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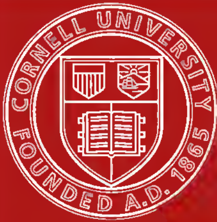

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THE HERKOMERS

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THE HERKOMERS

BY

SIR HUBERT VON HERKOMER

C.V.O., R.A., D.C.L., LL.D., Etc.

AUTHOR OF

'ETCHING AND MEZZOTINT ENGRAVING,' 'MY SCHOOL AND MY GOSPEL,'

AND 'A CERTAIN PHASE OF LITHOGRAPHY'

IN TWO VOLUMES

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CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION xi

CHAPTER I

AMERICA REVISITED, 1882 AND 1885 . 1

CHAPTER II

UNREST—DEATH OF MY FATHER . . . 9

CHAPTER III

MY MARRIAGE WITH MARGARET GRIFFITHS . 22

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW LIFE—"THE CHAPEL OF THE CHARTERHOUSE" 33

CHAPTER V

THE PICTORIAL MUSIC-PLAY . . 40

CHAPTER VI

MY FIRST VISIT TO ITALY . 53

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

"Our Village"—Full Academician—First Portrait Group 60

CHAPTER VIII

Another Phase of Unrest—Somerset—"All beautiful in Naked Purity"—"The Nomads" . . . 66

CHAPTER IX

Election into the "R.W.S."—The Burghers of Landsberg, Portrait Group 74

CHAPTER X

Lecturing 82

CHAPTER XI

Lecturing (*continued*) 90

CHAPTER XII

"Back to Life" and other Matter 95

CHAPTER XIII

Portraiture 102

CHAPTER XIV

Portraiture (*continued*) 112

CHAPTER XV

PAGE

Enamelling 134

CHAPTER XVI

Enamelling (*continued*) 145

CHAPTER XVII

The Graphic Arts 158

CHAPTER XVIII

"The Guards' Cheer" 170

CHAPTER XIX

Versatility—As a Medicine 175

CHAPTER XX

The Art of Living—Confidential 182

CHAPTER XXI

"Lululaund" 187

CHAPTER XXII

"Lululaund" (*continued*) 202

CHAPTER XXIII

Conclusion 232

ILLUSTRATIONS

FACE PAGE

Portrait of Myself. (From my Lithograph) . *Frontispiece*

The "Lady in Black" 8

Portrait of my Wife, Margaret. (From my Oil Portrait) . 24

"The Council of the Royal Academy, 1907." (From my Oil Picture.) (By permission of Messrs. Franz Hanfstaengl) 64

"The Triumph of the Hour." (Silver Shield with Enamel Pictures) 155

Part of the Front Elevation of "Lululaund" . . 190

The Drawing-room, "Lululaund" 210

"The Makers of my House." (From my Oil Portraits) . 231

My Uncle John, carver (left).

My Uncle Anton, weaver (centre).

My Father, carver (right).

INTRODUCTION

The original incentive that made me venture on so hazardous an undertaking as the writing of this narrative, was to fulfil a duty; to let others know what a father had done for his son, the moral and educational influences he brought to bear on his life, under circumstances certainly trying, if not unusual. That done (and I close the history of my father in the second chapter), it may be urged that no adequate reason remains for continuing this narrative of "The Herkomers," and that I overstep the bounds of good taste in filling the pages of this volume with pure, unalloyed autobiography. But having dutifully recorded my filial obligations, I still remain as a component part of this book, and am entitled to a hearing.

Having taken up this position, there is necessarily a note of egotism in the pages

that follow, which has been called "un-English." But "it is idle to criticize the egotism of autobiographies, however pervading and intense," and I have given my reader fair warning. Rather than that he should think badly of me, I would ask him not to look farther into these pages, for the rest of this book presents an unblushingly frank autobiography.

It is a very questionable point whether my personality, work, and life are worth the close analysis I have given them, and on this there will doubtless be some differences of opinion, hence my temerity in continuing this narrative on the only subject left me—myself.

My task is a difficult one. It was, comparatively speaking, a straightforward effort to write the story of my life up to the year 1885, with which the first volume ended. Events stood out in strong relief against a simple background, and fixed themselves clearly in the memory. Life was a headlong rush to reach certain promontories; those reached, things became unclear, "the shadows of clouds . . . confounded with the articulations of the mountains." I am somewhat lost in

the maze of that over-full period, which began in 1885 and has extended to within a few years of the present date. Thinking back, a strange doubt even passes through my mind whether in my narrative I shall be able to separate the real from the ideal; whether my methods of thought have not tampered with my memory, and made me lose the true familiarity with the past.

I will, however, to the best of my powers, subject my memory to severe examination, so as to state deeds and not intentions, facts and not imaginings. With this good and honest resolve I will now take up the broken cable of my story.

"Pleasure is a jewel which will only retain its lustre when it is in a setting of work."—LECKY.

CHAPTER I

AMERICA REVISITED, 1882 AND 1885

THE sacred duty of building a house that should be an adequate expression of the craftsmanship inherent in the Herkomer family had been entrusted to me by my father. I grew up with the idea; it was ever present in my mind, and never for a moment did I doubt its consummation. To the business mind it was an impracticable idea, steeped in sentimental extravagance, and fraught with costs in no way proportionate to the earnings of a painter. To the romantic sentiments of the Herkomer mind it seemed somewhat of a faith. Steadily, quietly, and with perfect confidence in the future, my father was for years making various kinds of furniture for the future house. But before I ventured on a large scale to set the great scheme in motion, I waited for the moment when I could see clearly that the

means wherewith to erect a noble monument were securely forthcoming. That moment appeared when I became a portrait painter, for I was then independent of the ever uncertain sale of pictures. A given size of portrait meant a definite fee, and this definite fee could be earned in a measured time. Given health and life, I had something tangible upon which to form my calculations.

But more than the monetary side had to be considered and ensured before such a scheme could be got under way — help from my father's two younger brothers, who were still in America, the one a master-carver and decorator, and the other a master-weaver. Here in my mind's eye were, with my father, the three "Makers of my House." It was especially desirable, nay, essential, that my uncle John, the carver, should come to England for the purpose, as my father was without experience in large undertakings of this kind, in the management of workmen, and in business details. He had always been a single-handed master-craftsman, completing all he did, from design to finish, without assistance. My uncle Anton, the

weaver, had settled comfortably on a little property in Long Island, working quietly at his hand-loom, making pretty neckerchiefs and the like. It would be easy to entice him to work wholly for me in an art to which he had in his youth been apprenticed, the weaving of brocade velvet, which was the material I desired for my curtains. There was also no necessity for him to leave America in order to carry out my wishes.

The question of my uncle John giving up his well-established business in his later years for a new life, and depending wholly on the uncertainty of my life, as well as on my wage-earning powers, was a far more serious matter. Yet I remember no special hesitancy on his part to accept my invitation, nor did he give me to understand that to a sober mind there was something appalling in the undertaking. But my mind was never sober when obsessed by an idea. Enthusiasm with me amounted to fanaticism, deadening all caution, and my vision saw but the idea in accomplished form, clear and irremovable, though distant. As I think back, it seems like a dream that it should have been so fully realized, and that the means

for its realization should have been forthcoming from the personal efforts in my art *alone*, means to meet the enormous cost of the venture, which amounted from first to last to a small fortune, and this with no payment to architect, builder, or contractor.

If the idea as entrusted to me by my father was of lesser magnitude, it was none the less my duty to give it the fullest expression that lay in my power. With the deep sentiment that guided me, such an idea could not remain as first conceived. It grew as it unfolded, and in this unfolding the dimensions grew as a natural sequence to my exercise in designing. Thus it came about that the house finally stands in its present shape, magnitude, and quality.

So much for the ideality; but the finality of the idea could never have been successful had I not been able to turn the ideality into a plain business transaction. This meant the establishment of workshops, and the acquisition of wood-working machines of every description, before a single detail could be commenced. Further, it meant the finding of capable workmen—carpenters, masons, and

iron-workers — who were to assist my uncle John. I had acquired the wood-working machines whilst on a visit to my uncle in America, under whose directions they were selected. They were in place, and in working order, driven by a 12 horse-power gas engine, by the time he came to England. With the two young carvers I had apprenticed he could proceed at once with the decorations of the drawing-room — the most elaborate room in the house.

For some time everything advanced except the elevation, and there I found my first stumbling-block. An artist can readily turn decorator, but even if he have the gift, he cannot, without long training, become a creative architect, and this training I had not had. I felt my deficiency bitterly, and it was with unmistakable jealousy that I was compelled to turn to another mind for assistance.

On my second visit to America, in 1885, it was my good fortune to come in contact with H. H. Richardson, to whom America owes the initiation of its extraordinary development in architecture. Richardson was in every way remarkable. Mind, body, and soul were built

on a large scale. Big-hearted and generous to a fault, he cast a magnetic spell over all who came in contact with him. Every rich man who enlisted his services fell under his charm ; he "enthused" the hardest-headed man of business, and made him feel the important part he was to play in the making of his country's architecture. I had found my man !

Although his style was a reincarnated Romanesque, and my interior was in the spirit of late German Gothic, I felt it to be quite logical that the *exterior* should reflect the type of an earlier form of architecture than the *interior* of my house. Bent on a little exchange, I took my ground-plans to Richardson. There was to be my handiwork, in the shape of a portrait, in exchange for his creation of an elevation to my ground-plans. He threw himself into the scheme with his usual impetuous enthusiasm. But he did not reckon on the difficulties that would beset him when trying to evolve an elevation on another man's ground-plan, for as he said, "an elevation should grow out of a ground-plan as a flower grows out of a stem" : he also told me that he had to "fuss round it" until he felt it to

be his own. When at last the day came for me to see his creation, he seemed excessively nervous. I remember he had placed the design on the inner side of a door through which I had to pass, so that, when turning round, I should suddenly and unexpectedly see it. Needless to say, I was immediately charmed. There it was, "Richardson" in every line; big, massive, and original. But the greatest surprise still awaited me, when he said to me, "Now *you* play all over it with your imagination." And so the elevation became a combination of his structure with my details.

My sojourn in America for seven months in 1882-3, and five months in 1885-6 was of unusual interest and benefit to me. Socially, I learnt to know a people who had true hearts and clear heads, whose trust was given, or not, *on sight*, and, once gained, was enduring. The atmosphere of the "almighty dollar" in those days, so far as my observations went, had in no way weakened that deep-seated touch of sentiment that lay hidden in the nation's moral constitution. I felt this with deep gratitude in their kind and tender attentions to my old father, whom they all called "Grandpa."

Of my work I need not speak in detail. Suffice it that I had two, three, and sometimes four sitters a day. Artistically, I suffered from the hard light, which came into the studio like a bar of blue steel. I could see no half-tones in the flesh I was painting, therefore at first my work was hard and flat. Only by shutting off most of the studio window, and then softening even the small remaining aperture with transparent gauze, could I get any semblance to the light in which I had been accustomed to paint in England.

This winter of 1885-6 was indeed prolific, for I produced thirty-four portraits between America and England. But of most importance to my career was the painting, that winter in America, of my so-called "Lady in Black" (the pendant to Miss Grant, the "Lady in White"), which, through the generosity of a friend, has found a final resting-place in the Leeds Art Gallery (1910).

CHAPTER II

UNREST

DEATH OF MY FATHER

ALL the interests I could conjure up, all the work I could heap upon my shoulders, could not dispel the unrest that now permeated my existence. My portrait and subject painting, my etching and engraving, my school, my Oxford professorship, all-absorbing occupations, as one might think, even when taken singly, could not dispel the gloom that was eating up my life. The building of my house itself seemed something artificial and unreal. Life, in short, was a drag!

Margaret, my sister-in-law, the best of comrades, the sweetest of mothers to my children, silently watched with misgivings this my mental condition. In honour I can truly state that the possibility of a closer tie between us never crossed our minds. The fact that

such unions were then forbidden by the English law defined most clearly our situation, and *there*, by common consent, we let it rest.

My father's health now began seriously to fail. He could only walk with difficulty, and his hand no longer responded to the will. It was a bitter thought to him to have to give up the work that had been his life's pride, and he still hoped that the condition was temporary. But I clearly saw that it was the beginning of the end, and it lacerated my heart. As he grew more and more helpless, it was my hand that alone could soothe, my word alone that could cheer. He clung to me in his helplessness as a child clings to its mother. And as a mother still does her work—somehow—whilst tending a sick child, so did I work with my father at my side; painting and watching—watching for the attacks of heart weakness, when suddenly palette and brush had to be laid aside and remedies applied to the sufferer. The attack over, work was again renewed. How could the world know the cause, if work, done under these trying circumstances, should fall below the expected excellence? The world has a cruel way of "dehumanizing" a

work of art; the *thing done*, and not the man who did it, has to stand the test. Moreover, in portraiture, the sitter, who commissions a portrait, expects to get the very best work from the painter: its full value is to be there once and for all. The picture buyer, on the other hand, can always expect a rise in the market for his purchase: there is speculation in such a transaction, whereas in portraiture there is none.

Knowing how it added to my father's distress if he found that his ailing was the cause of any cessation in my work, I arranged to paint at accessories—alas, the most difficult and harassing part of a portrait, for it is the accessories and pictorial treatment that can make or mar it. It was an agonizing trial to force invention and design, with the horrible uncertainty of my father's life ever before me. Suddenly I knew the end must come, but when? At the next pause in my painting? To-night? To-morrow? Mercifully in these extreme moments of agony additional strength seems to be given man. But for this mysterious help I should have broken down.

But now, in these last days of my father's

life, a wonderful revelation came to me, one perhaps somewhat easily misunderstood by my kind reader. At a moment of slight improvement in my father's condition, I was able to resume the sittings of a prominent ecclesiastic. He was one of those to whom the possibility of a repeal of that law forbidding the marriage with a deceased wife's sister was painful, deeming as he did that it would cause a complete dislocation of England's social life. He knew I was a widower, and that my sister-in-law presided over my home. Just at this time he was getting signatures for a petition against the repeal of the law as it stood, and he asked for mine. I have said that it never occurred to Margaret or myself to exchange our position for a closer tie. But a sudden strange feeling came over me when the direct request was made me to sign this petition : it seemed as if a rift in the clouds that had been darkening my life had suddenly disclosed to my mental view a truth that I had been unable to see before, or had mechanically shut out. I felt a sudden turmoil in my innermost being ; I had to be alone. I pleaded time to consider, and dismissed the sitter. I was in a dream ! I

suddenly had the craving for happiness, for a new life. Margaret ! Margaret unexpectedly assumed a new character to me. She was no longer the good comrade, but a woman to be wooed and won. The whole of that night I honestly wrestled with this change in my feelings towards her, but all reasoning was of no avail : before the dawn I had written to her in Wales, where at the time she was on a visit to her parents, asking her to become my wife. I knew she would go through a hard struggle before she could decide, and begged her not to write, but to bring the answer verbally on her return a week thence. When she did return, it needed but one look at her face to read the answer in her tearful, loving eyes. Life was all anew to me : gladness, hope, courage, all came back to me with torrential force. We knelt at my father's knees, and felt the touch of his dear hands on our heads.

I wrote immediately to my friend the ecclesiastic to say how his request had affected me, and what I had done. At the next sitting his words were : "Well, I can only wish you every happiness !" the words of a good man.

My father's life was now rapidly drawing

to its close; his whole constitution was breaking up. Yet almost at the very end we were cheated by his cheerfulness and apparent slight improvement as he was carried for the last time to his bed. That night death came as a friend. Without a trace of physical suffering, he looked kingly in death! Teacher, guide, friend, he has been my idol. Death removed him, but could not rob me of his spiritual presence. He is with me now, and ever will be whilst I have life and memory.

In the first volume I endeavoured to allow the father to reveal himself by his action and word, with barely a comment. Let me now give the reader a fuller portrait of this, to me, remarkable man.

The statement in the first volume will be remembered that the sum total of my school days as a boy amounted to six months. It stopped at that for two reasons: ill-health, and the strain on the already too straitened circumstances of the parents caused by the payment of school fees. It was then that my father determined to take up my education himself by a method as unique as it was

beneficial to my particular temperament. Thus, whilst the hand was engaged on a craft, the mind was being stored with facts, information, moral reasonings, with precepts for guidance in life, naturally in the German language, and, be it noted, *entirely without books.*

This particular kind of education lasted from my eighth to my eighteenth year, and in those years the *foundation* of all I know, of habits of thought, of aims and views of life, was laid. The method adopted was the very antithesis of the pedagogue's; it was removed from any form of "cramming." Indeed, my father never catechized me, never attempted to examine me in order to find out how much I had assimilated or understood. Later on, when questioned on this point, he said that what was *natural* to my particular mind *would* be retained, and the rest did not matter. That was his idea of "mental discipline."

I am quite at a loss to know how he acquired his knowledge, a knowledge not specialized, but spreading over great areas of human thought and history. Gathered I know not how, his information might have been open to doubt, but in all my extensive

reading in after years I have not detected a single instance of inaccuracy on his part. His excellent verbal memory enabled him to recite verse after verse of Goethe or Schiller, but that would not be such a matter of surprise as his information on such subjects as the history of morals, of rationalism, of religious thought.

