

## CHAPTER XV

### RETROSPECT

1897

In morals, as in art, saying is nothing, doing is all.—RENAN.

God sometimes granteth unto a man to learn and to know how to make a thing, the like whereof in his day no other can contrive, and perhaps for a long time none hath been before him, and after him cometh another not soon.—ALBERT DÜRER.

THE earliest impulse in art was to present what recommended itself as fascinating and beautiful in the limner's eyes; but however strictly this was the aim of each workman, the representation that he made was always different from that of his fellow-artists, indeed each drawing, made by students in a modern school from the same model, differs from its neighbour; either human vision sees things with a bias, or the hand is directed diversely by the individual's nature who interprets it. Art, like astronomy, has its "personal equation." The human mind for good or for bad operates in all the hand portrays; if an artist suppresses his personal partialities for grace of form, putting aside the principle of selection, and, rejecting nothing which is ugly or confusing, he throws away that guiding spirit which alone advances to perfection, his work cannot progress in either grace or beauty. It is only by striving after the highest that the noblest service may be fulfilled. That this has been required of art since society was

systematised is proved by the manner in which she has been called upon to serve in the worship of the Unseen. But a danger to the artist, to the purpose of his work, and to the work itself, lurks in delight of the idea alone without care of the fulness and beauty of the form in which this is presented. All appeals to the strong emotions demand the representation of truth and beauty in the expression of its outward form. Without consummate treatment in this respect, the work gives only the ghost of a thought, for it may truly here be said, "The blood is the life." The Greek Church in its art has proved how deadness follows the pursuit of the mere exaltation of a starved truth; but in recognising this peril we must not ignore a no less certain danger which must overtake us when we abandon our ideal ambitions to make instead merely an external likeness of a fact—a danger none the less sordid when it is decked in sensuous splendour. Modern days show us so glaringly the limitations of this materialistic school, that we need not cite examples to prove the case. We have all seen in exhibitions, paintings whose fit home could be but in a collection of the lower types of creation in a physiological museum, and others suitable only to inspire horror in a Turkish harem. Millais was not a painter with a determined eclectic purpose, but his worship of Nature led him to love the intangible beauty she offers to them that can see. It may be said, notwithstanding his lapses from highest purpose, that he disdained polluted nature, and never, in order to win favour with the fevered sentimentalist, allowed his art to deal with the morbid. Surely it were preposterous to agree with what is flippantly said, that Pre-Raphaelitism had produced only trivial and transient results.

As regards the other member of our Body, whatever the full estimate of Rossetti's genius may be, there must be no belittling of his artistic power or of the influence he exercised over Morris and Burne-Jones. Beginning with them when they were far beyond the age for ordinary youths to enter upon the career of

art, he managed to bring them to such proficiency as painters that small trace was to be seen of the results of loss of boyish training. From small experimental beginnings Morris, allied with Madox Brown, Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Philip Webb, acting, as I have shown, upon an idea promulgated by Millais and myself twelve years earlier, gradually developed a system of ornamentation so royal and perfect in principle, that again the spirit of British taste, which had produced the old cathedrals, the rich wood carvings of varying types and ages, the choice embroideries, the gorgeous metal work of iron, gold and silver, the graceful fittings of old English homes, the exquisite Wedgwood ware, and the old Worcester and porcelain work, had been re-awakened. The vulgar ugliness of design introduced in the Regency days exemplified by the Brighton Pavilion and mahogany monstrosities of furniture now appeared to have received its death-blow. The new spirit did not stay its hand with this conquest, but when mature also overcame the modern Gothic introduced by the servile minds of Pugin, Barry, and Gilbert Scott. William Morris and his band did their work honestly and well; whether the world can duly appreciate and profit by the service will depend very greatly upon the influence of the press. If this be moved only by the constant love of new sensations and ceaseless hunger for foreign influence, as indeed may be somewhat feared, "sin lieth at the door," not of the artists, but at that of the men who occupy the post of leaders of public taste. Ten or fifteen years ago there could have been no hesitation on the part of any competent authority to decide that a most effectual and apparently permanent progress had been established in the forms and decorations of objects connected with our daily life. This had grown up, year by year, very slowly at first, from 1861 until the adoption of Morris's control and superintendence in house furnishing was regarded as a necessity for all aspiringly fashionable people, but, alas! it proved to be nothing but a game of follow-my-leader.

People who had felt themselves "Philistines," if they had not an interior supplied from Morris and Co., soon showed that they were merely obeying the passing craze of the season, and when his design was no longer a novelty they turned to other modes, sometimes of the most egregious baseness, extolling their last choice as much in advance of Morris, just as they had formerly compared his designs with their previous wall-paper patterns of realistic roses tied up with ill-designed ribbons and devices of equal triviality. It would indeed seem as though the reform in this respect had no lasting value; the clamour of tongues may indeed rule that the "New Art" has superseded Morris's designs and assume that the last phase of taste must be the best.

Another signal example of the benefit accruing to decorative design from minds versed in pictorial art is given by the achievements of William de Morgan in ceramic pottery, which in the branches it undertakes is of such exquisite character as to furnish a worthy equivalent to Italian and Spanish productions. The artist's chemical and scientific profundity enabled him to add to his beautiful forms metallic lustres of refined fascination such as never should be allowed to lapse for want of appreciation. Instability in the public taste, when an advance has really been made, is a deadly token of the failure of capacity for sound judgment in the wealthy classes, and destroys confidence among craftsmen that sacrifices such as Morris made to obtain the best results will be worthily rewarded.

I would also remind my readers of Woolner's worthiest achievements, for he undoubtedly gave an excellent example of a more finished and nervous treatment of marble than he found prevalent at the time; this was to be seen in his busts and sometimes in his whole-length figures. However much of mannerism may have been present in the mien and bearing of the heads, and in the occasional habit of enlarging the eyes, his workmanship must ever be looked upon as admirable. The heads of Tennyson, F. D. Maurice, Carlyle,

and Rajah Brooke must be regarded as fine examples of realisations and skilful carving. A small model of a girl at a well, striving to kiss a young brother writhing in her arms, was so graceful in line as to justify the belief that he would succeed in groups of poetic nature, if he had an opportunity of undertaking them. His statue of Sassoon sent to India was, as I remember it, truly admirable. The group he made for Sir Walter Trevelyan's hall at Wallington possesses fine points in sculptural form and finish.

The accusation of the ineffectiveness of our reform in art has compelled me to record first what should be known of the career of the active members of our Brotherhood, what they did by their own hands, or by their influence on others, and thus in turn I am compelled to speak of myself. I confess I cannot do so without expressing regret at the limited quantity of my own productions; the story I have told will explain how little this was within my control. I speak with the more hesitation because I am conscious that already incidents connected with my own experience have been largely dwelt upon in this book. In part, the temptation to such egoism has arisen from my own interest in the East, where I lived so long while the character of the people and their adaptability to the illustration of ancient history still existed. In other matters, the inclination to speak of myself has been induced from determination to be candid about the experiences of all native-born artists subject to the conditions of patronage in this country. I have hoped thus to enable the outside community of taste to decide how best to assist the labours of future men.

