanting £10 to pay his rent. I could not spare this sum, but advanced half the amount. In another month he appeared again with a light elastic step, saying gaily that again he had come to tax my purse. At this I had to reveal something of my real position. He expressed the greatest astonishment, saying that every one spoke of me as "rolling in wealth."

Continual non-appearance at Exhibitions was seriously diminishing my prestige ; friends also were expostulating, for I had been unable to contribute any subject picture to the Exhibition of 1857, so it was in 1858 and 1859, while all my compeers were gaining fame by annual proofs of their genius. This so disheartened me that at times I questioned whether I had not been in error in relinquishing the idea I had entertained in 1851, of abandoning the pursuit of art altogether.