I have said that the direct teaching lasted practically from my eighth to my eighteenth year. After that, my absence from home broke the actual tuition, but not the influence, which has lasted throughout my life. Then, as I advanced in my art, and saw more of society, of life, after a few years my father spoke those memorable words: "You and I now change places; you have more experience and knowledge than I (meaning of the world), therefore I look to you henceforth for guidance, and I will obey you." From that day to the last of his life, I never remember my father to have urged an opinion antagonistic to mine, to give advice, or express any anxiety as to the result of any undertaking I had in view, however eccentric or venturesome it may have seemed. His whole being

seemed to change, to be absorbed into my own. He worked diligently at furniture for the future house; he saw with heartfelt relief that the mother was now reconciled to the profession chosen for me, and although she continued her lessons for a time, so as to feel a certain independence, the assistance that came from me was willingly accepted. My father, under these changed and happy circumstances, retained for some years his physical powers: but gradually the incipient paralysis became more and more evident, and showed itself in his inability to assert himself readily either in speech or action. This condition, however, did not prevent a serene contentment. Those of my friends who remember him sitting in his accustomed corner in the very settle he had made for me as a surprise when I brought home my first important water-colour (as described in the first volume), could hardly realize that he was not in the full enjoyment of health. His beautiful complexion, which never left him until he drew his last breath, his splendid head and telling white beard, made him a notable figure-head in our midst, not easily forgotten by those who saw him. It was

my pride to bring all who visited me to him. Although he could not rise to greet visitors, and found speech an effort, his noble bearing had a charm that affected all who approached him. All his life he was a man given to few words, if the few would suffice. But under pressure of calamity or great sorrow he could pour out his soul in words of true eloquence; and well do I remember such an occasion when I was about fourteen.

I have said that my father seemed to change completely when once at his desire we changed places; changed, in fact, our relationship. The serenity that followed this decision changed him so completely that he bore no likeness to the man who gave me the foundation for all my thinking; who taught me the secret of "self-administration"; who pointed out the difficult paths I should have to traverse; and who gave me the priceless "mental compass" that has guided me through life. This sweet, gentle creature, who had so entirely renounced his own personality, was not the man who had that fierce fight with the narrow-minded middle class of the 'fifties, the fight for his son's

freedom ; suffering calumny without a murmur, and, worse than all, the misunderstanding of the dear mother, who had not the premonition given to the father regarding my future. It seemed to her such a desperate struggle, such a nebulous future, unrelieved by any hope. There was just one chance which would have relieved the circumstance, and *that* my father relentlessly refused to take, the placing of myself—mere lad that I was—in an office where I could at once earn something, and where after forty years' attendance I should be entitled to a pension !

So strong were the lineaments of my father's real character, that it seems almost incredible that he could have so entirely changed, to all appearances, by an act of will. It could only have been brought about by an unusual self-control, combined with intense love for me. To describe more minutely these strong lineaments, I would say first that his was essentially a free nature : a nature proud and independent—so much so that conventional people often thought him wanting in manners. Further, while he did not carry his heart on his sleeve, he was not

secretive. With integrity and honesty so predominant, he did not work for reward's sake; if he succeeded in doing a good piece of work, *that* in itself was the reward. He shrank from all forms of advertisement, or what is usually called "pushing oneself forward," and in the cut-throat world of business he would have been as a child. Although he was slow to make up his mind, when once it was made up the rack itself could not have moved him: but this trait did not discount his breadth of mind; indeed I have hardly met any man so free from prejudices. *Right* and *Wrong* were clearly defined conditions to him; there were no half-way resting-places on sophistical grounds.

Ambitious he was not, as the word is usually understood, and though susceptible to praise, he was not less so to censure or criticism. In his intercourse with others he showed respect without a touch of servility, and being free from self-consciousness was at his ease in any company. Though he was always glad and appreciative of any friendliness shown him, he did not go out of his way to make friends. Unless roused by an injustice

he was equable in his temper, which was greatly due to the splendid constitution and the regular health he enjoyed until the last disease overcame him. His love for his wife was deep and unwavering; his love for me was a Shibboleth to him. Though so strangely different in temperament, seldom have father and son been so welded together, and the flame that forged this condition was —love.

CHAPTER III

MY MARRIAGE WITH MARGARET GRIFFITHS

It would perhaps be invidious on my part to enlarge on the merits or demerits of the then existing law in England, that made the marriage with a deceased wife's sister illegal. Suffice it that mine was a case in point, in which the anomaly of that law was glaringly illustrated. In the first volume I have said that the children of my first marriage never had other mother than the sisters Lulu and Margaret Griffiths, each to a child. Margaret, who was still watching over my home, and who possessed the entire love of these children, was surely the only woman who could enter my home, and claim the full title of Mother.

My marriage was to take place in a land where it *was* legal. I had but to become a citizen of Landsberg, Bavaria, where already my Mutterturm stood, with a short residence

of a few weeks, to fulfil the necessary conditions for such a marriage. That the town received me with open arms was to be expected, and soon followed the honour of being made "Ehrenbürger," equivalent to the "freedom of a city" in England.

I naturally expected that by becoming a German citizen, I should forfeit my rights in this country as a naturalized British subject; I certainly was prepared for it. What mattered to me these technicalities of nationality? I should still reside principally in England, and my real life would not be altered, for I well knew that I should lose none of my friends, in the country to which I owe my whole artistic career. The children of my first marriage, having been born in England, *were* English, and if Margaret and I were to be blessed with children, they would most probably be born in England, and thus be English too. However, some years later, I wished to know with more certainty what my position between the two countries really was, and my lawyer took two Counsels' opinion on the matter. Well, the one said I *had* forfeited my English rights by becoming

a German citizen, and the other said I had *not*. So much for Counsel's opinion! To quieten doubts, however, I sent, on the recommendation of my legal adviser, a petition to the Home Office for a "Special Certificate of Naturalization," which, after, I suppose, careful consideration by the Government lawyers, I finally obtained. I am therefore a British subject wherever the British flag flies, and a German subject wherever the German colours are hoisted. My case is curious, but by no means without precedent.

On the 2nd of September 1888, Margaret and I were married, the ceremony taking place in the Mutterturm. As we passed out of the Tower into the house adjoining, which is the principal dwelling-place, the air seemed filled with the sounds of the Lohengrin Wedding March. The effect was magical; it was next to impossible to locate the music. As a surprise to my bride, I had engaged a small band of the best brass instrument players from the Munich Opera House, and secretly placed them in the uppermost room of the Tower, with all its windows open.

PORTRAIT OF MY WIFE, MARGARET.

(From my Oil Portrait.)

We spent our honeymoon in Rothenburg on the Tauber. Rothenburg, that red-roofed old town in Franken, the rival in picturesqueness to Nürnberg, with its complete fortifications still intact, with all its gates still workable, has been a mine of wealth to artists for forty years and more. During that time they not only carried away in sketches reproductions of every picturesque nook and corner, but burrowed deeper and carried away in actual ware every vestige of antique furniture and objects of artistic interest that were to be found in those gabled Renaissance houses—objects bound up with the history of the past. A mighty toper of a Burgomaster once saved the town by carrying out the whim of a besieging general, which was to empty at a single draught a tankard containing no less than three and a half quarts of beer. That tankard probably decorates the studio of some painter, the craze in Germany for making a studio resemble an antiquarian shop having started some forty years ago. The town has now its artistic reputation much at heart, hence through the preservation of its picturesqueness, it will long prove an attraction to

painters, whose ranks have now been swelled by the ubiquitous lady sketcher. One of the latter class, an elderly spinster (as I guessed), I saw working diligently—as only such elderly spinsters can work—at a water-colour of a doorway, in front of which she had settled herself "largely" with easel and umbrella. Even at a distance I noticed that there were pigeons on the steps of the doorway which she was painting. It struck me as rather odd that those pigeons were not frightened away by her presence and paraphernalia. I wondered whether the continuous stream of artists had made them so tame, knowing the profession to be humane, or whether this woman possessed that strange gift of alluring birds, which is given to but few people. We drew nearer, when to my still greater surprise, we saw her rise from her camp-stool, deliberately take hold of one or two of the birds, and, after stroking them, quietly place them on another spot on the steps, and then return to her stool to resume her work. My wife rather held me back, saying that our presence might cause the pigeons to take fright and fly away; but my curiosity was now aroused, and I wanted to

get at the bottom of this strange phenomenon. Coming closer, the mystery was all at once cleared—they were stuffed pigeons! At the hotel they told me that this old lady took these stuffed birds daily to different spots, and carefully painted them with the real setting, and that she had been doing this for years. Well, I plead guilty to having copied stuffed ravens for my picture "Found," now in the Tate Gallery.

But during this visit I encountered a personage of greater import; a personage directly in touch with the traditions of a craft which modernism had not yet dethroned—a master bell-caster, who plied his craft with all the pride and skill handed down from father to son during the span of many lives. His name, P—— H——, was written boldly across the front of his gabled house, where the same surname had probably appeared for generations, with but the Christian name re-written when a son replaced a father. My attention was arrested by four newly cast bells standing in an archway which led to a small courtyard belonging to the house, and which were evidently ready for delivery. The

donor's name was on each bell, and the lower ornamentation contained a pious phrase. I was told afterwards that the donor, who had left his native village as a lad and made a fortune in foreign parts, desired to show his gratitude for a successful life by presenting his place of birth with these bells. I penetrated farther into the house, and met the wife, who informed me that the master was at his works outside the walls of the town, but would be back towards evening. I called again at close of day and met him. A face square and massive, large brown eyes set wide apart in the head, and brow broad and projecting, dark hair that seemed to defy "grooming," thick neck on broad shoulders, a deep chest, the upturned sleeves showing sinewy, brawny arms, acclaimed him at once a strong personality. He received me with a friendly yet independent air, and at once invited me to enter the dwelling-room. The little wife, looking weary yet patient, was still unable to say her day's work was done, as the master could. She never was done until she lay down in her bed, and then through the night the infant that lay at that moment in a cradle in the

corner of the room needed her frequent attention. A girl of eleven, with her dress off, sat mending it; there was also a boy of fourteen, bright and cheery, with a touch of his father's manner about him, for he was already in the business. This made up the family of this craftsman, as I saw it in that room. The master offered me a chair on one side of the table and he took the chair opposite, leaning his bared elbows on the table, and comfortably settling down to answer my questions concerning bell-casting. He called his wife, "Mutterle" (little mother), and bade her bring some moulds from under the roof, and various ornamentations for the rims of bells. He explained to me certain principles in the art of bell-casting. He showed me the book containing the secrets of his art, which had been handed down from father to son, adding, "This book is always kept under lock and key: it contains our secrets. These secrets are the fruit of endless experiments by our forefathers, and upon which we can never make improvements; the loss of this book would be our ruin. Each master guards his secrets jealously, and no son of a bell-caster

would formerly have been taken as an apprentice by another bell-caster."

Yet this craftsman, so typical of the spirit of the mediaeval guilds, had sent his two eldest sons to a foundry, to learn the more modern methods in casting bells and other objects in metal. I could not help wondering what change would be wrought in their natures by such a training: would they retain that pride in craft, or turn their attention more to the business aspect, and put money-making on a higher plane than art?

The next day I visited his works, which were placed outside the town walls. Primitive they certainly were—sheds, to all appearances tentatively erected—everything black and grimy. Yet as the master explained things to me I could see that he felt his calling to have something sacred in it. It was with moist eyes that he spoke of the great moment when the molten metal was allowed to flow into the mould; how, even as Schiller has described it, a fervent prayer was said by him and his workmen before the "Zapfen," the peg, was removed. All—all depended on the *one* complete casting; no tinkering can ever

make the note right, if in that first cast it fails.

> Soll das Werk den Meister loben ;
> Doch der Segen kommt von oben.

And it was to ask that blessing that master and men uncovered and prayed for God's blessing on the undertaking, for was not the bell a direct link with heaven? It called to prayer, it called for help in disaster, it gave the day's time. So strong was this feeling, that outsiders, who came to witness the great moment, would also uncover their heads, even down to the commonest loafer. Again with Schiller:—

> Wohl! nun kann der Guss beginnen ;
> Schön gezacket ist der Bruch.
> Doch, bevor wir's lassen rinnen,
> Betet einen frommen Spruch!
> Stosst den Zapfen aus!
> Gott bewahr das Haus!

In the modern stress of commercial competition, this spirit is hardly possible. Think of a modern Limited Liability Company running a great foundry for the casting of bells—a company made up of directors and shareholders on the one side, and wage-

workers on the other, working under pressure to produce large dividends! Then turn your thoughts to the bell-caster of Rothenburg, the master who held his craft as something sacred, whose greatest reward is the good work, but who acknowledges that the blessing on such work comes from above! It presents one of those irreconcilable conditions in modern commercialism. The old spirit of reverent craftsmanship is gone, and the new spirit "Business" is without reverence for anything.

On our return to Landsberg we were joyfully received by the children, and it was not long before we quitted our German home, to which had been added a new and solemn significance, deeply felt each time we re-visited the Mutterturm. On our return to England the new life illumined thought and work, and existence was synonymous with—happiness!

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW LIFE

"THE CHAPEL OF THE CHARTERHOUSE"

At this period I was beset by an uneasy feeling as to whether I had been sufficiently loyal to my imaginative art since I had taken up portraiture, and whether the latter did not contain the germs of a danger bred in the very marrow of success. A certain section in the ranks of both artists and public never failed to raise their voices deprecatingly when an artist, who had made a name as a painter of subjects, suddenly took up portraiture. Somewhat ugly reasons for the departure were freely given—the ugliest being the desire to make money. I wonder whether Titian, van Dyck, and Rembrandt were similarly criticized in their day? If that notable saying, "England expects every man to do his duty," might be paraphrased to suit

the artist, it would be "England expects every artist to do *just that* with which he first made his mark—that and nothing else for the rest of his *un*-natural life!" The phrase, "It is not *what* you do, but *how* you do it," had not yet become an article of faith in my young days. A good subject, skilfully painted, was then the accepted formula amongst artists. From Millais we had domestic and Biblical, and from Leighton classical subjects. From Pettie and Orchardson, historical and romantic; from Frith and others, anecdotal; from Walker and Mason, subjects of gentle sentiment; from Frank Holl, sorrow; from Leslie, sweet maidenhood; from Gilbert, knighthood and the clash of arms. And so one could go through the whole list of painters who had become "ticketed" with certain types of art before they took to portraiture; for many of these *did* take to portrait painting finally, and with conspicuous success.

At the time, however, when I was disturbed by that uneasy feeling, I comforted myself with the thought that portraiture was only a tentative phase in my career, for I fully expected each commission to be the

last. Yet from the time I commenced with Archibald Forbes to the present day I have been fortunate enough to have a continuous list of commissions.

There certainly were grounds for the uneasy feeling in my artistic conscience, occasioned by my suddenly taking up portraiture, the foremost being that, whilst dropping subject work, I had not yet grasped the significance and nobility of true portraiture—any more, I may say, than did Hogarth in his career; but of this more anon. The commissions crowded too rapidly on me to give time for reflection. Not that I "scamped" the work: but I did not aim at, or feel, the wider pictorial conception, beyond the mere likeness, without which portraiture can never be monumental. Truth to tell, portrait painting came too easily to me. I repeated technical methods, and worked with dangerous rapidity. Fortunately for me there were exceptions to this, when, for example, I painted sitters of my own selecting, such as Archibald Forbes, Miss Grant, and the "Lady in Black." But my great good fortune lay in the fact that, as the years went on, portrait painting

became more and more *difficult* to me, and it is now with positive thankfulness that with every fresh sitter I feel I am before a new artistic problem, requiring considerable experiment to solve. Therein lies the true elixir of the artistic life, the preservation of youthfulness.

I have at last come to acknowledge, though reluctantly, that portraiture *is* my *métier.* The appreciative reception of my three large portrait groups, the two representing the Council of Landsberg Burghers, and the other the Council of the Royal Academy, has made this more especially clear to me. So far back as 1875, when, as a young man of twenty-five, I painted the Chelsea Pensioners, I certainly touched this, my real bent. But I have already stated in the first volume how I obstinately refused to continue in that type of work, because it was so "unlike Walker."

This is rather a long preamble to the description of my picture "The Chapel of the Charterhouse," but I knew no shorter cut that would enable me to give an adequate idea of a condition of mind to which I and perhaps many a painter have been subjected. It was

from habit of work, rather than from inspiration, from a desire to silence detractors, rather than from an inner longing, that I took up this subject. The usual consequences ensued: the picture "wouldn't come"; it halted and dragged. I knew it was a good subject if properly treated. It belonged to my national pictures; it had sentiment; it offered every enticement to a figure painter of modern genre. But all that reasoning and analysis is of little avail if the "Drang" be missing, if inspiration have not been aroused. The picture was put aside in angry disgust before I had done more than "lay it in" on the large canvas.

Then came the great event in Landsberg, which wrought so wonderful a change in my whole being, and on my return, with the new happiness upon me, doubt, hesitancy, soon gave place to renewed interest in the subject, with the result that, whatever its merits, the picture gave me no more trouble. It was sent to the Academy Exhibition the following spring, 1889, and was purchased by the Council under the terms of the Chantrey Bequest, the second picture which

the Council honoured me by purchasing for the nation.