Life, as the years advance, becomes a more sacred trust, and it is of vital importance to decide that one's course is not undertaken without just consideration. I am persuaded that my decision to realise my purpose of painting in the East, at whatever cost it might be, was no rash one. It was certain that the time had come when others in the world

of thought besides myself were moved by the new spirit, which could not allow the highest of all interests to remain as an uninvestigated revelation. From the beginning of my attempt till this time many thinkers of various schools have devoted themselves to elucidate anew the history treated in the gospels, and the desire for further light cannot be quenched. The conviction I started with, that much of the teaching of Christ's life is lost by history being overlaid with sacerdotal gloss, is widely shared by others. The subjects I have treated have been few for the extent of time I have expended upon the pictures; but I console myself with the reflection that my object gave some degree of magnitude to the attempt, and that thus the lack of quantity may in the end not be taken altogether as a mark of incapacity or indolence. I have established my claim as a pioneer for English art in study of historic truth, which artists of other nations in their own ways have followed. I was told when it appeared about 1860, that Renan's "*Vie de Jésus*" would entirely destroy my understanding of the history in the gospels. I therefore felt it incumbent upon me to use the quiet my re-arrival in Jerusalem in 1869 gave me, to read the book. It was an exponent of the prevailing spirit of investigation, not only by comparison with records of the time, but also by reference to Eastern life as traced by a resident student in Syria. The failing of the book lay in its lack of imagination concerning the profundity and sublimity of the mind and purpose of Jesus; a mere provincial and enthusiastic dervish of modern type was made to figure in the place of the most unflinching proclaimer of truth and love.

To exercise original thought on sacred story must, it seems, ever be a *challenge* to the world. Carlyle, it will be remembered, saw in "*The Light of the World*" only a proclamation of ecclesiastical dogma, and so denounced it. Kingsley also very actively took up this cue. Thackeray at one time, for the same reason, was reserved, and

evidently suspected in me a degree of want of thought or of insincerity. In 1869 Ruskin blamed me as a supporter of absolute credulity. On the other hand, the extreme High Church party regarded my humanistic treatment of the life of Christ as wanting in reverence. Fortunately the unprejudiced public instinctively felt an interest in the attempt to make the story live as history, and their demand for engravings from my pictures induced the publishers to give me that support which enabled me to persevere; not, indeed, so soon or so thoroughly as I had desired, but after long waiting. In liberal quarters the clergy distinctly gave their approval to my purpose, for they did not fail to see that my work was done with reverence, yet none of these were powerful enough to commission me to paint any picture in a church.

"The Finding of Christ in the Temple" passed into the collection of Mr. Charles Mathews, and when his pictures were dispersed at his death Messrs. Agnew purchased it. The establishment of permanent art galleries in provincial towns had now made a home for pictures not suitable for ordinary living rooms. The Liverpool community purchased my Jerusalem painting of "The Triumph of the Innocents."<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. T. Middlemore, M.P., recognised the fitness of my picture for the Gallery of his native city, and, as has been already recorded, taxed his generosity to secure it. "The Shadow of Death" had been similarly presented to Manchester by Sir William Agnew.

The suspicion of certain thinkers that "The Light of the World" was painted to support the Puseyite movement had no justification.

Mr. Combe, to whom the picture belonged, had, with Mrs. Combe, from the Littlemore days a loving friendship for Dr. Newman, who had first introduced them to one another. This perhaps gradually led them to acquiesce in the degree of ritualism at the Church of St. Barnabas,

<sup>1</sup> The larger replica is still the property of Mr. Middlemore.

which they had built and endowed. The clerical circle at St. Barnabas were not so tolerant towards my broader views as Mr. and Mrs. Combe, and declined my offer to design and superintend some decorations, and to paint some figures on its walls myself. The good "Squire" had, from his first acquisition of pictures, declared that they should eventually go to one of the University Galleries; but when all were mourning his death on the day of his burial, Mrs. Combe, moved by impulse of sacrifice, used her prerogative to give the picture to Keble College. Mr. Butterfield, the architect, decided that its proportions were too small to be a feature in the architecture of the chapel chancel. I objected to the proposal that it should be placed on an easel, or in the sacristy as too dark a chamber, and so for some years it was secluded from the public in the private rooms of the college. It was then proposed that it should be placed in the library. I met Mr. Butterfield to see the place suggested. Demurring to its darkness, I was obliged further to protest, because underneath the spot there ran hot-air pipes, sending up blasts of heat through the open screen, which, passing over the picture, would ruin it.

The offer was then made to seal up the pipes with boards hermetically. As time pressed I agreed, with caution to the officials to guard against any injury that might still arise. The prejudice of the narrower High Church party against my conception of the subject disturbed my participation in Mrs. Combe's confidence as to the authorities' sympathy with the picture.

When in 1886 the painting was lent for exhibition in London, its condition was truly lamentable, the surface being shrivelled up by long-continued heat. Regarding this as an accident which would be regretted by Keble College as much as by myself, I with great pains and expenditure of time restored it before its return.

Both before and after the death of Mrs. Combe, having frequent reasons to doubt the safety of the work, I eventually undertook the subject in a second painting of life size.

This I had on hand for several years. To guard the replica against being shut up from the public or subject to any private caprice, I imposed conditions upon its sale.

When it was on exhibition in Bond Street, the bursar of Keble College appeared and declared to all present that the facts of the College treatment of the picture as given in the pamphlet then issued were incorrect, and that the artist knew it to be so. The next day the following letter from Dr. Lock, the Warden, was published in *The Times* :—

Keble College and "The Light of the World."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

SIR—I feel sure that you will, out of your sense of justice, allow me to claim some space in your columns in order to justify the Keble College authorities from the aspersions made upon them in your columns on Monday last with reference to their treatment of Mr. Holman Hunt's "Light of the World." I make no complaint against the writer of the article in question; he has evidently relied upon the note issued at the Exhibition of the new "Light of the World" by the Fine Arts Society, and he might naturally expect such a note to be authoritative. But, as I have to-day been reading through all the correspondence upon the subject, I do not hesitate to say that that note is so full of perversions of fact and of unjust insinuations that it ought to be withdrawn from publication.

Allow me to relate the facts :—

1. In 1872 Mrs. Combe offered the picture to the Keble College Council on condition that it should be placed in the College chapel, which was at that time being designed by Mr. Butterfield, and was to be erected at the expense of a private donor, Mr. William Gibbs of Tyntesfield. The Council consulted the donor and the architect, and pressed upon them the advisability of modifying the designs so as to include the picture in the structure. Both donor and architect were quite clear that the plans were too far advanced for any change, and that, great as were the merits of the picture, it was not of a piece with the whole tone and treatment of the rest of the chapel, and therefore they refused to consent to any alteration, leaving the Council free to place it anywhere in the completed

chapel (e.g. on an easel in the chapel or in the vestry), if it should seem desirable. As soon as the chapel was finished, these alternatives were considered, but it was seen at once that none of them would give sufficient light to do justice to the picture, and it was decided to put it into the library. Mrs. Combe expressed her "entire acquiescence" in this proposal, and Mr. Holman Hunt wrote to Mrs. Combe: "It seems to me a very wise decision that has been made. I quite agree that the proportions of the church itself are too large to afford a fitting niche for the picture. . . . In the sacristy the light and space are not enough for our picture."