Some amusement was caused when certain well-known personages, who had sat for my characters, were recognized. The Charterhouse, as is well known, is a home of retreat for gentlemen who have lost all in life except their pride, and there they are treated *as* gentlemen. It was therefore necessary to have "gentlemen" for my models. In the central figure I represented a character whose misfortunes had in no way lowered his estimation of himself. The idea occurred to me by seeing one of the Brethren enter the Chapel with the air of a man who was master of the place. My actual model was a neighbour in Bushey, who, by the way, was the original of Tenniel's "John Bull" in his *Punch* cartoons.

This year of 1888 was a fruitful one, in spite of the unrest with which it started, and in spite of the "uneasy feeling" of which I have given so lengthy an explanation; for I painted some fifteen portraits, in addition to a final venture in a "one man show" of forty-two water-colours, exhibited at the Fine Art Society, of subjects around my home at

Bushey. Here was surely enough to satisfy the utmost "greed of work"; but it was *not* enough for my unappeasable appetite, and I had already started what afterwards became a most cherished episode in my life — my theatrical venture.

CHAPTER V

THE PICTORIAL MUSIC-PLAY

THE suppression for nearly thirty years of my musical side was an act little short of heroic ; I say this advisedly, and without a blush. It was therefore only to be expected that I should seize the first opportunity of rewarding this good conduct. Now, this suppression was more than good conduct, it was good sense, because by this resolve I escaped the fatal step of attempting to succeed in two arts simultaneously. Few men have been able to do that, however equally balanced their talents may have been. But so strong was the love of music in me, that when I stood at the cross-roads, I own it was with leaden feet that I took the right one. I say the right one, but might I not have succeeded in music if I had devoted my life and energies to it as I have done to painting ? That must always remain a moot

question. But considering how a musician's work is placed before the public, and the form in which appreciation is shown him, I do not like to think of the probable effect such a life would have had on my temperament. I know it would have over-excited one of my least commendable traits—my desire for applause: aye, immediate, palpable applause! It is not a nice trait in anybody, and I will only so far defend it by saying it is the "rough edge of ambition."

I was safe in traversing the road I had selected, tortuous though it was. The applause or appreciation meted out to the Fine Arts wears a sombre garb; there is no clapping of hands, no intoxicating cries of Bravo! no coming before the curtain, no speech-making after a successful performance. Even the crowd pressing round a popular picture at an exhibition, guarded maybe by a policeman, is silent, being mostly curious.

Having promised myself a tremendous reward when the psychological moment arrived, is it to be wondered at that I should have thrown my whole energy into the fullest realization of a theatrical and musical venture, the

like of which, with its cost of strength and monetary expenditure, has perhaps never been attempted by an amateur for mere pleasure? But the pleasure was vital, inasmuch as it enabled me to "get even" with the years of hard discipline, and vital in its lesson to my students, demonstrating to them, as it did, the art of "picture-making" with living models, in a real setting.

Wholly visualizing the effects I wished to obtain on the stage, jealous of any assistance from those experienced in stage-craft, I plunged blindly into the undertaking, with only the help of a small staff of picked workmen engaged in the erection of my house, and the students of my school. Out of the picture I desired to set on the stage grew the subject of the play, followed, as it seemed, without effort, by the appropriate music. A theatre was built in my garden, and a small experiment tried. It was sufficiently successful to encourage me to greater efforts, which resulted in a three-act "pictorial music-play," called *An Idyl*—a non-committal title. For this, and within a year, the stage was enlarged, the scene "built up," the play written, the music

composed, and finally all rehearsed ready for our guests, who witnessed the thirteen performances in the summer of 1889. This, let me add, without a moment's neglect of my ordinary work, portrait painting, subject painting, etching, lecturing at Oxford, and continual supervision of my art school.

But it is one thing to open the flood-gates of one's musical nature, and quite another to direct its flow into the channels that demand melody, form, and orchestral instrumentation. However, owing to these very difficulties, the whole thing took shape in a form which—as I have often been told—seemed to others original, but to me only obvious and natural. There was just story enough to give reason to the changes of pictorial effects, and music enough to attune the mind of the spectator to the pictures. It was based upon the fantasy of a painter who used as pigment living colours, and a magic canvas, his mind all aflame with the excitement inseparable from a new experiment.

True as all this is, the reader, however kindly disposed towards me, cannot fail to detect in my words a colouring of enthusiasm,

which, instead of fading with time, has increased in forcefulness, and for a reason not far to seek. Strange though it may be, it is the *fact* in its *accomplished state* that remains most strongly *indented* in the memory. The colours of this accomplished fact increase in strength with the years, because the hundred and one incidents inseparable from such an undertaking, the failures, miscalculations, incidents distracting and distressing, are toned down—that is, if the final result has spelt "success." Had this not been the case, the reader may be sure I should have dismissed my theatrical and musical venture in a few words. But as it was a success far beyond our wildest dreams, I cannot resist the temptation of somewhat lingering over this episode in my life, the memory of which is sweet as the recollection of a balmy day in spring, when the blossom-scented air vibrates with the harmony of feathered songsters, and fills one's heart with gratitude for the gift of life and sensation.

How deliciously intoxicating it all was! How we basked in the atmosphere of unstinted praise! The fever of enthusiasm even spread

to the villagers, who lined the main street to watch our guests as they drove up to the Herkomer Theatre, full of excitement when they recognized a well-known celebrity.

I hear my critical reader say, "Yes, this sounds very entrancing and interesting; reminds one of the days of Aladdin, when a 'wish' was materialized by invisible hands overnight, 'Gestern kaum gedacht, heute noch verlacht, morgen schon vollbracht, und Wirklichkeit!' You talk of theatre built, play written, music composed, and all rehearsed, as if it were no more difficult to do, or entailed no more trouble, or took little more time than to send a telegram to a friend asking him to come and dine with you!"

True, my astute reader! Wishes in our days need some stronger means for materialization than the mere rubbing of an old lamp. But a *wish*, formulated and clearly defined, the offspring of an unsatisfied longing, begets, in turn, a vision of its final fulfilment. To me the "Thousand and One Nights" represent truly a particular state of man's mind, which is ever prone to coquette with visions. But coquetting is only experimenting with real

passion, into which it finally merges. Unhappy indeed the man or woman in whose mental make the capacity to dream dreams has been left out, for therein lies the initiative force of every deed, great or small!

Now, I am rather loath to disillusion the reader by a plainer statement of facts What could be more ridiculous, for instance, than for an artist, who had never been trained in music, to attempt to compose? And dramatic music, forsooth! What more insolent than to plunge, without hesitation, into orchestral scoring? But the voice within that said, "Write your tunes, and get some musician to score them for the instruments," was scorned. Pride, belief in self, would have none of it. Did I not, as stated in the first volume, spend my pocket-money of half a crown a week at the Crystal Palace "Saturday Pops" in the summers of 1886-7, and soak myself with the orchestral colouring given by the various masters to their music? Had I not followed in one piece the wood-wind alone, in another the brass, and in yet another the strings? *I* saw how it was done; of course I did! Therefore why not do it myself with my own tunes?

With this wild desire to do the whole thing, instrumentation and all, yet with absolutely no knowledge of the technique requisite in writing for the various instruments, I plunged into the books I had gathered on orchestral writing. But what a worry these books were! Rules, rules, rules! My memory, never very good, failed to retain the details of the transposed instruments. That blessed clarinet in B♭! Is it to be written for half a note higher than the real note? Those French horns again! Well, I wasn't going to worry about those. "I will," I thought, "write for the horn in F, and let the player worry with his crooks until he gets the chromatic scale." I got the score of the *Meistersinger* and Cherubini's *Wasserträger*, the latter of which I had heard was given to students to study. On these I positively slept, and wept!

But it was all tedious, time-robbing work. Then my practical mind suggested making a diagram, starting with the real notes of the piano, and then writing the transposed notes of the various instruments under it, marking lines down from the various C's: but it took

too long to do. On the other hand, there was no time for lessons; "the job" *had* to be done, and that quickly. Inquiring at a music shop for some such diagram, lo, and behold! I was shown the very thing I had tried to devise for myself, Lafleur's Atlas of Instrumentation. At a glance I saw not only the compass of each instrument, but its transposed note. Then I went ahead, for my tunes and incidental music were already written. For balance of the instruments, for grouping, I trusted to instinct, and to the suggestions I could find in the scores I had. Anyway, I *did* the thing!

The piece had been in full rehearsal for months, with the piano serving as orchestra. But now that the score was done I was confronted with a new difficulty—who was to be the conductor? Speaking of this difficulty at table one day, my eldest daughter, then a child of twelve years, blurted out, "Why don't you have Dr. Richter?" "Good heavens, child," I answered, "do you know what you are talking about?" Her reply was even more naive; "Well," she said, "isn't he good enough?"

It certainly was an outrageous suggestion, but for all that the child's idea did not leave me, and one day I took the desperate resolve of sending the score of the three acts to Dr. Hans Richter, who was then in Vienna, asking him if he thought he could so far demean himself as to conduct my thirteen performances during the summer, when he would be in London for his concerts. Oh, that waiting for the answer! It might mean humiliation hard to bear, but was there not also just the ghost of a chance that it might mean encouragement?

It was at a rehearsal that Dr. Richter's answering letter was brought me. Rapidly I scanned the words, then gave a sudden Hurrah! and, waving the letter over my head in greatest excitement, I shouted—"Dr. Richter will conduct!" Then from other throats came shout upon shout. It took some quieting down before I could read them the letter, in which that generous man told of his surprise at my score, and ended by saying that he would joyfully conduct my music.

That Dr. Richter threw himself heartily into the undertaking will be clear when I state that during the performances he lived in

Bushey, and went to London for his concerts. That we all worshipped him will be manifest to all who have fallen under the spell of his conductorship. It was but a "toy" music-play for his skill, but he took it as seriously as if it had been a production by a master. Deeply and gratefully did we acknowledge that his very name lifted our effort into a sphere of some importance.

Let the reader put himself in my place, and he will readily realize how dangerous was the situation for one of my temperament. I am not sure that Dr. Richter himself was not my greatest danger. Modesty is not exactly one of my failings, but I would hesitate to write down here what Dr. Richter prophesied if I were to study music—even for six months. Was I not satisfied with my artistic career? Had I perhaps after all taken the wrong turning at the cross roads?

But such reflections were as brief as the intoxication of our success, and I passed through all safely. Nor did the joy of it all lessen, when the soberness of the mind returned. Not having jeopardized the success of that one play by a further essay in the same

direction, I am content to remain as the composer of "one music-play," and consequently it can never be proved that I should have accomplished anything better in the sister art, music, had I gone on; still less can it be said that I never after did anything so good as that first attempt. My position is unassailable!

The few attempts we made to follow on were of so different a character that all comparison was made impossible. Even these attempts were finally ended after two or three years, the last being a play that had been specially written for me, and in which I took the part of an old conscience-racked Breton peasant. I thought I had realized the character rather well, but a woeful shock was awaiting me. After the performance a distinguished dramatic critic came forward with outstretched hands to congratulate me. Yes, but for what? For my impersonation of that old Breton? On the intensity of the passion I put into my acting? Not a bit of it! On *that wonderful make-up of mine*, he said! So this was all that was worth noting? So much, therefore, I thought, for my talent as an actor! Although my heart sank at the

time, that one remark brought me finally to my sober senses.

Some years after, when the pianola came into existence, I wrote some compositions specially for the possibilities of that contrivance, and found a special interest in making my own rolls. Here I had a "tame orchestra" under my control. I obtained curious and interesting effects from the piano, owing, no doubt, to the mass of notes that could be produced, unplayable by fingers, unless "rendered by three players on three different instruments," as a well-known pianist once said to me. Some paraphrases of the *Idyl*, and other character pieces followed in this way. Finally, a little more than a year ago (1909) this pleasure had to give way to another, one more in consonance with my art, of which mention will be made in its proper place.

Silent my muse is not, but her voice is distant. It still lulls me to sleep many a night. It has perhaps all been but a dream; but I think I shall dream that dream to my last hour.

CHAPTER VI

MY FIRST VISIT TO ITALY

THE performances of *An Idyl* made that year (1889) memorable in many ways, but the crowning event, which took place in the autumn, was the birth of our first-born. This boy, as it has since been shown, has added yet another generation to the craftsmen of the Herkomer family. He is the fourth generation in direct succession possessing the mechanical gift. With him, however, it has taken the engineering turn.

Whilst still under the aura of my theatrical success, and during a pause, pending the production of an English version of Coppé's *Les Luthiers de Crémone* (kindly lent me by Mr. Willard), for which I sacrificed my black beard, I paid my first visit to Italy.

The reader will wonder why I delayed so long in visiting what was once the "Mecca"

of the artist. The first explanation I have to offer for this delay is that by nature I am not a rover. Further, that I have always desired to exhaust the interest in the localities of my first exploits, rather than constantly to seek fresh grounds for new impressions. No doubt some danger lurks in this conservatism ; it may, nay, often *does*, engender mannerism and repetition in selection, followed by the danger of early decay. But my most severe critics will hardly accuse me of mannerism in my art, either in the selection of my subject or in the treatment. Indeed, they have pointed out to me that I have been too experimental, and tried too many things. But work has always directed my travels, which from the start lay between England and Bavaria. If in former years I felt new impressions to be almost disconcerting, whilst there was still much to search for in old ones, this feeling has become ten times more pronounced as I have advanced in years. I almost begrudge the hours spent away from my two homes, England and Bavaria, where in the former I spend nine months of the year, and in the latter three months. Around

these homes I have made my own atmosphere, within which my whole being moves and breathes harmoniously. Hence, but for an accident, that first led me to Italy, I might not yet have seen this land of poetic classicism.

To one without the advantage of a classical education, Italy can hardly be expected to arouse the same interest that is felt by the scholar. Consequently Italy appeared to me as she stood at the moment, detached from her legendary and historic interest. For all that I am rather surprised that only two works of art deeply impressed me: the portrait of Innocent the Tenth by Velasquez, and the headless and armless statue of a youth found within recent years in Rome. These two works represented to me the culmination of man's power in painting and sculpture. The Velasquez spoke the language that I had given my life to acquire; it was not a mystery to me—yet how unapproachable!

The closer acquaintance with the Renaissance in no way tempted me to throw over the type of art I practised. Whatever

its charm, and it possesses undeniable charm, it did not belong to me. The Italian landscape, however, *did* affect me strangely. That pellucid sky; those cypresses drawn, as it were, with black ink and a pen that widened out in the downward stroke—those cypresses that were always in the right place to counteract the otherwise too gentle and often monotonous landscape; the masonry of old buildings, of walls over which hung flowers deep in colour and careless in growth, all seen in the peculiarly clear yet soft light—could not but affect a lover of poetic nature. Yet none of it did I wish to paint, partly because I wanted to combine it with humanity, and there my disappointment was more than justified, and finally stopped my hand from serious intent. This will be understood when the reader considers my art training in England, the England of the later Victorian period, to which I owe the influence that has ever directed my taste and love of certain aspects in art and nature. So deeply was this influence engrafted, that to attempt to withdraw from it would have been to deprive me of what had become second

nature. And what did that influence maintain? That truth in art should be enhanced by sentiment, and that sentiment should be made vital by truth. But, for the expression of that truth I needed a people who *felt* deeply; a people on whom life, in its manifold struggles, left its impress on face and demeanour. This I found in the two peoples whom I almost exclusively represented in my art, the English and the Bavarian. In the latter I found an additional element of the dramatic spirit, which touched a deep chord in me. But in that southern race I missed just those qualities which so often stirred my mind to artistic energy, and which I found so pronounced in the peoples of the colder climes. This easy-going, sun-basking peasantry, who needed little in life, and took time to get that little, did not interest me. It is not to picturesque attire that we must first look in the representation of mankind. Mankind must mean more to the artist than a dressed-up puppet; it must mean the embodiment of emotion, which separates him from all other living creatures, and the page upon which man's emotions are written is his face. In

truth, I repeat, the Italian race had nothing to say to me, hence I did not want to paint it; and therein lay my disappointment. I may even add that no representation of Italian humanity by other painters has quite interested me. I have seen violence depicted, but that is not sentiment; I have seen "religiosity" *ad infinitum*, but that represented church dogma rather than deep feeling such as Millet saw and represented in his peasants. Not being attracted to any subject, and not having acquired the art of making irresponsible sketches, I did no work during that first visit to Italy.

A few years later I once more visited Italy, but during that longer stay my time was mostly occupied with portraiture. Amongst other portraits I did one in black-and-white of H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught (who was staying in Florence at the time) for the *Graphic*. I found one or two subjects among the monks and priests, with architectural backgrounds; but in architecture I never did shine, being always too impatient to do justice to what my aesthetic sense certainly appreciated. For that second visit I took some of

my portrait work to Florence, and my experience at the custom-house was not likely to create in me a pleasant feeling for this land of historic art. The duties were levied on my works, not according to the price at which I, or anybody, valued them: they were *weighed*, frames and all, and charged for according to weight. My water-colour portrait of John Ruskin, which I presented to our National Portrait Gallery a few years ago, went scot-free, because, as I was informed, the officials did not consider it "hand-painted!"