2. For nearly twenty years the picture hung in the library, and in order to do it honour we had Mr. Ruskin's description of its symbolism printed and hung up by it. But it is complained that it was placed in such a position that, through the proximity of a hot flue, it was seriously damaged. With regard to this, some damage was perhaps due to the hot-water pipes beneath the picture, but I have little doubt that the damage is greatly exaggerated in the note, and it ought to be known that Mr. Holman Hunt was himself consulted as to the position chosen, and that the Council carried out the one suggestion which he made, that a covering should be placed over the hot-water pipes at that part.

3. In 1894 we were enabled, by the munificence of Mrs. Combe, to build a side-chapel. Here at last we had a place appropriate for the picture, and it was at once transferred thither; a stately frame was designed for it, and it was placed on a swinging hinge, so that visitors can always move it to catch the right light. The note says that it was placed in the new frame "without the title, and bearing a different and totally inappropriate text." These statements are absolutely untrue; the original gilt frame has never been touched; it has been set entire in an oaken frame; the title is there still, as well as the original text, the same which Mr. Holman Hunt has repeated in his new picture.

The note further adds that the picture was refused for public exhibition at the Guildhall. We have had so many applications that the picture may be exhibited elsewhere that we have been obliged to make a rule against it; but, as a matter of fact, when, in 1899, application was made that it might be exhibited in the Guildhall, the Council set aside its rule and gave consent, but the proposal was vetoed by Mr. Holman Hunt himself.

"The artist," we are told, "was driven to the conclusion that his work was permanently hidden from the world." Hidden

from the world! Did the artist make that complaint when his picture was the private property of Mr. Combe, and could only be seen by his private friends? Why make it now, when for five hours every week-day in the year the whole world can, on payment of a small fee, have access to the picture, and when every visitor to it receives a printed copy of Mr. Ruskin's description of it? The artist, no doubt, would prefer that no fee should be charged. We too should prefer it; but to prevent harm to the picture it must be in the care of a servant, and it can scarcely be expected that an unendowed college should be charged with this expense. The artist is kind enough to admit that since my appointment as Warden the picture has been treated with greater consideration. But I have no right to claim this praise; the transference of the picture to the chapel was made by my predecessor, Dr. Wilson, and all correspondence shows that Dr. Talbot was as proud of the picture and as anxious to do it justice as either Dr. Wilson or myself.

4. The note states that the picture was not regarded favourably by the authorities of Keble College, and insinuates that it was "presumably on religious grounds"; and your article explains this by suggesting that they thought "the picture too liberal in meaning." I confess that I entirely fail to understand what is meant by such an assertion, but, as the picture never has been regarded unfavourably, it is not worth while to consider the motives. Our one aim has been to treat the picture with all honour; our College was founded in the belief that the subject of the painting is the Light of all mankind; the picture, whether in the library or in the chapel, has helped many of us to a stronger faith and a greater confidence in that Light guiding us in our studies; it has, I believe, inspired some of our members to take part in spreading that Light throughout the world; and we welcome with unmixed pleasure the news that Mr. Holman Hunt has produced a replica, and that Mr. Booth is going to send it for exhibition through the Colonies, in the hope that it may have something of the same influence there as the original has had here.—I am, sir, yours respectfully,

WALTER LOCK (Warden).

KEBLE COLLEGE, *March 22, 1904.*

#### TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

SIR—I have to ask you to extend your well-proved courtesy in permitting me to make some observations upon a letter that was published in your columns of March 24 from the Warden

of Keble. In a printed notice issued at a recent exhibition of my replica of the picture "The Light of the World," I gave some reasons why I painted this replica. But as I understood that these remarks were disapproved of by the Warden of Keble, and at the request of those who were conducting the Exhibition, I consented to their removal from the Catalogue, as I had no wish to revive an ancient controversy. The Warden of Keble College has, however, by the statements in his letter, left me no option but to reply.

The original picture was hung in proximity to some hot-water pipes and, as I have been informed, there was also a flue behind it. I do not, of course, impute to the authorities that they tried to destroy the picture, but when it came to my studio it was very severely damaged with blisters, and in parts the paint had scaled off. The Warden says, "he has little doubt that the damage is greatly exaggerated." This is an airy way of dismissing the subject, and hardly very gracious, considering that it took me four or five weeks' labour to repair the injury, time which I gave gratuitously, the cost of relining the picture being defrayed by Mrs. Combe. The injury might have been arrested if the authorities of the College had caused the picture to be occasionally inspected by an expert, but I do not think they were aware of its condition, or saw much difference when it was returned. Its state, however, can be vouched for by several persons now living, and is not a matter on which any doubt can exist.

In my note I stated that "when the chapel was built the picture was placed there, but in a new frame, without the title, and bearing a different and totally inappropriate text." This statement is designated by the Warden, with more directness than courtesy, as "absolutely untrue." In fact, however, when I heard of the new frame, and the absurdly inappropriate text upon it, I journeyed to Oxford to protest, and I saw the frame and text myself,<sup>1</sup> and remonstrated with the late Warden. The matter does not rest there; other persons saw it also, and their testimony corroborates mine. The frame and text were afterwards removed, and the former frame restored. As to my complaint that the picture is not sufficiently accessible, the Warden says that a fee is necessary, as "it can hardly be expected that an unendowed college should be charged with the expense of showing it." He adds, "the artist no doubt would prefer that no fee should be charged." I must say I should prefer it. When

<sup>1</sup> The text substituted for "Behold I stand at the door and knock," etc., etc., was, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Seek, and ye shall find."



the picture was given to Keble, still more when the generous donor, my early friend, further bequeathed £1500 towards building a chapel for it, I had hoped it would have been accessible to poor as well as rich. It is, perhaps, unlikely the Warden and I shall agree on this matter. But one of my reasons for painting the replica was the hope that it would be accessible to all, and, thanks to the public spirit of another donor, I believe that this hope will eventually be realised. When the picture was the private property of Mr. Combe no charge was made for its exhibition. It was shown freely, and was lent for long months to the Royal Academy, the Paris, and other Exhibitions.

I regret that the few words of explanation I wrote should have given rise to this controversy. I have no wish to prolong it. I am willing to believe the professions of the Warden that the authorities now value the picture, and I hope that they may be induced some day to exhibit it without charge, in the same way as other Colleges allow the masterpieces in their possession to be seen without exacting any remuneration.—I am, yours,

W. HOLMAN HUNT.

18 MELBURY ROAD.

#### TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES"

SIR—Mr. Holman Hunt so willingly admits that the Keble College authorities now value "The Light of the World" that I agree with him in wishing not to prolong this controversy.

It is, however, fair both to himself and to myself, to explain the point on which we seem to be in direct contradiction, I mean the statement that the picture was placed in the chapel without its title, and with the addition of an inappropriate text.

Mr. Holman Hunt has himself supplied the link which explains the contradiction. The original statement that the picture was so placed in the chapel, gave the impression that that was the condition of the picture during the ten years that it has been placed there; and this I was sure was entirely untrue.

Mr. Holman Hunt now adds that the offending frame and text were afterwards removed; he is therefore referring to the first frame, which was designed for the picture when it was transferred to the chapel. This, however, was disliked by the late Warden, as well as by Mr. Holman Hunt, and was in the chapel for so very short a time (I think not more than a very few weeks) that it had entirely escaped my memory. Mr. Holman Hunt says this had no title and a different text; in this it is possible

that he is right. I at least have no recollection of the frame sufficient to make me doubt his word; and as it was at once condemned as unsatisfactory, the point is unimportant to the main issue of my letter.—I am, yours respectfully,  
WALTER LOCK.

KEBLE COLLEGE, OXFORD, *March 31.*

I had no reason after this handsome retraction to prolong the correspondence.

The Right Honourable Charles Booth bought the picture. Sympathising with my desire (suggested by Lady Loch, the widow of the late Governor at the Cape) that it should be seen in the Transvaal, and finally presented to a public gallery, he transcended the original proposal by generously determining in true imperial spirit that the picture should be exhibited throughout the realm, and eventually be presented to the Tate Gallery where it should never be secluded from the public.

I have still to defend our movement against the charge of being ephemeral, and to sum up its claims.

It would be impossible to follow the tale of enchanting works in painting and in decoration which unchartered Pre-Raphaelites, candidly professing influence from our example, contributed to its honour.

My assertion as to Brown's relation to us in no way modifies his claim to having been the painter of many pictures which will ever touch the hearts of mankind and will always add to the reputation of British genius. The increasing conversion of art lovers to his merits is now, alas, too late for the country's full benefit from it.

The cruelty of the world towards poor Chatterton, whose only offence was that he asked to be heard as a poet under a feigned name, will never henceforth be remembered without recognition of Henry Wallis the painter, who first so pathetically excited pity for his fate in his picture of the death of the hapless boy.

I must also remind readers of many exquisite poems

painted by Arthur Hughes, transcribed from human life during the last fifty years.

Windus also for many years added to the toll of poetic scenes ere he put by the brush.

The list might be greatly amplified, but it should be enough to silence the detractors of our reform. I am persuaded that had not the hue and cry against Pre-Raphaelitism been so blindly savage and so general, such tardy patronage would not have been extended to our works; had it been otherwise, many more pictures, both by my hands and those of others, would vindicate the power of our principles.

It is far from my purpose in distinguishing the different manners and varying priority of artists who joined in our movement to determine the relative artistic merits of each. But it has been seen that William Rossetti is followed by many in taking my laudation of his brother as a support to his theory that Gabriel was "the leader" and true representative of the original purpose of Millais and myself. With misreading of evidence and long possession of the public ear which he and his followers have enjoyed; and by means of a multitude of publications great and small, they have led the world to assume that Rossetti's priority could not be disputed, and that his type of work was a true representation of original Pre-Raphaelite intentions.

It did not seem possible that this confusion could occur when I paid my tributes to Rossetti's merits, for I wished to prove that Pre-Raphaelite rivalry could bear no trace of envy. It was not then necessary to dwell upon the circumstances marking his estrangement from us; I was not called upon in my panegyric to indicate the dates and character of his progressive steps in design and workmanship, nor how these compared with those of other Pre-Raphaelite workers. At that time so many were alive who knew the facts, that the shadowy pretensions of Rossetti's priority were not worthy to be taken into account. The case is now altered. In



W. Holman Hunt. pinx.

Swan Electric Engraving Co. sc.

*The Tracer.*



writing the History of Pre-Raphaelitism I must correct erroneous conclusions from any source, yet I would protest against my delimitation of Rossetti's claims being taken as a withdrawal of my testimony to his independent excellence. In disproving all right to leadership for him, it must not be assumed that I fail to acknowledge the distinction which, in its degree, his genius brought to our cause ; and I must maintain that his training in my studio had a lasting influence upon the spirit of his mode of expression. This apprenticeship gave his art an actuality without some degree of which all painting is characterless and unpersuasive, particularly so when of revivalist temper. Our methods of work, however, had serious results on our output. After going apart on our several ways Rossetti began to depend more and more on the practice of making separate studies of the parts of his pictures, while this habit decreased with Millais and myself. Our experience told us that in determining the character of heads and all parts of the figure in a complicated composition, it was of vital importance to have all the surrounding parts of the design in sight, and that studies on detached paper could not be conducted with this advantage. The parts separately studied when transferred to the canvas proved to be irresponsive to the rest, and so with independent emotion for each part, the whole seemed to be, in our judgment, too spectacular in aspect. We therefore settled the exact pose of the heads, and other parts of the composition on the canvas itself, hence our isolated drawings were made only under exceptional circumstances. The loss was an obvious one, for when an improvement was resolved upon, the previous work had to be rubbed out, instead of adding to the number of our productions. Rossetti, indeed, unaffected by such conviction, grew to love the stateliness of scenes so arranged, and increased his practice of drawing preliminary studies until he made complete cartoons for his projected subjects ; thereby multiplying his designs very liberally. With this he developed a facility in drawing which tended to an amplitude of pose and form, such as

in his earlier days he would have avoided as belonging to art over-luxurious in manner.

In my *Contemporary* articles of 1886 on Pre-Raphaelitism, I felt the difficulty of ignoring the reiterated declaration by the two nominal members that our Body consisted of seven. It is undeniable that, after Millais had agreed that Gabriel should be a third member, Collinson, Woolner, and W. Rossetti were proposed as additions. Thereupon, fearing indefinite extension, by proposing Stephens I limited the full number to seven. William Rossetti, appropriately for the time, was made secretary of the tentative society.

The hope that the body would fulfil our expectations in the course of a year or two gradually waned. The new members soon made it evident that the only part of our combination which they enjoyed was the pleasantness of our Bohemian meetings. When the original members looked askance at the non-appearance of work by the inactive ones, the latter could see nothing wanting except in the character of the original rules, and proposed revision; further suggesting that each member should draw up a statement of his understanding of the objects of Pre-Raphaelitism. This constituted an overt admission that they had not understood our purpose from the beginning. Confidence between us as to art problems ceased, although we still personally remained cordial to one another: the honorary secretary soon gave up all efforts to become a painter. Indeed, it may be added, it was too late in life for him to undertake the necessary studies. He has said that he is destitute of the gift of genius; but the sonnet on the cover of *The Germ*, which ends with the line, "Truth is a circle, perfect, great or small," goes far to disprove this too-modest disclaimer. His other sonnet, "The Evil under the Sun," witnesses to his large pity for the oppressed, and when the tyranny of Pio Nono in the Papal States is remembered, the poem will be removed from the category of youthful outbursts which proclaim that whatever is, is wrong. It was fraternal modesty that

made him give up the pursuit of poetry. Genius, like every other possibility for man, claims cultivation, and this cultivation W. M. Rossetti forewent by consideration of circumstances that his brother might have the better opportunity. Who shall say that to write sonorous, well thought out, and perfectly adjusted verse is nobler than to live and walk through life with sincerity and generous unselfishness? But while I admire the self-sacrifice of my old friend, I cannot be a party to his endorsement of his brother's pretensions, or to his advocacy of his father-in-law, Madox Brown's priority in example. His fraternal and filial devotion have made him assume that their previous work was truly representative of Pre-Raphaelitism, and have led him to misapprehend the significance of the circumstances of our early days. His prestige as the secretary of our experimental society has spread abroad a misunderstanding of the true nature of our purpose, which, if left uncorrected, would be matter of much greater moment than any confusion of our relative personal claims could be.