Well, it may be that I was never long enough in Italy to understand its true fascination, or to assimilate its artistic and poetic significance, but I have never longed to pay it another visit.

CHAPTER VII

"OUR VILLAGE"—FULL ACADEMICIAN FIRST PORTRAIT GROUP

In the year 1890, besides portraits, I produced the picture "Our Village." The full-branched elm still enframed the old church, with its picturesque setting of yews and tombs. There was still the somnolent air about the village; the villagers, women and children, expectant, at sundown, of the labourer husband and father, could still stand in gossiping groups with safety in the road. There was no hooting of motor horns; there was no blinding dust thrown into their eyes by the rush of passing motor-cars. It had retained up till then all the touch and air of the old days' existence, when work was plentiful, and men were willing to do it, satisfied with their scale of wage; when the sons of working men desired nothing better

than to become working men in their turn. That spirit, that condition of things is gone for ever. Useless to lament the fact: better to find the good that lies in the new order; better to see forward, to change the glasses for the changed focus. And true it is that I have benefited in a most pronounced way by the advent of one new thing—the motor-car. It has enabled me to emerge from my isolated life, to see friends, and have friends come to see me. The journey to and from London became not only irksome, but wellnigh impossible in my state of delicate health. Now the car takes me to my town studio, when work has to be done there, or to friends, and this from door to door. No more the rushing to catch the last train home, ending with the weary drive from the station late at night. I leave the house of my friend at any hour suitable, curl myself up in the comfortable covered car, and sleep until awakened at my front door by the chauffeur's loud voice announcing, "Lululaund, sir, all safe!"

The car is to me more than mere pleasure, or a form of sport; it is "business," for I find my sitters come to Bushey preferably for their

sittings. And if they are not possessed of a car, I send my own for their journey there and back.

I never knew England, and I never knew my own native Bavaria, before I had a car. It has enlarged my horizon, and given *air* to my very existence. The change and advantages have been so manifest, that it becomes a daily wonder how my life could have gone on without this form of locomotion.

I gave a prize for a three years' reliability running in Germany, which not only raised the status of the manufactories, but the all-important status of the drivers. By the conduct of the competitors, the ill-feeling of the populace was removed, and most touching was it on that long route to see the school-children paraded in the villages to welcome the cars, throwing flowers into them as they passed ; flowers, and not stones, as was only too frequently the case before.

To return to the year 1890, two events of import should be recorded, one of joy, and the other of regret. The latter was my resignation of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colours. It was after much delibera-

tion that I at last determined on this resignation, but my reasons, which I need not give here, were to my mind sufficiently cogent to justify my action. I deeply regretted it, because when I was first made a Member it was by invitation and not by competition, and coming so early in my career was a great honour. I quite acknowledge that such resignation has the colouring of ingratitude, and gave an opportunity to my ill-wishers to say that I had only remained a Member whilst it was of use to me. But however the act may be interpreted even at this distance of time, I deny that ingratitude can ever be justly brought against me in my life.

The other event, my election as full Member of the Academy, had great significance, and gave me unalloyed satisfaction. Although honours have come to me from many sources, that was the one for which I worked and longed. In order to exercise my privileges at once, I placed as a *deposit*, until my diploma picture could be painted, my portrait of Briton Rivière. My diploma work was handed in the following year, and was called "On Strike." I was privileged to

sit with most distinguished men on my first Council: men like Lord Leighton (President), Millais, Pettie, Faed, Peter Graham; and already then I desired to paint a picture of that Council. I still have the little pencil note of how they sat, with their names marked above each figure. It never was commenced, for the simple reason that I knew I was not yet "ripe" for such work.

It was not until two years after, that a chance was given me to try my hand at what has since perhaps become my real *métier*, portrait groups. This was an unexpected commission to paint a "Board of Directors." Here was, as I thought, a case that demanded uncompromising reality, in order to make it convincing. The room in which the Directors sat, around a large table, was curiously, but interestingly lighted by a series of small windows at their back. The effect of such lighting on the faces must be strictly adhered to, as I thought, and every object on the table, papers, books, etc., must be given in all their local truthfulness of tone, colour, and form. To reach this truthfulness it was absolutely necessary to work direct from

"THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1907."

(From my Oil Picture.)

(By permission of Messrs. Franz Hanfstaengl.)

nature on to the large canvas. As there was no space for my canvas in the room where the meetings took place, and as I never could work from sketches, I built a similarly constructed room in my garden at Bushey—a wooden structure, as it was before the days when corrugated iron became a matter of law. With the addition of the actual table (upon which were scattered the various books and papers) and the actual chairs, I had a complete facsimile of the board-room on three sides. The fourth was left large enough (and specially lighted) to enable me to work on the full-sized canvas.

This picture was exhibited in the Academy in 1892, and, if I remember rightly, was fairly successful. It is long since I have seen it, therefore I cannot venture on a criticism of my own.

It had, however, an important bearing on my career, because it led the way to the two portrait groups of Landsberg Burghers, and finally to the painting of the Royal Academy Council of 1907, which was exhibited in 1908.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER PHASE OF UNREST—SOMERSET
"ALL BEAUTIFUL IN NAKED PURITY"
"THE NOMADS"

AGAIN a phase of unrest came across me, but this time purely artistic. My work did not satisfy me, and my eye for colour, never very stable, had again shown signs of getting dulled. Some remedy had to be employed to stimulate that particular faculty. I knew a distinguished painter who lived in Somerset —a good colourist—and I thought a spring and summer residence, within reach of him, might be of medicinal benefit to my artistic condition. I took an old isolated farmhouse, picturesquely situated, and furnished it. A large wooden studio was built in the grounds, and in the spring of 1892 the whole family migrated to this hermitage, which was six miles, four miles, and three miles from

butcher, baker, and grocer. As for a doctor, he was immeasurably far from us.

I was in shockingly bad health, having been put on a pernicious diet only suited to people suffering from gout or rheumatism, or from over-eating—a starvation diet, in addition to its having a deleterious effect on the very trouble from which I was suffering. Then the air, instead of helping me, seemed to take the last fragment of the little bodily strength that was left in me. It was "boiled air," as I believe Sydney Smith called it. The loneliness of the place, the un-get-at-ableness of anything and everything, was at first appalling. We felt frightened and insecure. The house had a musty, damp smell, and the drinking water from the feeble well, with its pump in the back kitchen, was shared by a few neighbouring peasants, who sent children daily with mugs and buckets. Here was the simple life with a vengeance.

Had this sojourn taken place in the period of motor-cars—notwithstanding the desperate hills around us—the loneliness, difficulty of communication with mankind, butcher, baker, grocer, or friend, would have been entirely

obviated, and thereby turned misery into pleasure. A ramshackle old gig, and a weak-kneed old nag, hired from a neighbouring farm, was our only form of locomotion beyond our own legs, and they were, in my case, too weak to carry me more than a few hundred yards.

But what a country for the artist! If ever decay and neglect enhanced nature for the painter's art, there it is in all its artistry. The rich red soil, the undulating country, the apple-trees tumbling about in their eccentric untouched shapes (untouched by man, except to gather the fruit for cider making), the dilapidated farmsteads; all a treasure ground for painter and poet. In spring, the first budding of leafage, like jewels set in the deep purple tonality given by the massing of tree branches not yet in leaf; the offset of the strong green masses of ivy growths that have taken overwhelming possession of the stems to which they are attached, give a witchery to this corner of England unsurpassed, I should say, in any part of the world.

It was within a few miles of our farm-house that Frederick Walker painted his

"Plough," and "The Old Gate." It was in this neighbourhood that J. W. North evolved his peculiar art, that greatly affected his companion, Walker. North is perhaps a rare example of an artist who was a good colourist from the start. Walker certainly was not; even Turner was not, nor a number of men I could name, who in the course of their development became finally good colourists. North had drunk in the essence of the "Somersetian" tonality and colour, and even took the draught with him when he went to Algiers. I got a draught of this essence, but it was filtered through North's "seeing," and when I painted in water-colours my work was little better than a feeble imitation of North. My oils were more independent, and my two pictures in that medium, "The Nomads," and "All Beautiful in Naked Purity," were, I think, creditable performances, free from North's colour and treatment. The former, representing just that transient moment in spring already described, was painted under the most distressing bodily suffering. My subject was ready designed and sketched out on the canvas, one of moderate size. I was

only awaiting the moment when the leaves would first burst their buds, to paint in the background to my figures, a woman and a lad wearily trudging along the road—wanderers. It was agony to know that the very hours of a day would alter the landscape, whilst I was so enfeebled that to walk across the room was an exertion. But I was not to be baulked by physical incapacity ; dying or alive, I *must* get that background painted. I had constructed a small hut of canvas stretched over a framework of wood, which had on one side a window, the whole just large enough to take my work. This hut was on wheels, and was kept in the farmhouse nearest to the spot of my subject, to be wheeled out when required. But *I* had to get to the spot ! Being some miles from the house, I was conveyed (I can call it by no other name) in a sort of covered wagonette, which gave me one side on which to lie nearly at full length. Arrived at the spot, the horse was taken out to graze at the roadside, whilst I was helped out by my wife and into my little hut, where I worked perhaps for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, until the pain, that was grinding

away at my vitals, became unbearable. Then I would be helped back into the carriage to resume the horizontal position, which generally relieved the pain for the time : that was sometimes a matter of half an hour. I would then return for another short spell of work. So the programme was repeated for three days, until I had completed my landscape background, which gave me the further moral satisfaction of having conquered almost insuperable difficulties.

During the next few years on those visits I produced the first two of that series of small water-colour portraits, which will perhaps remain my best efforts in that medium. The first was of J. W. North, and the second of Robert Macbeth, who had also settled in the district. Besides some water-colour subjects, and two oil-colour portraits, I produced a large oil picture of a single nude female figure standing in a fairy-like glen.

The reception of this picture, "All Beautiful in Naked Purity," when exhibited in the Academy revealed to me once again how deep-seated are the puritanical tendencies of the English race. Far be it

from me to defend the way in which many foreign artists exploit the nude. But I stoutly affirm that there was nothing in my treatment of that nude figure that should give offence to a normal mind. Its sole offence could only have been that the figure was in nature's garb as she stood, surrounded by blossoming trees and running brooklet. That picture kept the room in which it was placed practically *clear* of visitors ; and as for the settee in front of it, nobody dared to sit there, facing the objectionable work. They would probably not have minded, had *they* themselves not been seen, and it was as good as a comedy to watch the people pass through the room and give one more furtive look over their shoulders, before they finally quitted it.

It must be clearly understood by my reader that when I speak deprecatingly of puritanism, I speak of it in its bearing on *art*, and *not* on religion. In no country has its baneful influence on art been so felt as in England ; consequently the painter of the nude has been but an exotic growth in this country. Let me make this question of the nude a little clearer. *The noblest forms of art have re-*

presented the human figure; and flesh painting represents the highest achievement of the painter. If a master has produced a noble work in this direction, it is nobody's business to inquire by what means it was evolved, who were his models, or what their character may have been. But this is precisely the interest to the puritanical mind. Such a mind cannot differentiate between the nude as an expression of the highest art, and mere nakedness. Some change has taken place in the last seventeen years, but I cannot hope that this wrong seeing and wrong thinking will ever be quite eradicated in some minds. As Swinburne has said, "There is no possible truce between art and puritanism."

CHAPTER IX

ELECTION INTO THE "R.W.S."
THE BURGHERS OF LANDSBERG, PORTRAIT GROUP

I HAVE now arrived at a moment when events, being nearer, have got somewhat out of perspective, and I find it difficult to continue in an orderly way to recount what took place between the year 1893 and the present time. The incidents that stand out do not seem connected with dates; they might have happened at any period, so far as my memory is concerned. Ridiculous as it may seem, I have to consult my family as to what I did in such and such a year, or when so and so happened. I suppose this comes from the habit of mentally living in the future, which makes the present a mere stepping-stone, and the past somewhat of a myth. On inquiry, however, I am able to state that our daughter

was born in October 1893; that I was also elected an Associate of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours in that year, and a full Member the year after; that we occupied the present house, Lululaund, in 1894; that my two most interesting sitters during 1894-5 were Cecil Rhodes and Dr. Jameson; that in 1895 I exhibited the first of the two large pictures, the Burghers in Council. As this picture played an important part in the development of a new direction in my artistic career, it must have some attention here.

As stated in the first volume, my mother died in Landsberg after a short sojourn of eighteen months. I purchased the house in which she died, and erected to her memory in the grounds the tower, which I called "Mutterturm." Landsberg, which had thus become a second home to us, is a small town on the River Lech. Its main architectural character is still of the seventeenth century, with some picturesque remains of towers and wall defences of an earlier date.

Having been made a burgher, besides receiving other tokens of their good-will towards me and my family, I desired to show

my appreciation by a gift to the townspeople of some picture from my hand, which was to be placed in the Town Hall. But I was greatly exercised in my mind as to a subject that would be appropriate. Accident, as usual, decided that. One day, as it happened, I wished to speak to the Burgomaster, and was told he was sitting in Council in the Town Hall. Going there, I knocked at the door, and hearing the call to enter, opened it. My subject was before me, ready made. In the centre of the room stood the Burgomaster, in the act of addressing the Council; by his side, at the small table, sat the Secretary. Of the three windows behind them, the one in the centre was draped with some transparent blue stuff, in front of which was a bust of the Prince Regent. Through the other two undraped windows the houses in the main square below were visible. Sitting in the stalls, on either side of the Burgomaster, were the ten Members of Council—five on either side. Here then was my subject complete in every way, and clear to my artistic sight; it had only to be transferred to canvas.

Now, it could reasonably be asked in what

lay the particular "charm" of such a subject to justify its being painted on so large a scale (24 feet)? It was not poetic; it offered nothing that could be called aesthetically beautiful; the blue curtain was common, the stalls were plain, almost ugly, the woodwork painted, and the men themselves of the most ordinary type, in unpicturesque modern attire. If the "beautiful" is impossible to define, as it is conceded, it is equally impossible to make a law of "taste." It is enough for any artist to have a subject appeal to him. That appeal is closely connected with his powers of realization in his art; he feels he can *do it.* Restated from this standpoint, the men had paintable and characteristic heads; the strong light and shade on them was advantageously contrasted with the dimmer light on the two central figures; the blue curtain gave a note of importance in the colour scheme, and the houses of the square below, seen through the open windows, at once localized the subject. The more reality I could put into the painting, the more it became *true* history painting. I had seen nothing quite like it in pictures of modern

times, and consequently I felt I had something *new* in that direction to deal with.

When it was finished, and before it should be finally placed in the Rathaus, I wished to exhibit it, and first in England. But when I saw it over here, I had grave doubts as to the advisability of sending it to the Academy. How could this subject of an out-of-the-way town in Germany, with its plain burghers, interest the English public? I consulted a colleague, whom I had often called in to criticize my work. He, however, likewise hesitated to advise its exhibition, and finally recommended me to call in Orchardson, who was known to have a clear, definite judgment in such matters. Orchardson came, and at once pronounced in favour of sending the picture to the Academy: nay, he went so far, in his generous enthusiasm, as to say it was a *duty* I owed to the Academy. It is pleasant to record that his opinion was entirely endorsed by the other Members.

It is a noteworthy fact that all my best subjects were of scenes that I had witnessed: "The Last Muster," "Eventide," "Castle Garden, New York," "The Chapel of the

Charterhouse," "The Guards' Cheer." Among my Bavarian pictures I can name "After the Toil of the Day," "Natural Enemies," "Der Bittgang," "Light, Life, and Melody," "The Arrest of a Poacher." Is this mere coincidence, or does it point to lack of invention, or what we term imagination, in me?

In the first volume I enlarged rather fully on my capacity to visualize imaginary scenes, and of my father having encouraged this day-dreaming tendency in me. But if it should be more than *coincidence* that my best subject-pictures represented actual scenes that I had witnessed, it would follow that such visualizing powers in no way assisted me in my art. It is, to say the least, a contradiction not very pleasant to contemplate, and as the very thought of it arouses some annoyance in me, I am inclined to dispute it. It will hardly be denied that the word "imagination" is too often used in a loose way, the user not having made clear to himself what it really means. There is a silly notion prevalent amongst a large section of people that an imaginative picture can only be of something unreal;

something quite outside physical laws ; something that could never have happened. Two poorly clad, ugly peasants in a turnip field, pausing in their work to offer up a silent prayer as the Angelus is rung in the distant church tower, is passed over as being too common to interest them. Whereas a pictorial display of winged women floating about in the sky in long cotton gowns, arrests their attention, and is gazed at with awe and reverence. But there can be no question as to which of the two pictures is the truly imaginative one.

The *imaginative* and the *imaginary* represent two totally different aspects. If I had painted the burghers of a hundred years previous, sitting in the same room, *that* would have been imaginary. Having painted the burghers of my day, I had direct living evidence in my favour. But before that "evidence" could be "transferred by paint on to canvas," much "treatment" was requisite, and such treatment can only be successful if it be the outcome of imagination. The whole mental process that goes to the making of a picture is a co-ordination of taste, technical dexterity, and

many other mental powers impossible to define ; but the motive power is imagination—*the power to see what should appear on the canvas, though it may not yet be there.* Compare any artist's work of such a subject with a photograph of the same scene, and my statement will be verified. The moment a touch of the artist's *mentality* is visible in his representation of natural objects and scenes, you may be sure it is the result of imagination.