In making my final pronouncement on the real value of current traditions, I feel that I must put aside my hesitation to controvert men with whom I still have the memory of an early and sacred friendship. A more complete scrutiny of the course they pursued is therefore necessary, and the investigation will show how damaging to the real workers were the results from their incorporation with us. Indeed, we were not long in discovering that our dream for the reform of art could be fulfilled only by the energies of independent allies. I must however forewarn readers that this research will involve a return to many early circumstances, so that those indifferent to such survey may decide not to proceed further.

The following letter from M. de la Sizeranne will show how widely established is the romantic fable, and how necessary it is to take radical means to examine the value of the different witnesses on whose evidence the fallacy rests. In acknowledging his courtesy in sending me

proofs of an article on the P.R.B. in the *Revue des deux mondes*, I pointed out that it would be incumbent on me to controvert his main theory about the initiative of our movement. He replied thus :—

CHÂTEAU DE MARGES,

DRÔME.

24 octobre.

MONSIEUR—J'ai lu, avec le plus grand intérêt, la très aimable et très intéressante lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'adresser à propos de mon article sur *La Peinture Anglaise contemporaine : ses origines pre-raphaelites*. Voulez-vous me permettre, en vous en remerciant, de vous soumettre les raisons pour lesquelles j'ai cru devoir à Madox Brown, dans le mouvement pre-raphaelite, la part initiale contre laquelle vous protestez ?

Vous trouvez en effet que je lui ai fait une part trop grande, et vous m'informez d'abord qu'il ne fut que *nominalement* le maître de Rossetti, ensuite qu'il n'a jamais été sollicité d'entrer dans la Brotherhood, enfin que ses œuvres caractéristiques ont suivi, et non précédé, celles de la P.R.B. et qu'en particulier *Work* n'a été commencé qu'en 1852.

Sur le premier point, qui est purement une question de fait—un fait qui remonte presque à cinquante ans—j'ai dû, naturellement, suivre les témoignages des historiens du mouvement pre-raphaelite et de ceux qui y'ont pris part—or, j'ai d'autant moins suspecté ces témoignages qu'ils sont nombreux, désintéressés et parfaitement concordants. Voici en effet ce que je lis dans les mémoires de votre ami W. Bell Scott, t. i. p. 287 : "M. Ford Madox Brown came in, to whom I found Rossetti had been indebted for some lessons generously afforded. *This he acknowledged with much effusion.*" Voilà donc Rossetti lui-même qui témoigne. Et y aurait-il eu "*much effusion*," si l'enseignement de Rossetti avait été purement nominal ? Je lis dans le livre de Sharp : "M. F. Madox Brown, to whom the young artist (Rossetti) was ever through life willing to admit his early indebtedness,"—et plus loin, à propos du *Chaucer* : "A work, apart from its other great merits, remarkable for being the painter's *first attempt in sunlight*; and from witnessing such work as this *no doubt in part grew the impulse* of protest against artificial methods that *afterwards* animated the young painters known as pre-raphaelities." Je lis dans Knight : "The movement which had been, in fact, *anticipated* by Madox Brown"; et encore : "He (Madox Brown)

did more to influence the P.R.B. than any others." Je trouve, dans Sharp déjà cité, cette opinion : "If Rossetti be considered the father of Pre-Raphaelitism, Madox Brown may be considered its grandfather." Chez Esther Wood, cette autre opinion : "Soon came Madox Brown to encourage their tentative efforts, and to aid them (the P.R.B.) both with *practical* and *friendly instruction*." Chez M. Harry Quilter, cette affirmation : "I must show clearly by the consideration of Madox Brown's own painting and the records of his own words how *irresistible is the evidence* that he was, *in all but name*, the real founder and leader of the P.R.B. movement, the inspirer, as well as the teacher." Enfin, pour revenir à un témoin direct, immédiat, à un membre de la Brotherhood, je lis chez M. F. G. Stephens, P.R.B. : "Nevertheless, there can be *no doubt whatever* that to Brown's guidance and example, we owe the better part of Rossetti as a painter *per se*" (*Portfolio*, May 1894). En réduisant l'éducation de Rossetti par Brown à quelque chose de nul et de *purement nominal*, vous exprimez donc une idée nouvelle, une thèse imprévue, qui viendra démentir tout ce que vos compatriotes et, entres autres, vos anciens confrères ont écrit sur la matière. Je lirai les développements de cette thèse avec le plus vif intérêt, mais jusqu'à ce qu'elle se soit fait accepter, ce n'est pas moi seul qui suis "*quite misinformed*," c'est tout le monde. Sur le second point, qui est également un point de fait, c'est-à-dire la question de savoir si Madox Brown a été sollicité de faire partie de la Brotherhood, j'ai dû également suivre les témoignages nombreux et concordants que j'ai trouvés dans les livres. Ainsi M. Knight dit : "The only cause of his (Madox Brown) not becoming a member of the Brotherhood was his disbelief in the advantages of clique." M. Sharp écrit : "M. Ford Madox Brown, *it is well known*, refused membership on the ground of scepticism as to the utility of coteries." Le catalogue de la "National Gallery," de 1894, s'exprime ainsi : "Madox Brown refused to be enrolled as a member of the little clique," et M. Walter Armstrong de la sorte : "Madox Brown expressly declined membership on general disbelief in its utility." Enfin, M. G. F. Stephens, que j'ai dû croire bien placé pour savoir ce qui passait dans la Confrérie, puisqu'il en était, a écrit : "Naturally enough, Brown was *solicited* to become a Brother, but he, chiefly because of the rude principle which for a time was adopted by the other painters, declined to join the Society. . . ." (G. F. Stephens. *Portfolio*, May 1894.)

Assurément, Monsieur, je ne cite pas tous ces témoignages pour les préférer, si nombreux soient-ils, à celui de l'auteur du *Light of the World*, mais simplement pour établir que vôtre

épithète "*quite misinformed*" s'applique à tous les historiens du Pre-Raphaelitism et, en particulier, à M. G. F. Stephens, P.R.B.

Aussi bien, ce ne sont là que des questions historiques, moins importantes que la question esthétique, ou je ne vous opposerai d'autre témoignage que le vôtre, persuadé qu'au fond nous sommes du même avis. Assurément les P.R.B. ne se sont pas de l'abord inspirés de *Work*, mais je n'ai point parlé de *Work* dans mon article, et, pour qu'il ne puisse y avoir aucun doute, bien que je le connusse, je n'en ai même pas prononcé le nom. J'ai parlé des cartons de Westminster. Or ceux-ci auraient beaucoup impressionné les futurs P.R.B. Vos souvenirs en font foi : "I had been content to see M. Madox Brown's works at Westminster Hall with great silent recognition of the genius in the picture of *Harold*, but Rossetti with more leisure had taken the pains to find him." (William Holman Hunt. "The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. A Fight for Art." *Contemporary Review*.)

Dans votre lettre, vous qualifiez cette œuvre de "wild" et de "grotesque." Je ne le conteste nullement, mais précisément, auriez-vous employé ces mêmes expressions s'il s'était agi du tableau correctement vulgaire d'un académicien de 1880 ? Et ce "mannerism" que vous signalez dans *Parisina*, était-ce le style alors en vogue en Angleterre ? Cette *Justice* "comical" encore que "distinctly clever" était-elle conçue comme on concevait alors un tableau sous Maclise ou Mulready ? Non assurément. . . .

ROBERT DE LA SIZERANNE.

The writer, it is seen, perfectly justified his assumptions by adducing evidence from the authors who have written on the subject, who, by their corroboration of one another, could not but convey the impression accepted by him. Unfortunately these various contributors to history are not independent witnesses, as they at first appear to be, but are dependent for their information on the "Brown-Rossetti" centre, and wrote under the influence of the same prepossession as these so-called "original members" themselves, wholly disregarding, or possibly wholly ignorant of the facts established by the dates I have given. As I confine my extracts to that part of M. de la Sizeranne's letter concerning his own justification, I ought to state that he concludes with polite encomiums upon Millais and myself.

M. de la Sizeranne could not, of course, be expected to know the relative values of the writers he quotes. Two of them only have any sort of original value, Mr. W. Bell Scott and Mr. F. G. Stephens. The others derive their knowledge from more or less acquaintance-ship with Rossetti, or from the printed writings of Mr. W. M. Rossetti. Mr. Knight would be the last to claim for his casual pronouncement on Rossetti any authority as a critic of art. Mr. Sharp's accuracy of statement and perception will be referred to later, his personal knowledge of Rossetti was confined to his later years, and his only importance is that of reporting the legend current in the Rossetti circle at a time when we and others pursuing the original idea had long ago marked our separation from the mediævalism which Rossetti had confused with Pre-Raphaelitism. The other writers cited have no first-hand knowledge of the facts or persons at all, and their accuracy may be judged of by an extract from the work of one of the most responsible among them (Mr. Cook's excellent handbook to the National Gallery).

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the head of the romantic movement in modern English poetry and of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in English painting, was born in London, the son of Gabriel Rossetti—an Italian patriot and commentator upon Dante, who was at the time Professor of Italian at King's College. Like all the members of his family, young Rossetti had innate taste and interest in art, but in the direction which his art took—Gothic instead of Classic—he was the outcome of English influence. He never doubted, says his friend, Mr. Holman Hunt, of his call to exceptional effort in life, and from the time when he was not more than nineteen or twenty he began to exercise a powerful influence on many of the foremost minds in art and literature of the time, such as Mr. W. Morris, Mr. Holman Hunt, Mr. Burne-Jones, Mr. Swinburne, and Mr. G. Meredith. He was the leading spirit in the little band—comprising, beside himself, his brother, W. M. Rossetti, Millais, Woolner, J. Collinson, and F. G. Stephens—who associated themselves under the name of "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood." To the general public, however, he was little known as a poet until 1870, when his poems and

ballads were published—or as a painter till the year after his death, when a collection of his works were exhibited at Burlington House—for he lived almost as a recluse and seldom exhibited pictures. From eight to fifteen he was at King's College School. He then studied art . . . in the studio of Ford Madox Brown. In 1849 he exhibited his first oil picture, "The Girlhood of the Virgin," and in the following year he painted "Ancilla Domini." His picture is admirably illustrative in its simplicity of the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite School, whilst at the same time it is wholly free from the affections peculiar to Rossetti which characterise his later works. Upon the originality of thought displayed in this picture Mr. Holman Hunt has expressed himself thus:— (Here follows a quotation from my Chelsea address.)

Mr. Cook, it will be seen, mixes up men associated broadly together in aim, who never met till seven years or so after the initiation of our reform.

The quotation from Mr. Bell Scott should certainly not be read as an isolated passage, for the next page of his book (288) gives the number of the lessons so generously afforded by Ford Madox Brown. In Rossetti's own words, "He set me to fag at some still-life drawing and painting both; but I could not stand that kind of thing, and *after a time or two* gave it up, began the picture beside Hunt, and there you saw me." Rossetti's enunciation of the fewness of times that he worked under Brown was undoubtedly an exaggeration, yet his first youthful and just gratitude for Brown's offer was quite properly not limited in expression by his inability fully to take advantage of it. Surely, if ever obligation approached the "purely nominal," it was that which closed at such an elementary stage, and which was succeeded by a course which brought about the completion of Rossetti's first painting and which directed him to a new spirit of design.

It is enough, however, to point to the plain facts which show that Millais and I could not have been in 1848 the followers of a young man of whom we scarcely knew, who only some months afterwards I was teaching to paint, and helping day by day, or that we could be the

disciples of a painter whose tuition "after a time or two" my pupil had given up, and whom we did not then know. But I must now account for the growth of the legend we so long allowed to pass almost unquestioned.

The rumours of Rossetti's leadership in our reform, which I have hitherto reported as coming to our ears, were first circulated about 1856, but these were not traceable to any one with a right to claim authority, and neither Millais nor I regarded them as deserving attention. We still felt this, even after Ruskin had delivered his opinion in one of his Oxford lectures, "I believe Rossetti's name should be placed first on the list of men, within my own range of knowledge, who have raised and changed the spirit of modern art, raised in absolute attainment, changed in direction of temper." And again: "Rossetti was the chief intellectual force in the establishment of the Modern Romantic School in England." (A statement by the way which applies to Rossetti as a writer.)

We heard of this only at second-hand, and as we both felt that the author had arrived at his conviction on independent grounds, he was in his just province as a critic in forming his opinion, and we were the last men called upon to remonstrate. The case is different now that W. M. Rossetti has repeatedly declared his brother to be our leader, in writings which inadvertently reveal his want of knowledge as to the real inspiration of Pre-Raphaelitism. Hence we must scrutinise the evidence. When asserting, for example, that his brother always assumed the place of priority in every company, he altogether ignores the teaching and help which Gabriel acquired from my guidance and constant attention during the progress of "The Girlhood of the Virgin." I must remind my readers of what has been already said, that he certainly could not, without my supervision, have had any painting ready for exhibition in 1849. W. M. Rossetti's opinion of his brother's priority is supported by F. G. Stephens, and the strength of their double testimony reflected on all hands may be gathered from M. de la



Sizeranne's letter already quoted. The foundation of the whole theory seems to have been a letter of Ruskin's published by William Rossetti, who introduces it in the following terms. Perhaps the first portion of the letter which is "torn off" would have enlightened us still more.