I fear I am not skilful enough to put this important matter more clearly, but the reader *with imagination* will be able to read between the lines, and make up for the deficiency.

CHAPTER X

LECTURING

THE reasons that led me to make lecturing so important a feature in my life are not far to seek. I am by nature loquacious; I love to talk—too much so perhaps for some good friends who may fail to get their fair share of conversation whilst in my company. The public platform always had an attraction for me; a good voice, a clear enunciation, and an entire absence of all nervousness, combine to make lecturing a real pleasure to me. A mass of upturned faces listening to every word has a most inspiring and life-giving influence on me, for whatever I may "give out" in human magnetism, is returned to me tenfold by the response of my audience. This *rapport* sometimes takes a little time to get into working order; but, once obtained, the rest is easy. From practice every lecturer knows

when that moment has arrived. Popular audiences start on curiosity; your manner, your voice, even your appearance are first criticized, and settled in their minds before attention is given to the matter of the lecture.

My lectures are popularly written and make no claim to literary value. Although prepared with infinite care and trouble, I endeavour to give my thoughts in the simplest language, avoiding "an unusual word as a hidden reef." My fundamental aim has been to make the people understand that art is an "emanation" from a particularly constituted mind, given forth for the benefit of mankind; that life would be impossible without art of some sort; to take them into my confidence and endeavour to explain certain conditions and phases of art.

If, however, the delivery of my lectures has been easy to me, their preparation has often given me great trouble. Merely touching the history of art for occasional illustration, my subjects have always been chosen out of my own experience, which frequently did not offer enough material on a particular subject to eke out the hour — my limit of time for

my lectures. To fill up, matter was often introduced that somewhat interfered with the balance of the lecture. In my delivery I could always make such defects unfelt, but if reported, the patchiness was painfully obvious. With practice, experience, and painstaking, however, such defects became less and less observable as I improved in the technicalities of writing. But a lecture, written for delivery, cannot be completed in the study; it must be tested by delivery to an audience. I found I could never really complete a lecture until I had delivered it half a dozen times. Even then, if put by for a few years, it necessitated a re-cast before it was suited to the new period. Hence I have always resisted publishing any of my lectures that were not of a purely technical nature.

I have done the regular touring, lecturing in a different place every night. But the constant repetition of the same matter seemed to take away its interest. The effort became purely mechanical: emphases, even gestures, were repeated, until you felt *acting* a part not truly belonging to yourself, which even the knowledge that it was fresh matter to

each new audience could not dispel. For such touring everything is arranged for you, date, town, hour, hotel, time of trains, etc. You become a performing machine, and unless physically strong, it takes some precautionary measures to prevent a breakdown on the way, and a disappointment to your audience. It is certainly not always a pleasure trip. You arrive after dark, on a cold winter's day, in cold drizzling rain—say in a small town in Scotland. The cab—pre-ordered—takes you through ill-lighted and seemingly empty streets. Presently it stops at a rather more liberally lighted house, which you find is the hotel you are to stay at. On entering you have to search for "Mine Host" (or Hostess) ; but when found you begin to feel once more among human beings. And this little, half-lighted, deadly dull place is to furnish an intelligent audience? You make inquiries, and find to your astonishment that the best lecturers have been there. After a slight repast, served by a none-too-clean slavey in the sitting-room, with its unheard-of furniture, pictures, and prints, and its hardly perceptible fire in a neglected grate, you once

more get into that strongly scented cab, and are put down at a large building, which generally turns out to be a chapel. There may be a secretary, or some of the Committee to meet you. The clock points to the hour, and you enter a side door, and are suddenly face to face with an unexpectedly large audience, which may be all you could desire. You return through the mysterious streets to the Inn, where you spend a few hours revising your lecture before going to bed. The next day you repeat the programme. But there are towns you touch where two thousand people will gather to hear your words—and more, two thousand five hundred, and three thousand. That recompenses you for the smaller audiences in the smaller towns; equally for the discomfort inseparable from the life of the professional lecturer whilst on tour. It is a noteworthy fact that some 150 Societies in Great Britain have been established to engage lecturers on all kinds of subjects, and these are mostly in connection with Nonconformist chapels.

The importance of my connection with Oxford as a lecturer must be given a foremost

place in my career. The honours, appreciation, and friends that I have found there have enriched my life, for which I desire here to record my deep gratitude. How I came to be elected Slade Professor is rather a curious story. I had attended the last lecture of John Ruskin in Oxford. How shall I describe that painful performance? And painful it was to his friends who loved and revered him, who so plainly saw how he played to the gallery, how, in the perversity of spirit that sometimes overtook that brilliant mind, he seemed only to wish to arouse hilarity amongst the undergraduates, who *did not know him.* It was next to impossible to follow the drift of his discourse, and still more difficult to reconcile the vulgar illustrations he exhibited, with the titles of his lectures. There were of course flashes of his unique diction, but those seemed far from the matter of his lecture, so that one was trying all the time to seek interpretation.

After this last lecture I accompanied Ruskin on his drive home. Immediately he escaped from the crowd he was a changed man, a man of infinite sorrow and sadness. Presently he

laid his hand on my knee, and said, "You must carry this on for me." His wish was evidently conveyed to the electors, for I was made Slade Professor of Fine Arts in his place without delay. I made it clear to the electors what I *could*, and *could not* do, but was met with the greatest courtesy, giving me entire freedom of action.

My inaugural address before a large audience in the Sheldonian Theatre, in the presence of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jowett, was an event that will always be memorable to me. After the lecture, the Vice-Chancellor rose and addressed the audience, welcoming me to the new position with most flattering and appreciative allusions to my lecture. Before my second lecture I received the degree of M.A., and was soon made an Honorary Fellow of All Souls, a great honour, especially as the only other Hon. Fellow at that time was Gladstone. How the degree of M.A. came to me is worth relating.

The day after the first lecture I was invited to lunch with the Vice-Chancellor, after which he took me round the College. As we were

walking through the corridors he suddenly said, " Would you like a degree ? " Of course I would, and said so in as modest language as I could muster, adding, however, that I was no classical scholar, etc., etc. He seemed not to hear my confession, but added, " What would you like ? " Seeing that modesty did not work, I boldly said, " Well, sir, I would like some degree that would give me a voice on matters of art in the University." He then suggested the degree of Master of Arts. At my second subsequent lecture I wore my gown, and felt of considerably more importance than at my inaugural address, when I lectured in a plain frock-coat.

CHAPTER XI

LECTURING (*continued*)

THE Professorship of Fine Arts founded by Mr. Felix Slade has a chair in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London, and Ruskin held the one in Oxford with, I think, but one interval, from the commencement until he finally resigned. It may be mentioned that the school of drawing which Ruskin founded and endowed in that city is independent of the University. The professorships of Oxford and Cambridge differ from that of the London University. The latter is a practical school for the tuition of drawing, painting, and sculpture, whereas the chairs in Oxford and Cambridge were intended by the founder to bring the aesthetic or historical side of art before the students, to help them in forming opinions on, and to arouse their interest in, works of art.

Now, I always had misgivings about a literary judgment on art, for it loses sight of a vital element, the technique. I intended therefore to leave the literature of art in the background, and to place before the students painting "in the making," to demonstrate the art by actually painting a portrait in their presence. It was a bold innovation, but one which was accepted with avidity and interest. I would paint a half-length portrait of some well-known member of the University, who offered himself as my subject, in six sittings of an hour each. Several of these portraits I presented to the Taylor Gallery in Oxford, just as I left them (more or less finished) at the sixth demonstration lecture. But it was a tax on my strength, as I gave my audience a running commentary the whole time I was painting.

Although talking whilst working is almost a necessity to me, to interpret the work that is actually coming from one's hand as it progresses is an effort necessitating almost a dislocation of the co-ordination of one's faculties, as such work is done by a subconscious action of the brain. For the

moment I had to be two persons in one, and this dual exercise of the mind was sometimes the cause of the painting, or the talking, getting a little mixed. But as I never mind making a mistake, even in public, if I can rectify it, I found that the act of scraping out and repainting the badly manipulated part gave me interesting matter for verbal commentary. It has been well said: "Don't be discouraged if your work is full of imperfections. A sunbeam cannot be seen except for the dust that gets in its way." Well, the effect on my audience of scraping out, say, an eye, or side of a cheek, was amusing, for it called forth a kind of general groan. Even in the sanctuary of the studio it takes considerable moral courage to remove work that, however wrong, was to all intents and purposes finished; how much more so then in public? But it is just in the artist's honest acceptation of the fallibility of his powers that the audience gets the truest glimpse into the mental operation that takes place during the evolution of a work of art. No doubt to the layman painting may seem a kind of magic; but there is nothing in the nature of legerdemain in it. Some of the greatest

paintings have been the result of endless trials and alterations.

I made another innovation during my Professorship, in separating the general public at my lectures, from the Members and students of the University. The former, having leisure, came an hour or two before the lecture and secured the seats; then the students, whose studies gave them barely time to come at the hour fixed, were left with standing room only. I therefore consulted the hour most convenient to the latter, and at that hour only members or students of the University were admitted. Not to disappoint the outsiders, however, I repeated the lecture to them.

I held the chair for nine years, ending in 1895, I also lectured in the Royal Academy as Professor of Painting. But after these more or less official positions, I devoted my lecturing to the public in general. I developed a style of popular diction; I selected subjects of general interest, with only sufficient technicalities to give me a justifiable peg upon which to hang my philosophy of art and life. I have addressed audiences of every description, but mostly belonging to what is termed — the

people. Perhaps the most remarkably responsive and virile audience I ever spoke to was one consisting of a thousand men in a London Chapel on a Sunday afternoon, at what was termed a "men's meeting."

After an absence of thirteen years, I felt a strong desire to test this kind of lecture on the higher-class audience in Oxford. That was the year after I had received the honour of the D.C.L. degree. The Vice-Chancellor met my wishes to come as a "free-lance" most courteously, and I gave four lectures in the largest room of the Examination Schools. I started with an audience of some seven hundred, which grew to eleven hundred for the last lecture. Here was a compliment and encouragement that I knew how to appreciate.

CHAPTER XII

"BACK TO LIFE" AND OTHER MATTER

THREE events stand out in the year 1896: an exhibition at the Fine Art Society of water-colours and black-and-white works; my position as Deputy-President of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours; and the exhibition of a subject picture called "Back to Life."

To speak of the latter, this picture represented a scene that I had *not* witnessed, and in this way was one of the few exceptions to my other important oil subject works. I knew an attractive village in Somerset that seemed *made* to form a background for figures. A landscape painter, however, might have made the picturesque village street, with its rising ground on one side, and gentle distance on the other, the *main motive* of his work, with figures dotted here and there, just to indicate that the

village was not deserted. But such figures would be mere adjuncts, and would in no way arrest the sympathies of the spectator. Birket Foster had a great gift of placing such figures into his landscapes. Although mostly "pinafored" little girls, they were always in the right place, and added "artistic" interest to the scene. I was never influenced by his work, or specially attracted by this gift of his, but I heard with much interest only the other day that Walker was, and had openly expressed his indebtedness to Birket Foster in this respect. But with Walker the figures were always more than mere adjuncts; they formed a real human interest, and touched our sympathies before the landscape into which they were introduced. This was my aim in the picture "Back to Life." I had a first-rate background, and there was a sweet-looking little girl in our village, with delicate features and light blue eyes, whom I had long desired to paint. Out of this combination a tangible story grew. From the fact that the little girl looked delicate, it was not a great stretch to suppose that she had been ill and was now convalescent. Thus I came upon the idea of transferring our

Bushey district nurse to that Somerset village, and making the nurse, dressed in her uniform, tenderly support the child on her first outing, carefully wrapped in the nearest thing at hand in the cottage—a blanket. Such improvised garment, being unusual, would suggest that the child *was* an invalid, and it moreover provided a strong contrast to the uniform of the nurse. There was the further contrast in facial expression ; the child half dazed with the full light of day after her long confinement in the dark cottage room, and the sympathetic look on the face of the nurse, satisfied and thankful that her efforts to help the child's recovery had not been in vain. All this was imaginary ; yet as it belonged so much to real life, and was so *possible*, it might be said that it was only by an accident that I had not witnessed it.

These two figures formed the nucleus of my subject, and at once suggested the title of the picture, "Back to Life." The importance of a good title cannot be over-estimated. It gives a final touch to the deeper meaning of a picture ; it makes the spectator *think*. Millais was often very fortunate in his titles ; I have

only to mention his "Chill October" as an example. This landscape was not a composition; it represented a wind-swept and somewhat desolate scene of rushes, water, and a group of trees in mid-distance, with a nondescript grey sky. But the title touched it with a poetic meaning, that would have been more or less lost on the spectator who otherwise saw merely a finely painted and realistic transcript of nature.

Well, to return to my work under discussion, the nurse and the child were placed right in the forefront of the canvas. They arrested attention before all; yet they had to be supported by other figures, not only to make a "composition," but to draw the eye even more to the figures of central interest. Sympathy, and pleasure at seeing the child once more out of her sick-room had to be expressed, and that by figures (mostly women) of all ages. This, however, was easy work; it was only a matter of finding appropriate models, and then painting them in action, expression, and tonality as well as I could.

I have described this picture, not in praise

of the work, but to show the reader how, in its evolution, the "combined forces" of the *imaginary* and the *imaginative* which I have already treated in Chapter IX. worked towards an artistic end.

I come now to my election as Deputy-President of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours. Great pressure was put upon me by many Members to accept that position. I hesitated, not only because I knew it would take up too much of my time, but because I knew that once in this responsible position I should feel it my duty to the Society, which I greatly honoured, to bring forward propositions for changes, which were sure to find opposition from those Members who had got used to, and liked, the humdrum, easy-going regime which had got rooted during the long absence, through failing health, of our revered President, Sir John Gilbert. Although I had very closely watched the procedure at our Academy Meetings under the chairmanship of our incomparable President, Lord Leighton, I did not feel competent to direct meetings until I had taken lessons from a parliamentary expert, on the forms pertaining to the conduct-

ing of a Society's Assemblies of Members. But once familiar with them I never hesitated, although courteously I hope, to enforce them. I did not calculate whether I was making myself popular or unpopular. The dignity and importance of the Society alone guided me. It was acknowledged, even by Members who did not like me, or my methods of enforcing order, that my two years' tenure of office caused many improvements to become law, which materially and permanently added to the efficiency of the Society's government.

When Sir John Gilbert died I still held the position of Deputy-President, and it devolved on me to preside as Chairman at the Meeting for the election of a new President, despite the fact that I was in the running for that more exalted position. It so happened that the votes were equally divided between myself and the Member who had been put up against me. I refused to use my prerogative of the casting vote, and insisted on a second "scratching." In that, one vote was lost by the scratch having been given to an ineligible Member, and it was by that accident the

Presidency was won, much to my relief and satisfaction.

There is no need to say more on this episode, as it is a matter of history, known to all who took part, or were interested in the election.

CHAPTER XIII

PORTRAITURE

IT has been pointed out to me by one who has seen the foregoing pages that I have treated my portraiture rather cavalierly, compared to my subject work, and that I ought to devote a chapter solely to this important branch of my art work.

There are difficulties attending this, both as to treatment and good taste. Am I to write my "impressions" of the well-known men who have come under my brush? But I ask, would such impressions add important facts of value to the biographers of the celebrities I have painted? It would be an impertinence on my part to assume that I could bring some new light, beyond what I had expressed on canvas, to bear on their characters. It would be impertinent to attempt such a thing were they dead, in which case their descendants

would still represent them: and were they living, they might with justice resent a close description of their peculiarities from the pen of a man who was engaged, and paid, to paint their likeness.

And as for repeating in print what a churchman, statesman, lawyer, or soldier may have said to me, I need only state that the moment a sitter enters a portrait painter's studio, it is tacitly understood that he is on sacred ground, where he can freely vent his opinions or give information, without fear of his words being made public. Naturally such immunity from danger of publication, a danger that dogs the steps of every public man, makes the conversation between painter and sitter often highly entertaining and frequently instructive.

The portrait painter must "draw out" his subject, as well as draw and paint him on the canvas, and this he can only do by means of conversation. If he have the gift of talking whilst at work, he will find no sitter uninteresting, as "every man is your master in something."

The relation between sitter and painter is

always—it *must* always be—pleasant, otherwise how is the painter to get the "best" aspect of his sitter? For instance argument, in any direct form, has to be studiously avoided, for the simple reason that "superfluous blood must be kept from the face of the sitter." The least touch of dislike, either way, would endanger the situation, and jeopardize the success of the work. How scurrilous it would be, therefore, to repeat conversations that took place in the studio, when all restraint was thrown aside!