The letter from which I here give an extract is woefully torn. The first portion evidently replies to something that Rossetti had written regarding Millais and Hunt, and regarding his own subject of modern life in the picture called "Found," which work he was now inclined to lay aside on the ground that Hunt in his picture "The Awakened Conscience" (begun and finished at a date later than the beginning of "Found") had been treating a modern subject of somewhat similar bearing.

#### RUSKIN'S REPLY TO GABRIEL'S LETTER

GENEVA, June 15, 1854.

I know that, so far from being envious of them, you are thoroughly happy in their success; but yet you feel that there is as much in you as in them, and you have a kind of gnawing pain at not standing side by side with them. You feel as if it were not worth while now to bring out your modern subjects as Hunt has done his first. Now as to the suggestion of the power which there is in modern life if honestly treated, I firmly believe that to whomsoever it may belong in priority of time, it belongs to all three of you rightly in right of possession. I think that you, Hunt, and Millais would, every one of you, have made the discovery without assistance or suggestion from the other. One might be quicker or slower than another, and I suppose that actually you were the first who did it. But it would have been impossible for men of such eyes and hearts as Millais and Hunt to walk the streets of London, or watch the things that pass each day, and not to discover also what there was in them—something to be shown and painted.

This letter offers the first piece of published evidence emanating distinctly from Gabriel himself for claim of "leadership" in any respect. The suggestion that my picture of "The Awakened Conscience" was anticipated in idea by the design of "Found" (for W. M. Rossetti asserts

that the former was "begun and finished at a later date than the beginning of 'Found'") seems to convey a charge of plagiarism on my part, so it is needful to enter into the exact facts of the evolution of my design.

Rossetti, it is obvious, assumes that he was the originator of the general motive of pity for the fallen embodied in "The Awakened Conscience." It may be remembered that in 1850, outraged with the difficulties of working from ever-changing foliage in Sevenoaks Park, he returned to our lodgings and set to work on a design from *Philip van Artevelde*.

Sang mouth of neither wife nor maid  
To heart of neither maid nor wife;  
Lead we not here a jolly life,  
Between the sunshine and the shade.

The embodiment of the idea proved so far difficult that he gave up the unfinished drawings, and we heard no more at that time of the subject. When "The Light of the World" was on my easel at Chelsea in 1851, it occurred to me that my spiritual subject called for a material counterpart in a picture representing in actual life the manner in which the appeal of the spirit of heavenly love calls a soul to abandon a lower life. In reading *David Copperfield* I had been deeply touched by the pathos of the search by old Peggotty after little Emily, when she had become an outcast, and I went about to different haunts of fallen girls to find a locality suitable for the scene of the old mariner's pursuing love. My object was not to illustrate any special incident in the book, but to take the suggestion of the loving seeker of the fallen girl coming upon the object of his search. I spoke freely of this intended subject, but, while cogitating upon the broad intention, I reflected that the instinctive eluding of pursuit by the erring one would not coincide with the willing conversion and instantaneous resolve for a higher life which it was necessary to emphasise.

While recognising this, I fell upon the text in Proverbs,

"As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to a heavy heart." These words, expressing the unintended stirring up of the deeps of pure affection by the idle sing-song of an empty mind, led me to see how the companion of the girl's fall might himself be the unconscious utterer of a divine message. In scribbles I arranged the two figures to present the woman recalling the memory of her childish home, and breaking away from her gilded cage with a startled holy resolve, while her shallow companion still sings on, ignorantly intensifying her repentant purpose.

I explained my rough design to my good friend Augustus Egg amongst others, and shortly after he told me that Mr. Thomas Fairbairn had been greatly interested in the thought, and had expressed a desire that I should paint the picture for him.

I gladly undertook the commission. I cannot distinctly remember that I told Rossetti of all these fluctuations of thought, although it would have been natural to do so. It never struck me that these ideas had anything to do with Rossetti's relinquished mediæval design. He had not been the first to represent a girl saddened by the thought of her folly, for Millais had done two or three pen-and-ink designs illustrating unconsecrated passion in modern life. Hogarth, Greuze, Northcote, and many others had treated the theme in moods widely differing, and I never suspected that Rossetti could claim a monopoly in the expression of piteous sympathy for the victim of folly. But he seems soon to have set to work to complete his illustration to *Philip van Artevelde*, and by way of publishing his claim, inscribed the margin with the declaration that the design had been commenced in 1850 and completed in 1853, and that it was given by him to his P.R. brother, F. G. Stephens. This was three years after we had, for good reason, given up the use of the monogram.

Ruskin's letter is of the more importance, as it dates the beginning of Rossetti's new pretensions, and coincides

with Woolner's report of Rossetti's claim that he was the leader in our reform, which provoked Woolner's ridicule, and so caused the final separation between them.

In 1851 Millais had painted his century-seasoned wall in "The Huguenot." Up to 1853 Rossetti had not done anything in strict accordance with our exact study of outdoor nature. He had not attempted hitherto to give the truth at first-hand to such accessories. The first indication of such a desire is in a letter to his mother, then staying at Frome, which shows a sudden resolve to follow Nature without any compromise in the details of his picture of "Found":—

#### LETTER TO HIS MOTHER

September 30, 1853.

Have you or Christina any recollection of an eligible and accessible brick wall? I should want to set up and paint it early in the mornings, as the light ought to be that of dawn. It should be not too countrified (yet beautiful in colour), as it is to represent a city wall. A certain modicum of moss would therefore be admissible, but no prodigality of grass, weeds, ivy, etc. . . . I suppose Christina's pictorial eye will by this time have some insight into the beauties of brick walls.

"The Awakened Conscience" was finished in January and exhibited in May 1854. Brown, in his *Diary*,<sup>1</sup> November 1 of 1854, shows that "Found" was then only just begun; and not having had Gabriel under his guidance for five years, he was surprised, and speaks unapprovingly of his former pupil's manner of work in painting the calf, etc., but he records no attempt to enforce mastership, which he would have done had not Gabriel's docility in practice been regarded as altogether broken off. In any case, I can aver that neither Gabriel nor any of our circle ever said a word to me about his design of "Found" until after my return from Syria in 1856, and even then no more had been done to it than the painting of the cart and calf and a few other accessories. The diary kept by

<sup>1</sup> Published by W. M. Rossetti.

Brown at Finchley in the last months of 1854 sheds direct illumination on facts which touch to the quick the question of Gabriel's claim to have been the leader both in my



D. G. Rossetti.

FOUND.

personal question and the general one of our reform. The entry runs :—

*November 1, 1854.*—We went after his calf, and succeeded to a miracle.

*November 12, 1854.*—Gabriel gone to town to see Miss

Siddal. Getting on slowly with his calf. He paints it in all like Albert Durer, hair by hair, and seems incapable of any breadth; but this he will get by going over it from feeling at home. From want of habit, I see Nature bothers him, but it is sweetly drawn and felt. . . .

*November 27, 1854.*—Saw Gabriel's calf; very beautiful, but takes a long time. Endless emendations; no perceptible progress from day to day, and all the time he wearing my greatcoat, which I want, and a pair of my breeches, besides food and an unlimited supply of turpentine. . . .

By the whole passage it will be seen, with other suggestions most distinctly enunciated, that Rossetti was painting in a manner foreign to that prescribed by Brown. The latter's influence, therefore, was put aside in the direction which Millais and I had been condemned for taking five years before. From whom else had Rossetti obtained the resolution to go to Nature for every feature of a picture, and to paint it in the most direct and finished manner? It was precisely what I had tried to induce him to do in my studio in 1849, and again at Sevenoaks in 1850.

When Rossetti first came to be taught by me, the background of my "Rienzi" had all its landscape painted from Nature; and, as I proceeded, Brown on his visits often uttered satirical pleasantries on the "microscopic" vegetation, and also on the armour and details, as these were gradually added. The scrupulous humility with which Millais and I were disciplining ourselves we had continued ever since, and had enforced attention to this purpose in all our exhibited works. Either Rossetti derived his manner from us, or, if he invented it, it was five years after the practice had been invented by us.

I must take this opportunity of expressing my surprise that my ever esteemed friend W. M. Rossetti allowed himself to publish without submitting to me the unfounded nonsense which Brown persuaded himself Gabriel had told him about my having been employed when about thirteen

at one of "these league bread-shops." I cannot claim the credit of having risen from such a humble position as that which this legend would suggest. When a poor sinner is dead and buried any absurd fables to which an idle word may have given rise have to go uncontradicted, and be handed down as unquestioned history, but while he remains still breathing he certainly should be consulted by any one pretending to publish truth as to the origin of any absurd improbability. Since this statement is given on the authority of friends with whom I was closely allied when the diary was written in 1854, I cannot let it pass without distinct contradiction. I confess that I do not yet know what a "league bread-shop" means. The same diary goes on to report a meeting of Brown with Millais and Collins at the house of Mr. Seddon. He says:—

*April 17, 1855.*—To Seddon's to meet Millais, Rossetti, and Collins. Conversation between Seddon, Millais, and Collins highly moral and religious; they of opinion that no really good man is ever unsuccessful in life. If he dies and leaves a wife and fifteen children they are sure to be well provided for, and he not to bother about it, Millais citing as instances two examples to the contrary of irreligious men going to the dogs.

I have little doubt that Brown was setting forth some of his extreme revolutionary ideas, and that Millais took occasion to suggest to him how the parade of such views stood in his way with his fellow-men, and that "going to church" was merely a typical example of sober and orderly procedure. It is entertaining to note that Brown's diary on the next day, being Good Friday, has "Went to church"!

William Rossetti goes on to champion Brown's anterior claim; speaking of the Free Exhibition, he writes:—"Its first year, 1848" (that is, a year before our pictures with the P.R.B. on them appeared at the Royal Academy), "had been distinguished by the display of Madox Brown's highly interesting and important painting, 'Wickliffe reading his Translation of the New Testament to John of Gaunt,' a painting which, in its bright but rather pale colouring,

lightness of surface, and general feeling of quietism, had beyond a doubt served in some respect to mould the ideas and beacon the practice of the P.R.B.'s." If this estimate of the work and its influence had been really justified it was more wonderful than even its proclaimer of precedence thinks, for I never spared the precious time to go to Hyde Park Corner to see it, and I am sure Millais did not. What I thought of the picture as to its artificial composition when first I saw it in Brown's studio I have already explained; as to its colour, I have a distinct remembrance that it struck me as being harmonious and pleasant in a decorative sense, but as to natural truth much wanting in solidity—the hues being those of gelatinous matter if not of stained glass, rather than of substances absorbing some rays and reflecting others.

Brown was naturally reluctant to acknowledge his conversion to views introduced by men several years his junior, yet after his astonishment at the perfection of Millais' Keats picture in 1849, when he had got free from other work, he began his sweet little painting of "Waiting" in 1853, which, after many years' retouching, was more exquisitely detailed than anything he had hitherto done—more so, indeed, than any of his pictures of later years. It has already been shown how his picture of "Christ washing Peter's Feet" was a new departure on a method of work openly derived from us;<sup>1</sup> and his picture of "Work," begun in 1852, is shown to have been conducted, in the painting of the landscape, on the plan which we had inaugurated of working frankly on the canvas itself from Nature, which neither he nor any other figure-painter before us had attempted.

The *Diary* thus examined proves to be a wonderful confirmation of the other evidence that neither Rossetti nor Brown were originators of our reform. Rossetti's

<sup>1</sup> See F. M. Brown's *Life*, by Ford M. Hueffer, p. 77. Brown did not always appreciate the motives of his friends when they attempted to serve him. See his reference in his *Diary* to "Millais' lying instigation" (Pre-Raphaelite Diaries). It may be assumed that this diary was not meant for his friend's inspection.

picture "Found" was left at the last altogether incomplete, for no other reason than his want of enduring interest in the theme, which he certainly would not have lacked, had it sincerely represented his own natural sentiment. If Rossetti had, whilst participating in our close alliance, once indulged the ambition to play the part of leader with which his brother credits him, there would have been instantly a dissolution of our Brotherhood, at least of the active members. The comparison of dates with the evidence from Brown's *Diary* should convince any one who wishes to arrive at the truth as to the order in which the members of our circle influenced one another.

The design of Rossetti's "Girlhood of the Virgin" was of Overbeck revivalist character, which no superintendence of mine as to the manner of painting could much affect, and his "Annunciation" still reflected Brown's early Christian phase. The more thorough realisation of form and freer painting of these works, while conferring a naïve charm on them, did not make them fundamentally Pre-Raphaelite in character. The first painting designed by Rossetti, and begun in accordance with our aims, was undoubtedly "Found."

The more sensuous phase of taste developed in Rossetti's later period was of hothouse fancifulness, and breathed disdain for the robust, out-of-door growth of native Pre-Raphaelitism. I have seen statements that the difference between the works of Millais and myself, as opposed to the Rossetti school, arose only from our inability to ascend to the fuller purpose of the third member of our Brotherhood.

The question of pre-eminence of production is not for me but for posterity. My business is to prove that what Rossetti did was a divergence from our aims. Some light on the persistency of the opposite contention may appear when it is understood that neither W. M. Rossetti nor F. G. Stephens ever grasped Pre-Raphaelitism, and their attitude fostered much of the suspicion and enmity which met us at the outset of our activity.

As W. M. Rossetti and Stephens have repeatedly stated that they were *de facto* members of the P.R.B. and have not been contradicted, it is natural that the public should assume that they knew all the circumstances of the time. W. M. Rossetti treats the matter as though in our first intention they had not been required to become practical artists. Had we not originally required excellence in art as a qualification for P.R.B. membership, we should not have chosen the name of Raphael to mark the boundary line of progressive and decadent art; Pre-Machiavellian, Pre-Dantesque, or Pre-Aretinesque would have been more appropriate names.

When after a year or so we, the active members, saw that the majority of the seven only talked, indeed often in misconception of the objects of our Brotherhood, all that could be done by us was to discontinue keeping up an outward show of combination, by ceasing to convene or attend official meetings. It was natural that their neglect of daily experiment in work should be followed by absence of interest in new questions of practice, and we therefore ceased to speak to them in confidence, and soon their revelations proved how thoroughly ignorant they remained of the ideals towards which we directed our steps.