I may, however, enlarge on some of the side lights of portrait painting, without offence to the sitters who have come under my hand, or to their descendants, who may glance at these pages: or, further, without annoyance to my fellow portraitists, who might fear that I should either advertise or "give away" the profession too much. Thus I will begin by stating that a sitter's confidence must be gained, before the real work can commence. The following incident will make my meaning clear.

A number of friends desired to present a gentleman with his portrait, as a token of their

respect and admiration. Disliking the very idea of being painted, he resisted for years. When at last he consented, his dislike to sitting even increased, as he was then angry with himself for having given in. I had a preliminary interview with him at his own house, which passed pleasantly enough, as the dreaded subject was barely alluded to. The impression he left on me was of a straightforward, honest man, but withal of a distinctly sympathetic nature, one that needed "response." Between the time of this interview and the first sitting, however, he must have worked himself up to a pitch of excessive temper, for when he mounted the platform and sat in the chair, he was the personification of intense resentment. Now, here was a case where humouring was more essential at that moment than painting. Although I had my canvas (of which he could only see the back) in position, I merely made pretence of work. I started a conversation as far away from the matter in hand as possible. As he was a German I spoke to him in his own language; that in itself had a soothing effect. I asked him about his German home and his youth;

that aroused the affectionate remembrance of his parents. Passing on, I asked his opinion of the two countries, and of the future of commerce between them; that aroused his patriotism. In short, he became so interested in hearing himself talk, that he forgot altogether the purpose for which he sat in that chair. That first sitting cleared the way for a good understanding between us, and from the second to the last sitting I could not have wished for a better or more congenial sitter. It was curious to see how, in spite of himself, he gradually became interested in the work, and being so honest, candidly expressed his interest and approval. To uphold a semblance of the position he had taken up at the beginning, however, the expression of his dislike to sitting *had* to be brought in. But the repetition of his sentence, "Mind, I hate to be painted," which had interlarded much of his conversation at first, became less and less frequent, until it was heard no more.

If the sitter has to be humoured, so to speak, before he can be painted, the artist has no little to do with himself before he can paint. If the sitter for the time is under *his*

influence, he himself is also under all kinds of invisible but potent influences. He is certain to have some painter in his mind, of whose work he may at the time be enamoured.

At the date of my writing, 1910, I count back nearly thirty years since I painted Archibald Forbes, my real beginning in portraiture. During that time I have passed through most curious technical phases in this art, more especially as regards colour, which has often suggested to me that there must be something very unstaple in my organ. Some work by another painter would set me on a new track, which I would follow until it either ceased to interest me, or until results were losing their freshness. This apparently vacillating condition of mind is partly due to a frantic fear of getting into a groove, which has haunted me throughout my life. This present period (1910) has perhaps shown the greatest change in my feeling for colour, and my colleagues are good enough to say I have "greatly improved." If this be so it is fortunate for me, as I have less time before me, humanly speaking, than ever before, for "groping." I have learnt much from

Sargent in the planning of lights and darks, the balance in tonality of background in its relation to the figure, the true emphasizing of essentials : these are phases that were greatly neglected in the days of my early training. Although "tonality," or so-called "values," have been carried to excess in modern times, thereby obliterating the beautiful and lovable detail to which we, in those days, gave primary importance, there lies within this modern "seeing" the germ of "rightness," which goes so far towards making a work of art convincing. Having said so much I am bound to add that, if in overlooking this sense of rightness we (in those early days) were apt to get our work *spotty*, or *confused*, there is in our present time a tendency to give an *illogical scale of touch* for the *scale of the canvas*, necessitating often a visual distance before any forms can be distinguished that is quite out of proportion to the size of the picture. If this be too ostentatiously affected (especially in portraiture) the work never gets beyond the *sketch* ; and while the elements of the spontaneous sketch are undeniably embodied in every great work of art, yet,

standing alone, the sketch can never claim *greatness*. This is a truth that cannot be too often repeated.

Let me pass on to another point—the background and general arrangement of a portrait, which is of such great importance. Let a head be never so well painted, it will still be dependent on the colour and treatment of the surrounding parts for final success. I read somewhere that Titian declared anybody could paint a head, but that few could treat backgrounds successfully. I was long before I fully realized the importance of the "setting." Although when I commenced portraiture I felt the importance of the art, and appreciated to the full any success I may have achieved, I did not fully comprehend *all* that portraiture meant. But I sufficiently understood its importance to disagree with painters who spoke sneeringly of this most human branch of art. Nor could I understand why artists should continue to practise it whilst heartily disliking the work—even to loathing—as two distinguished portrait painters have expressed themselves to me. Hogarth's ill-natured remarks are too transparently the

outcome of spite to deceive any one, when he says: "As to portrait painting, the chief branch of art by which a painter can procure himself a tolerable livelihood, and the only one by which a lover of money can get a fortune, a man of very moderate talents may have great success in it, as the artifice and address of a mercer is infinitely more useful than the ability of a painter." My remarks on the humouring of the sitter would, I presume, come under the lash of this acrid critic when he speaks of "artifice and address." Was it not Bacon who remarked that, "in the flight of Fame, she will make little progress without some feathers of ostentation?" The portrait painter certainly must be more respectably housed than would be necessary for a subject or landscape painter. He could not expect a lady, beautifully dressed, to sit in an untidy studio, oftentimes located away from the house, in the garden. But *logical decency* and *ostentation* are terms of widely different meaning. Again, the portrait painter, unlike the subject or landscape painter, *must* be a man of society, and "address" is then only a part of his good conduct when mixing with his

fellow creatures. By painting all classes of people he is the "recorder of the times." If he saw none but the few sitters he painted, his judgment of character would soon get impaired, as that gift—perhaps *the* most essential in obtaining true likeness—needs a large area for its exercise. No one sitter could be judged unless the artist had experience of mankind in general. Comparison may be unconscious in his mind, but nevertheless it is active all the time.

Let me again say by the way that it is the more regular income accruing from portrait painting which has caused it to be exposed to so much obloquy amongst some artists. But I will just put the question: how is it that when the picture market is bad, portraits increase in proportion to the decrease in subject works in all exhibitions? The reader will find no difficulty in answering this question.

CHAPTER XIV

PORTRAITURE (*continued*)

To say that portrait painting, being the most human of all the arts, may make claim to being the most satisfying, and further that, by portraying history-making man, portrait painting becomes history painting in the truest sense, is to utter a platitude. Yet I feel the truth of this every time I open a book of biography, which, if it does not include some kind of pictorial portrait of the subject treated in the text, leaves me unsatisfied. It is safe to assert that portrait painting is the most popular, the most indispensable, and, let me add, the most difficult and exacting of all the "Formative Arts"—*pace*, my friends of landscape and subject renown! From time immemorial man has endeavoured to make a counterfeit of his fellow creature; he has scratched it on a

mammoth's tusk; has cut it in granite, in wood, and fashioned it in every available material, to the most subtle treatment in colours. Man has ever been the primary interest *to* man, and he has used the arts to raise him to the semblance of a god. In early days the artist has given man the attributes of the beast, to show him as the master of all living things. In spite of religions having forbidden the exact imitation of man's form, the "idea of man" was always there, and unfailingly appeared through every imposed artificiality and stricture. I go so far as to say, man is not a mere adjunct to this world: *he is the world*! To paint man, then, is to represent the world and its history.

I do not wish to escape the imputation that I write as if I held a *brief* for portraiture. I do hold such a brief; but I plead for the art, and not for myself, or for my own efforts. The longer I live, the more I observe, and the steadier my judgment, the more do I see the potentialities and fuller meaning of this art.

To speak in these pages of specific works by portrait painters would be invidious if modern, and out of place if ancient. It is

enough to say that every artist who contributes a successful portrait of a fellow creature, deserves the thanks of the community at large. This thought has come to me again and again when I have looked at a fine work by some brother painter. As an artist, I have felt pride in my comrade's work, feeling that he had given us a standard of excellence that would stimulate us in our own work; as an individual I have rejoiced, knowing full well what unspeakable happiness he must have given to those who belonged closely to the sitter.

To touch the lighter side, it is strange what a hesitancy there is on the part of many people to sit for their portraits. They fear the operation: an indefinite feeling, strongly allied to superstition, makes them dread the result in anticipation. They take alarm at the possibility of the painter bringing out some trait that the sitter has tried to hide all his life. This was well illustrated by a lady who was asked if she would sit to a certain painter. "I think not," was her reply, "I would rather wait for doomsday!"

It does, of course, happen that some consti-

tutional trait is unconsciously brought out by a painter; sometimes it is a good one, one that has been too long overlooked; but sometimes also it may be just the *one* trait which *ought* to be overlooked. I have seen symptoms of senility creep over the face of an aged sitter, before his family or his medical advisers suspected its near approach. It was but momentary, and a sudden remark from me would brush away that slight cloud that had momentarily dimmed the brain. Surely that was not an essential to be emphasized by the painter? A strange case of the revealing power of the portraitist's art came under my notice some time back. A lady who was suffering from some ailment that baffled all the doctors, was advised by her family medico to try travelling for a time; there was a chance that such a change would improve her state of health. The husband readily fell in with this advice, as he wanted his wife to be painted by a distinguished foreign artist. During her absence from home the lady's portrait was painted, and to the entire satisfaction of the husband. On their return home, a reception was arranged to give their numerous

friends an opportunity of seeing the great artist's work. To that reception the lady's family doctor was invited. He gazed long and earnestly at the portrait, after which he took the husband aside, and said to him: "Now I know what is really the matter with your wife." "Well," answered the husband, "what is it?" "Insanity!" was the doctor's one word. That lady died in an asylum within a year.

In this case the artist did not *read* his sitter wrongly, but he *selected* wrongly, and thereby gave evidence which, though true, represented a disease and not character. Being very subtle, that peculiar look of incipient insanity in the lady's eyes no doubt fascinated the artist, who selected it as a matter of interest to his work. It may also be gathered that it had hitherto escaped the notice of her friends, even as it escaped the notice of her doctor. But, as I have said, it was a mistake in selection. I might have selected the look of senility which I saw pass over the face of my aged sitter: I might have thought it gave more pathos, or was artistically more interesting, had I not instantly recognized that it was pathological, and not psychological.

A much less tragic illustration of the portrait painter's revealing powers was told me by a gentleman whom I painted whilst in America. He had, some years before, been painted by an artist who had studied in Paris, where he had allied himself with a section of students who swore by "artistic brutality," as a counterblast to the fulsome flattery and prettiness practised in the other camp. This artist returned to his native country to preach and practise his acquired *style*. His countrymen were, however, somewhat repelled by the specimens of the work he exhibited. They were clever, certainly—artistic, and all that—but "he seemed to select such ugly people to paint," they said. My friend, however, thought he would venture, and commissioned the artist to paint him. When he was at last allowed to see the finished picture, he thought it very like him; but what truly astonished him was that the artist distinctly showed in his face his special liking for a certain dish: "Why," he remarked, "I can see every oyster I have eaten in my life!"

Another danger in portraiture is unconscious humour, which is not infrequently

the cause of even more distress than arises from "artistic brutality." If an exhibition, restricted to portraiture alone, be not hung with great care and discretion, this particularly unfortunate feature becomes very pronounced. Strange to say I cannot point to a single old master's work in which this unhappy feature is noticeable, therefore I am constrained to think that it is purely a modern failing, perhaps a natural outcome of the unhealthy striving for novelty at all costs. It is bad enough in a portrait painter, but Heaven protect the artist who, lacking the saving grace of humour, attempts allegorical painting. It is not only in art, but in all walks of life, that the lack of a sense of humour causes trouble. Ridiculous behaviour, absurd speech, exaggeration of dress, tactlessness, eccentricities of various kinds would all be obviated by a sense of humour. But alas, of all the innate faculties, sense of humour is the one which is most beyond the reach of education or training.

I must turn, although rather abruptly, to a particular treatment in portraiture much in favour in Reynolds' time. I refer to that ad-

mixture of quasi-subject with pure portraiture. Personally, when looking at such treatment, I am always bothered to find the individual under the comedy-guise. I cannot but feel that such a work, however meritorious, cannot claim to stand as a picture, and still less so as a portrait, *per se*. If I painted my daughter as St. Cecilia, in light robes, with some instrument in her hand, and standing on a cloud, it might make a pretty picture; but it would seem ridiculous to name it a portrait of "Miss Herkomer *as* St. Cecilia."

Not wishing to publish the lady's name, I have called one of my portraits "Madonna," but it was an absolute portrait of a lady in a modern dress, the title being only suggested by the type of the lady's beauty. She did not hold a supposed Christ-child in her arms, with the rest of us kneeling around her in adoration. Such a rendering would indeed demand superlatively fine painting, and deadly earnestness in the doing, to evade the absurdity of the pictorial conception.

There is quite a possibility of making several persons doing various things in one portrait-picture, without such play-acting.

The picture of Velasquez standing by the side of a big canvas (the back of which is turned to the spectator) with the little royal visitor and her attendants about the studio, is a frank statement of a true incident. We do not wish to inquire if it was meant for a "subject." It is a wholly convincing, logical, honest work, of amazing reality, untrammelled by the conventions of any art period. It was just the result of a real "seeing," and was dexterously translated into paint by the master hand.

There is another form of treatment which I must speak of—so called "plein air." Portrait groups, or single figures, placed in the open air, have been painted by the modern artist with every attention to *truth* of light and colour. He has had his sitters out of doors, and copied them as they appeared in that light; tonality, colour, reflected lights and all. We may now ask the question, is this an advance on the conventions of the past in the treatment of a portrait? Does the work, by such truthfulness, rise in the scale of achievement? These are pertinent questions that will be answered very variously by

different painters. Before we can answer them, we had better examine the older conventions in portraiture. No one can say with certainty how conventions arise, any more than one can say how a sudden fashion comes into existence. A strong man may *set* a fashion, but he does not complete it. A weaker man will continue it, sometimes intentionally, as a matter of business rather than of art ; sometimes also through the influence of environment. Whatever the cause of its origin or continuation, convention is a hard thing to kill. At the present time when, surely, the most bizarre and outrageous treatment of portraiture is practised, there is also work done, aye, and intentionally, reflecting the period when a conventional treatment was considered the very essence of the art of portraiture. No doubt there is always the temptation before the artist to arrest attention by *new* treatment. A revival is often looked upon as new, and to a certain extent it becomes something new, when reincarnated by the temperament of a modern mind. It must be remembered that the range of possibilities in the treatment of a portrait is not unlimited.

The artist is always bound down to the subject. To escape this coercion artists paint ladies in some striking arrangement, in an arrested attitude, in fact in some novel way that arouses much admiration. But when we inquire whose portrait it is supposed to be, we find but a title to indicate the "arrangement," and then we know it is merely a "model" who has sat for it. It may be like the model, but it is not a portrait of an individual, whose characteristics it has been the painter's duty to bring out. This is an important point in the consideration of the difficulties that are placed before the portrait painter who accepts commissions. If you leave out the *one* it greatly facilitates the other. If you attend only to effect in "plein air" treatment and neglect the actual likeness, you separate the art just at the place where the greatest difficulties arise.

It will be said that a portrait should above all be "truthful"; that there must be no mistake as to the identity of the individual represented. That is the fundamental idea. But truth, or truthfulness, in the matter of mere "likeness," cannot be said to be the whole art of portraiture. Paradoxical as it

may sound, a portrait may be *like*, and yet not life-like, and contrariwise, it may be life-like, yet not like. Again, a portrait devoid of all claims to art can be an excellent likeness; it may also be said on the other side that a fine piece of painting may be devoid of that particular *likeness* which makes it recognizable by people who are unable to appreciate the art technique. Be it said here, that the gift of "catching a likeness" is distinct from the gift of painting. A child, who can only scribble on a slate, may, in a few "illiterate" lines, make certain personages recognizable. It does not follow, therefore, that because an artist is a fine painter, of imaginative powers, or with skill in design, he must necessarily be competent to render a *true likeness* of a person; and it is but poor solace to the artist when family and friends, who have come to view a portrait, take shelter behind the phrase "it is a fine work of art!" When that is said, the artist may take it as a certainty that there is something wrong about the likeness, according to their judgment. I know that artists are not very willing to give any credence to the judgment of the public; but of this I am

convinced, that the public has a far more critical eye for subtle likeness since the advent of photography, than it ever had before. And such is the position of the artist, poor chap, that between satisfying his fellow artists in the quality of the painting, and the public in the "subtleness" of the likeness, he has many unhappy moments in his calling. Separate these two claims, however, and his difficulties are reduced by half each way. But they cannot *be* separated, and therein lies the exacting element in portrait painting, of which I have spoken.

Now, in matters of likeness, the artist adds immeasurably to his difficulties by a treatment of "plein air." To begin with, the appearance of a person in the open air, and in a room, is quite different. In the former there are no apparent shadows; light is diffused. Whereas in the room, with its sharp side-light, shadows *enforce the plastic* of the features, and as the light and shade is less subtle, it is far more easily rendered by the painter's art. There are other difficulties attending the "plein air" treatment. A sitter can only, at least in this climate, be exposed

to the open air on rare occasions, especially if it be a lady in evening dress. That in itself is a difficulty that makes such an attempt almost hopelessly impracticable. I am very much inclined to think that we here come pretty near to the real origin of the convention which combined studio light on the sitter, with background of landscape, put in after, and without reference to logical truth. But I fancy it was not a mere subterfuge, as a sitter could be placed in a glass-house, made warm and comfortable, which would have something, though not all, of the semblance of outdoor light. No, it was a deliberate intention to raise portraiture into a *higher sphere*, to one above mere realism. And this is the answer to my former questions, regarding the relative value of the "plein air" treatment and the older convention.

The conventional treatment certainly gave more scope to the designer who looked to the "pattern," as we say in studio vernacular. A dark passage on this side of the figure, a light on the other ; a bit of blue distance to break the monotony of a semi-interior, the ubiquitous curtain (coming from nowhere),

the column, and what not; all were so many items to be applied, when expedient, to make the "pattern," and, by means of it, "the picture." But does this odd, illogical admixture of material so introduced really raise the work into a higher sphere of art? I am constrained to say it does. Even if we confine ourselves to the interior, to carry the argument further, let a painter build up a scene, complete in every detail, and then realistically and literally paint it as it appears, it would fail to be as convincing as the artificial treatment, simply because the higher thinking in pictorial representation has in such a case been enslaved by the mere copying of the objects. Byron has said that nature, exactly, simply, barely nature, will make no great artist of any kind—and he might have added, no great work of art. In short, *truth in art is what it seems to the individual, and not what it is*. And in this lies the *monumental* quality, without which no portrait can be called *great*. In every portrait treated in the "plein air" method I have missed this all-essential quality. Nor does the want lie in any technical deficiency; it lies in the scheme. I would

be inclined to say that the greater the skill in depicting the conflicting lights of outdoor nature on the face and figure of the sitter, the more it emphasizes the absence of the monumental. I can give no reason for this, but can only express what has been borne in on me by long and close observation of treatment in portraiture.

Byron further states: "Nature alone, *exactly* as she appears, is not sufficient to bear him (the artist) out. The very sky of his painting is not the *portrait* of the sky of nature; it is a composition of different *skies*, observed at different times, and not the whole copied from any particular day. And why? Because nature is not lavish of her beauties; they are widely scattered, and occasionally displayed, to be selected with care, and gathered with difficulty."

The last two phrases are eminently applicable to portraiture. A human face is as variable in expression as a sky; it reflects calm and storm, joy and anger, and a multitude of other emotions, even more subtle than are ever to be witnessed in the heavens, and all "gathered with difficulty." The full

expression of a wind-swept cloud may be given in a few strokes of the brush; but a fleeting expression on a face must be rendered without a distortion of the features, and moreover without loss of actual likeness. Therefore most severely is the portrait painter's ability taxed in securing a fleeting expression, an expression which illumines the whole face, and on which the true likeness depends. By *true* I mean as giving the *best* interpretation of the sitter's character. The effort of catching a fleeting expression has often been likened to "shooting on the wing"; but the simile will not bear scrutiny. A shot that has missed its mark is no special loss—and is a gain to the bird. Whereas a "miss" in securing expression on a face spells failure in portraiture. And that is serious in the portrait painter's career, as one failure is better remembered and more often quoted than six successes. I do not hesitate to say that "expression" is the vital quality that makes a portrait "all but speak"; that makes it *human*, in the best sense; that gives it grace, lovableness, and truth. How often a face, in itself almost ugly, will light up

during moments of animation until it almost partakes of beauty. But such beauty being a "radiance of the mind," is *felt* rather than *seen*, or, let us say, "it is seen with the eye of the spirit, and not with the eye of the flesh." Yet it does not alter actual form: it cannot alter a crooked mouth, a bulbous nose, or irregularities in the two eyes; nor can it remove a bad or blotchy complexion. The idealization of such defects in features, being occasioned by the mind, is something *intangible*, and only too often beyond the reach of our art. Such subtle transformation of a face is almost beyond the reach of a painter, unless the face, when in repose, is physically well fashioned.

A story comes to my mind anent this, of a certain sea captain, who was so repulsively ugly that the passengers at first refused to sit at the table over which he presided when his duties allowed. Presently, however, one or two exchanged to his table, and so fascinating was his personality, so brilliant and entertaining his conversation, and so completely did his ugliness, apparently, disappear when he was animated, that soon the passengers vied with each other for places near him.

Ugliness in a man may pass, but ugliness in a woman—I beg pardon, I should say plainness—is a hard problem for the painter to solve. Well, *is* any gentlewoman really plain? Is there not always femininity to soften; is there not that indefinable quality of grace and charm—peculiar to the lady—that distinguishes her? Would that some of the clever modern portraitists gave the same attention to the bringing out of the latter quality that they give to experiments in artistic violence of attitude, distortions of features, and crass, bizarre arrangements of dress. There is of course the other extreme, practised by painters who court favour by barefaced flattery, who strive only to make every woman *pretty*, who care not for, or cannot see, character. It is not their endeavour to "tell the truth lovingly," but to lie for all they are worth from start to finish.

It has often been stated that portraiture can be successfully practised without that superlative faculty of the mind which we call imagination. I deny that! To "draw out a human soul," to make it *felt*, and fixed on the canvas, belongs to the highest achievement of the artistic mind.

Unlike what I have said about truth in art, a human being must not be merely represented as he *seems*, but as he *is*, in those deeper recesses of his character. It is a tremendous effort, and not always successful, even in the hands of the greatest portraitists. The physical artist (*i.e.* painter *per se*) and the mental artist (*i.e.* painter and thinker) represent the same line of division in portraiture as in subject painting. And however clever the workmanship, the former will no more stand the test of time in portraiture than in subject work.

The art of portrait painting suffers more from the bad or commonplace output than any other form of art. This is a source of obloquy to which the other arts are not subjected in the same degree. And truth to tell, a bad portrait *is* unapproachable in its disastrous power of giving offence, disappointment, and distress. It is one of those things that are difficult to deal with. Unless positively turned to the wall, or burnt, it ascends higher and higher in the scale of rooms of a house, until it reaches its final goal in the attic. But the very knowledge that it is there, though

out of the sight of friends, does not remove the memory of it. I know of a painful case where a bereaved husband ventured after many years to have another look at his wife's portrait, thus stowed away ; on seeing it again his sorrow was overwhelming at the thought that his wife could never again be persuaded to sit, after that first failure. These failures are constantly giving the whole art of portraiture a set-back, as a first attempt that fails hardens sitters against further trials. And I do not blame them.

But a good portrait is a priceless gift, impossible to repay with gold. Its potentiality is truly given in that beautiful letter, written by Erasmus :—

"I can scarcely express in words Margaret Roper, thou ornament of thine England, what hearty delight I experienced when the painter Holbein presented to my view your whole family in such a successful delineation, that I could scarcely have seen you better had I been myself near you. Constantly do I desire that once more, before my goal is reached, it may be granted to me to see this dear family circle, to whom I owe the best part of my outward

prosperity and of my fame, whatever they may be, and would owe them rather than to any other mortal. A fair proportion of this wish has now been fulfilled by the gifted hand of the painter. I recognize all, yet none more than thee, and from the beautiful vestment of thy form, I feel as if I could see thy still more beautiful mind beaming forth. . . . Greet thy mother, the honoured Mistress Alice, many times from me; as I could not embrace her myself, I have kissed her picture from my heart."

CHAPTER XV

ENAMELLING

In former chapters I have made mention of the instability of my colour sense. This was once again made manifest in the year 1897. In order to arrest the tendency to dullness of colour into which I had drifted, I took up an art that dealt with the purest and most brilliant colour pigments available—enamels.

In a letter I received from a friend about my work in the Academy this year (1910), some light, new to me, was thrown on the effect the various by-arts I practised had on my oil painting at different periods. Referring to my work in the present exhibition, he says: "It shows an immense advance in subtlety without any diminution of force—it represents a new and very interesting phase in your evolution. Is your change of colour feeling this year unconscious or deliberate? I do not

remember any picture of yours before in which you have played so sensitively on tones of grey as you have in the —— portrait. Both in that and the —— one, you seem to have substituted *grey for brown* with the happiest results, and with, as I feel, a great gain in colour subtlety. I wonder if this change is due to your lithographic work (taken up in 1909)? I have always felt that your oil paintings reflect some of the sentiment of the other work you may be doing. They had a greater force and sumptuousness of colour when you were working on your enamels; and now that you are studying the variations of grey in lithography I feel that you are carrying the same study into your pictures. As a matter of psychology—of artistic emotion rather—this interests me."

I can vouch for the change in my colour this year being deliberate, but it had not occurred to me that this change was owing to the influence of my lithographic experiments. My friend, however, may be right in his premisses. He certainly is right when he attributes the change from the dull and brown tones that beset me in 1897 in my oil work to

something more "sumptuous" when I took up enamelling. Unfortunately such measures are mere tonics, and though they correct for the time being, do not leave a permanent cure. Well, the only alternative is to go on with tonics, finding the specific one for each kind of disorder.

When we speak of *painting in enamel*, we use the term painting in a very broad sense, as nothing, for instance, could be more unlike the technique of oil painting than the application of enamels to metal. The *generic* name of painting, however, has been given "to all imitations of natural objects by the assemblage of lines, colour and lights and darks on a single plane." It has also been made to include "the craft of arranging a picture to be seen by the transmission of light through a transparent substance, in glass painting."

The reader will certainly ask, "What is enamel?" Enamel is simply *glass*. Glass is the basis (just as oil is the basis of oil colour), and the coloration is given by certain mineral oxides that *fuse* with the glass when subjected to heat. These coloured glasses form the palette of the enameller. For the present this

scanty explanation must suffice, as I wish to present to the reader something of its history, which, however, he can " skip " if it does not interest him.

There is a consensus of opinion that the art of enamelling is practically post-Christian. We cannot trace it farther back on reliable data, as no specimens of the art, however primitive, are extant. The whole speculation of its possible pre-Christian origin rests on a single word, *electrum*, which some writers say meant enamels. But it is too nebulous to be authoritative. Probably, according to an eminent writer, " enamels and carved ivory are the oldest testimonies of the art of drawing at the time when Christianity was evolved from that union of barbarism with the last remains of ancient civilization."

The use of enamels, starting on the imitation of incrustation of precious stones, developed almost in the same ratio as the Christian Church. The earliest form, which had its origin in Greece, was called " cloisonné," being pieces of coloured enamel (glass) within rigid lines. It was crude, simple, and had little expression, beyond the decorative

quality that was inherent in the material, and which is never quite lost, no matter how applied.

Rejecting the Grecian formula, enamelling, though still remaining crude under architectural preponderance, passed over to the chasers in the West, who produced what is called "champlevé," that is, thick metal gouged out, leaving a raised outline for the separation of the enamels, which were placed in the interstices. The drift from this period was distinctly towards the *pictorial*—towards a freedom from the enforced metal line. This line, in both cloisonné and champlevé, gave no chance for improvement in drawing, which was at that period deficient enough. Nor was the colour good, for the reason that on the foundation metal, which was *bronze*, only opaque enamels could be used, and this robbed the enamel of its greatest merit—brilliancy.

The next step towards the pictorial was to cover the chaser's work in relief with translucent enamel. Therefore "to the three phases of art, the Grecian hierarchism, the Western awakening in the twelfth century, and the Italian renaissance in the fifteenth,

correspond the cloisonné enamels, the champlevé enamels, and the translucent enamels over relief. Further, the freedom of the sixteenth century has for corollary the painted enamels, produced by a totally different method, the outcome of certain improvements in the art of painting on glass.

That painted enamels are in many ways connected with the art of painting on glass is undeniable. Enamellers, who were getting tired of the old processes, which barred the way to pictorial development, evidently took a lesson from the glass painter, and evolved that ingenious system which enabled them to get a *picture* with gradations of colour. They made a great secret of this discovery, which has been more or less kept up to the present day. Léonard Limousin, who was the acknowledged head of them all, in the forty years that he practised the art, both developed it and laid the foundation for its decay.

We must not forget that these men were not artists, but jewellers, or workmen in connection with jewellers. They could only copy drawings done by others, and rarely worked out original designs. In the early days of the

Pénicauds, they imitated Dürer and his school, and this was still the fashion in the beginning of Léonard Limousin's career. Then came the engravings after Raphael and Michael Angelo into France, and the Limoges workmen at once adopted the new school of drawing and design : but with what result ? The muscular type of figure, as drawn by Michael Angelo and Raphael, became meaningless in the hands of these artisans, as their "lumpy" figures testify. Soon, also, religious themes, which in the early days monopolized their efforts, gave way, to a great extent under the new influence, to allegorical and heathen subjects.

To show the reason for the rapid decay of enamelling as practised in Limoges, I must first explain an important item in the manufacture of the material. Enamels such as they used are made as follows : a certain quality of glass is ground up into powder, and with this, as a basis, is mixed the oxide that is to colour it, also the powder. These are put together into an earthenware vase (only baked to the "biscuit" state) and the whole thing subjected to three, four, or even six hours of heat in a

big kiln, such as the china manufacturers use. When cool the glass inside is found to be solid. The earthenware pot is then chipped off by little blows, and the glass, which is evenly coloured throughout, is broken up, so that small portions can again be ground up for use in painting. This is what I have named *substantial enamel*, deep, rich, and unequalled for brilliance and durability by any other pigment in existence.

But the reader will readily see that this enamel, which is put on the metal in a powdered state, cannot be made to express *form*—you cannot *draw* with it. Some other method must therefore first be employed to give design and drawing preparatory to the application of the substantial enamel, which can only give colour. That preliminary process is the following: on a thin piece of bright copper a layer of transparent flux (glass) is laid—both sides—and fused in the furnace or muffle. Then this surface is again covered with a dark blue, almost black, enamel, and once more fused by heat. On this dark ground the picture is worked up with an oxide of tin forming a white, which, when mixed

with a little volatile oil, and put on with a brush, can be gradated to any degree. The black underground is either left for the lines, or the white removed with a needle to show it. When that black-and-white drawing or design is completed and fired, the coloration can be proceeded with.

To give extra brilliancy, gold or silver foil is laid over the black ground, or the copper left, covered only by the transparent flux, as the ground for the translucent substantial enamel. In the latter case the outline is made with a black or brown, mixed with the volatile oil, and fired before the translucent enamel is applied, which allows the line to shimmer through.

The preparation of the enamel which can be mixed with an oil and applied with a brush, differs from the substantial. This kind of enamel, which I will call "superficial," could not be applied to the *bare* metal, as it would have no glaze after firing. Therefore it must be put on to an enamel of the substantial kind, from which it borrows the glaze when subjected to heat. The oxides for this enamel are ground to a powder so fine that it is mere

dust, and only a very little flux, equally finely ground, is added. The ease with which such enamel colours could be used, added to the larger range of colours at the disposal of the artist, soon made the old and grander form give way, and is the cause of the decay I mentioned of the Limoges substantial enamel work. This was the beginning of what is called miniature enamel. These colours being opaque, no under-painting for the drawing was necessary, and the colours could be applied on a white enamel ground, just as water-colour would be on ivory or vellum. But for the deep brilliancy of the substantial enamel, they substituted garishness and want of transparent depth.

Although some large plates were done in this method, it was usually restricted to work of small dimensions. For instance, we have innumerable snuff-boxes painted with a most astonishing minuteness, and some really artistic miniature portraits, which are as elaborate as the old ivory miniatures. This art also in due time degenerated, having fallen into inartistic hands, as we see in the vulgar productions of the Louis XVIth period. It showed a little

activity again under the Empire and the Restoration, and then lapsed until the present day, when it has become a purely commercial article. Thousands of fancy heads are introduced in modern jewellery, produced largely in Geneva, which are of little more artistic value than the innumerable coloured prints of various subjects to be found on biscuit, match, and cigar boxes, done in chromo-lithography.

This is a rough sketch of the history of enamels. That enamels played a great part in the history of art in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries we cannot deny. The art was held in great esteem by the Church and by royal courts, and an immense amount of work was turned out in Limoges.

CHAPTER XVI

ENAMELLING (*continued*)

BEYOND the specific benefit to my colour faculty that I expected to derive from the practice of enamel painting, there was something very alluring in an art, historically so interesting, artistically so exciting, and technically so mysterious. And a glamour of mystery certainly was shed over it by the few practitioners in England, who were for the most part amateurs desirous of a little notoriety, or (with some conspicuous exceptions) artists who could make nothing of oil or water-colours, but who believed themselves divinely endowed with a poetic fancy that could find no adequate expression in those hackneyed mediums—oil or water-colours. To the uninitiated the practice of enamelling appeared as something occult, mysterious, dangerous. To be told about "vitreous colours," "firing,"

"fusing of crystalline glass," of the "infusion of oxides," all suggested to the gaping outsider the search for the philosopher's stone. Moreover, the reckless use of gold and silver as a basis for the work, instead of canvas and paper, raised the practitioner to the status of a magician !

Needless to say, I found them unapproachable. I then applied to the maker of my enamel colours in Geneva to find a teacher on whose shoulders the mantle of tradition had fallen. I was informed that there was one old—very old—man still living in the town, who knew everything belonging to the art, but it was questionable whether he, even for a liberal consideration, would be willing to impart his secrets. To the plain man in the street, all this seemed but a manœuvre towards extortion : but let that pass. There were many *pourparlers* between the maker of enamels and the old magician, which, however, ended in an acquiescence on the part of the latter by the time I arrived in Geneva.

A dense mist, as it happened, lay like a pall over the city, completely shutting off the beautiful lake and its panoramic background

of giant mountains. Under the piloting of my enamel manufacturer, we arrived at the abode of the man of mysteries, whose sanctum was reached after a climb of endless stairs, that creaked, and groaned, and smelt abominably. Knocking at the door on the top of the stairs, and without waiting for an answer, my guide turned the handle and entered: I followed, and we stood in an attic—a low-roofed room of large dimensions, taking up, in fact, the whole width of the building. The windows made a continuous line along the front wall, through which one only saw the tiles and chimneys of the opposite houses. Continuous also was the bench by the windows, from end to end of the room.

I saw no signs of the master, but my guide, knowing where to look, espied him in a dark, half-hidden recess at the end of the room, stooping over a small muffle in the act of firing a plate. Taking no notice of my guide's greeting, he continued his task until it was finished, when he emerged, holding at the end of a long pair of tongs the red-hot plate, which he dropped into a box of sand standing on the bench—the traditional method for slow

cooling. Until this was done he did not even vouchsafe us a look, much less a word. I was then introduced to him as "the Englishman whom he promised to instruct in the rudiments of enamelling"—for the sum agreed upon. He looked at me over his spectacles, looked at my face and at my clothes, and being satisfied that I was never likely to become a rival, turned his gaze on my guide with a look which was interpreted to me as meaning "he wants his money down before starting." So far not a word had escaped this old man, not even when he pocketed the gold coins.

Small eyes, placed rather near together, with mistrust written plainly in their look; a low forehead and bald head rising up to a point at the back, from which straggled grey strips of hair that had not felt the touch of a comb for many a day; a hooked nose and thin lips over toothless gums; a complexion like parchment, with a kind of additional "patina" from the holy avoidance of soap and water, pretty accurately describes the face and head of this weird old wizard. In figure, short, lean, with a stoop, wearing a long, light robe, half blouse, half coat, probably doing service for

both, and boots with various cracks, through which, in more than one place, the bare foot could be discerned—makes up the portrait.

Whilst he was getting ready—still without a word—for a demonstration of the very first stage in enamelling, shaping and covering a small copper plate with flux, I plied my guide (in English) with some personal questions concerning this strange creature, for he had at once arrested my interest and curiosity. Nobody knew anything about him; his age and antecedents were equally unknown. The oldest inhabitant could not remember his coming to Geneva: *he had always been there.* Secretive, mysterious, a recluse—all attributes of a magician! I was so taken up with the man and his surroundings that I cared not whether he taught me anything or nothing; the sight of him was worth the money I laid on the bench. My imagination pondered over this human problem: had he ever wife or child? Had he any relatives, friends? What would happen if he were ill, and refused (as most likely) to go to the hospital? And why so wordless? Misanthrope perhaps; a disappointed man, ending up a career of failure

by preparing enamel disks for the watchmakers of Geneva?

As we were shown into the recess to see him fire the little plate he had prepared, we caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a *bed*, through a half-opened door in a partitioned-off, unlighted space, barely large enough to turn round in. Bed, said I? Well, we had better close that door, and think no more of what caught our eye on the other side of it.

Patiently, with remarkable deftness of handling, yet still *wordless*, the old man continued his demonstration of just so much of the process as he had agreed to show me, but no more. It was but the ground-work, which still left all the problems of the more difficult kind before me to solve as best I could.

It has been a habit of mine to formulate a definite idea of what I wish to aim at in any of the crafts or graphic arts, before I have even commenced experiments with them, and I have worked on through repeated disappointment, until that idea was realized. I may have formulated a *wrong* idea, but it was always a personal desire, a personal taste, that started the *idea*, and to that I have clung with obstinate tenacity.

I had seen a great deal of old and modern enamel work. The old had a charm quite apart from any high artistic achievement, either in colour, drawing, or composition. The modern, often exquisitely finished, and satisfactory in drawing and design, was too obviously produced by superficial enamel, and looked *thin*. The old at least was virile, the modern on the other hand was "pretty," and wanting in that depth of colour, which is alone possible with substantial enamel. The difficulties, however, of producing higher finish, better drawing, and tones more in consonance with nature with the latter material were most harassing. The extreme heat to which some colours had to be subjected, the irritation of having to use an enamel that looked entirely wrong until fired, was constantly baffling me, and prevented any straightforward work. A *precise calculation*—a pre-calculation, based on experiment—mentally fixed, before a single colour could be put on the plate, is not exactly conducive to the free display of an artistic effort. Yet that artistic feeling had to be kept alive during a tedious process, fraught all the time with

danger at each firing. The colours had to be used in accordance with their hardness, and not in accordance with the artist's feeling. Whatever the scheme of colour, the *hardest* had to be used first, and only slightly fused—looking, in consequence, all wrong. Then came the next hardest, and so on through the entire scale, until quite at the last the softest enamel was applied, and with that slight last firing, the fourteenth perhaps, all the other colours had to show their proper lustre, having, by the successive firings, received their proper share of heat: truly a harassing process!

There is a contention amongst some workers in this art, that enamels should not look like *pictures*; that they should be something more *decorative*: granted. But it is too often forgotten that the best pictures possess that decorative element; the corollary being that the pictorial cannot be entirely left out of the decorative. By pictorial I do not mean the representation of the various textures of nature. I put it down that: the decorative element is an *intellectual abstract of natural form and phenomenon.* But so is all art,

pictorial or otherwise. Perhaps the Japanese have shown more clearly than any other artists how to *fill a space without covering it.* Do we not say of an actor that he "fills the stage," although he may be standing alone on the boards? That is the psychological equivalent to filling a space without covering it, in the decorative arts.

I felt that a closer resemblance to nature would make enamel painting more attractive and more satisfying. It became *necessary* in portraiture, and I may safely say that I vindicated this in my portraits of the German Emperor in his full regalia, the Bishop of London in full canonicals and with crosier in his hand, Professor Ende, President of the Berlin Academy, in his academic robes, with orders, and my own in the M.A. gown. Even a subject of pure fancy is not the better for being enigmatical. I cannot conceive that *clear articulation* is contrary to any art. Mystery should not be expressed in muddle; confusion is not poetry. Obviously in portraiture of a particular person close likeness is imperative. But there are special privileges belonging to each of the Fine Arts.

In enamel painting, for instance, precious stones can be added without loss of artistic logic. It would be absurd to attempt this in an oil picture; it would then be neither fish, flesh, nor real good art, for illogical treatment would not bring it nearer the decorative. The ultra-realism, so much dreaded by some artists in the art of enamel painting, is never to be feared, for the very material is antagonistic to it. It cannot produce the qualities necessary for the realistic representation of natural objects.

The arts being an expression of emotions in certain individual minds, and a law unto themselves, it follows that schisms start readily into life, and breed prolifically. In this respect the applied arts suffer most. The strict laws of the ancient guilds alone kept unity of purpose. Although in all other branches of the fine arts *individuality* is the modern pronouncement, yet in enamel painting there seems to be a strange harking back to traditions still prevalent amongst the workers in this art, who stigmatize any attempt to get away from them as illegitimate. My aim, therefore, for more pictorial

THE TRIUMPH
OF THE HOUR

"THE TRIUMPH OF THE HOUR."

(Silver Shield with Enamel Pictures.)

advance in enamels displeased some "traditionalists." One of this type, on looking at an enamel work of mine, said: "It is very beautiful, but all wrong!" The grotesque contradiction in terms of this remark was so obvious, that I should have hesitated to insert it here, did it not illustrate the peculiar temper of some modern enamel workers. But it aroused no doubts in me as to the propriety of the course I was pursuing: I was not working in this art to suit a certain creed; I made my own faith, and stuck to it.

My most important work, "The Triumph of the Hour," exhibited in the Academy in 1899, was a kind of Herkomerian anthology. It was a large shield, oblong in shape, and some five feet from end to end, of silvered copper, its surface—slightly ornamented—animated by a series of enamel plates representing thoughts on life, in anthological order. The enamel material itself gave me a "metre," as it were; it lifted the enamel "pictures" beyond the pale of ordinary art expression. They needed no tricking to make them essentially decorative—that quality lay inherently in the material.

The next in importance of my enamel subjects was called "Beauty's Altar"; a nude figure at the foot of a gilded altar, upon which stood a peacock with outspread tail; beyond, on either side, and in two separate side-plates, landscape of poetic Italian character.

Here were subjects that gave free play to all the glories of enamel colouring, and they originated out of the possibilities of the material.

Enamel painting cannot be taken up at odd moments, or done in a perfunctory way. It is not a young man's art, and it is not a poor man's art: it needs experience in drawing and painting, and necessitates a costly plant: the absence of either will cause disappointment and failure. Where enamel painting finds a nature suited to its practice, it is so absorbing that it demands an artist's whole time and attention; this makes it impracticable as a side art.

I worked with clinging interest in this art, until I had reached the qualities I aimed at, and had produced a certain number of satisfactory works. Beyond this, it had its medicinal effect on my colour sense; and when I felt the treatment consummated, and the joy in

such work satisfied, I did not feel justified in giving so much time to the exacting conditions of this art.

Beyond the production of vases and pots in a peculiar treatment of enamel on *deposited* copper, which my staff could produce, after a time I gave it up entirely, and dismantled my muffles. It was, however, a joy in the doing, and will always remain a pleasure in the remembrance.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GRAPHIC ARTS

In the graphic arts—I use the term strictly in the sense of meaning black-and-white—I made my first attempts in my profession; in the practice of illustration I obtained my artistic training; and in the success of my efforts I received the first encouragement to enter the arena of the higher branch, painting.

It has often been asserted that producing illustrations, both for book and newspaper, is the best training for a painter. But to assert this is to overlook some grave dangers that beset the awakening art faculties of the young mind. Such black-and-white work certainly trains the mind to *see subjects*; it exercises the sense of design; and it increases powers of drawing; but it leaves the colour-sense practically unawakened, and, unless early exercised, this is difficult to bring to life. Many a

clever draughtsman has failed to become a painter solely from this cause.

To a young artist, forced to get his livelihood, the temptation to postpone the plunge into painting is obvious. His illustrative work is at least a certainty ; his bread is secured ; his constant employment—I refer to the time when there *was* work for the illustrator—gives him a facility which makes the work easier and easier. But with that very ease, his moral courage to widen his horizon gradually weakens. Even in its beneficial aspect illustrative work has incipient dangers, likely to affect the artist throughout his career. Let us take "subject seeing" as our starting-point. In a newspaper, subjects must be of general interest to the public. In the early days of the *Graphic*—the halcyon days of illustrative work—Mr. W. L. Thomas, the founder, distinctly trained the public taste. He gave them what he thought *good for them* ; what would arouse their artistic instincts ; and it was a wide range of subjects he presented in that weekly newspaper—subjects not only of passing events, but of pathos, of tragedy, of sorrow. He dictated to the public, and never

allowed his shareholders to dictate to him ; his one aim was high art, the best he could give the public under the circumstances. And yet the *Graphic* was an unprecedented financial success.

Now, if we carefully examine the pictorial design of those illustrations, we find them absolutely spontaneous, but the character is rather that of the sketch than of the type that we have, through long tradition, accepted as *pictorial composition*. It follows that the constant treatment of subjects in this type of design begets a habit of thought which is only too apt to stick to the artist throughout his life ; and consequently his eventual efforts in painting frequently partake of the character of *coloured illustrations*. This defect is painfully obvious in most of Walker's oil colour work, which even his exquisite feeling and sentiment cannot remove. Had he lived longer, had he been privileged to develop his genius, he would undoubtedly have obviated this peculiarity, by becoming more the painter *per se*. Compare him to Mason, who never was an illustrator, but primarily a painter, and my meaning will be clear.

One could quote many other painters, whose training as illustrators left the same mark on their eventual pictorial work. I myself am an example of it, and when Ruskin said that my oil picture of the Chelsea Pensioners in Church had little more value than an illustration in a newspaper, he was right, so far as the design was concerned. It *was* originally a newspaper illustration, and with all the amplification and improvements, the oil picture was practically the same in conception and design as the original illustration. It will be seen, therefore, how the artistic faculties of a young mind are affected, when the *first* exercise is the producing of illustrations in black-and-white.

We have only to turn to the black-and-white work done at that period by the set of men who painted *first*, and then produced illustrations—such men as Millais, Holman Hunt, Leighton, Sandys, Ford Madox Brown, and Poynter—to recognize the difference in their design and composition from the work of those who practised illustration before painting. The drawings of the painters were fully evolved compositions, and more often

than not partook of the character of black-and-white transcripts of pictures. Take Holman Hunt's "Lady of Shalott." When, in later life, he painted this subject, he adhered practically to the design of his original wood-drawing; yet the picture showed no signs of being a *coloured illustration.* Then turn to Walker's "Gipsies" in the Tate Gallery, which was also first done as an illustration, and the reader will readily recognize the inflexible influence of his training, *i.e.* doing illustrative work before painting.

Another element of danger that waylays the artist who starts as an illustrator is his fear of plunging direct into oil-colour; he invariably feels his way to colour through the water-colour medium. It is easier for him, and more akin to his black-and-white manipulation, as he practically "draws with colour." It is so tender, so sweet and pure; he escapes the inevitable "messiness" of oils. Moreover, in those early days to which I am referring, serious work in water-colours was accepted by the public; the young artist could, in this medium, gain a reputation of importance in the art world. But it is a bad passage to oils.

Pinwell never got away from it ; Gregory, in spite of his successful oil-colour work, remained essentially a water-colourist ; it was so with Turner, whose oil pictures were always, to me, reminiscent of the tenderer medium ; and Burne-Jones' oil-colour work was equally so. Elsewhere I have said that it took me years to become a "natural" oil painter, and the cause was the same. There is another example I can quote, to clinch my argument, of one who stood alone, entirely free from traditional influences, and that was Adolf Menzel. He was first a draughtsman, then a water-colourist, and finally an oil painter, but to the end of his days he remained essentially the draughtsman—the illustrator.

I naturally followed the trend of those times, to start as an illustrator in black-and-white, then to become a water-colour painter, before the greater effort of oil-colour painting was made. It had all the effect on me that it had on others, but it left me with an ineradicable love of black-and-white art. When I developed my painting, the illustrative work ceased ; but there was still the longing for the exercise of some form of black-and-white

as a recreation, if nothing more, from my painting. Thus it was that I plunged into the mysteries of etching and mezzotint engraving.

My practice of drawing in line on wood—the manner that was in those days insisted upon—was distinctly against me when endeavouring to grasp the etched line in all its meaning. Incredible as it may seem, Rembrandt's and Meryon's etched works were unknown to me. Whistler's etchings I had seen in the South Kensington Museum Library, when a student; but they appealed to me but superficially, and the essential quality and beauty of his line, especially in his incomparable early "Thames Series," entirely escaped me.

It was therefore as a wood-draughtsman, with the little manual on etching by Hamerton at my side, that I commenced my experiments—as usual in feverish excitement. What etcher in his earliest attempts has not felt the strange intoxication of seeing a few bitten lines printed? They seem to be a translation into a new language, unbeknown to him: surely they cannot be *his* lines?—

lines that looked mere glittering diagrams on the plate before being etched. The charm of surprise is in the first stage a joy; in the later stage an intolerable irritation.

This guess-work on the plate was principally due to the acid-resisting ground being black, thus causing the lines scraped through it to shine, and appear as light on black. To turn this negative into a positive process, I invented a white ground, equally acid-resisting, against which the lines, scratched through to the copper beneath, showed in their proper relations of black on white. So clearly could one see what one's lines were like when removing the white ground with the needle, that a distinguished etcher was moved to exclaim, "Why, there are no more surprises for the etcher!"

My ingrained habit of rushing at a thing, and then finding out *how* to do it, naturally brought many disasters in the first stages. Fortunately, I equipped myself with a printing press, which shortened the suspense of waiting to see results.

I produced all kinds of original subjects, mostly Bavarian. I also etched other men's

work: Walker's "Old Gate," his "Philip in Church"; Pinwell's "Seat in St. James's Park." But I was never happy in rendering pictorial work in etching. I felt it was not wholly my deficiency as an etcher that was the cause of such work not reaching the highest quality, but that some of the cause lay in forcing a *line* art into a *tone* art. It was this longing for *tone* that drove me into mezzotint engraving. But here I had formidable difficulties to encounter. No information on that art was to be had in practical manuals, and the practitioners were singularly secret and uncommunicative. However, on second-hand information from my printer, I managed to make a start. Now it must be told that steel had replaced copper for mezzotint work, simply as a commercial necessity; but, being hard, the soft velvety quality of the old mezzotints could not be obtained. This set me wondering why that process, already in use, of steel-surfacing an etched plate, should not be applied to a mezzotint engraving on copper. It seemed that all attempts had hitherto failed, but with the assistance of my printer, I soon perfected this chemical process, with the

result that engravers went back to the more sympathetic metal, when they found that the copper could be made to render as many, and even more, impressions than steel.

I taught some of my pupils mezzotint engraving ; I placed in their hands my experience, and inculcated them with my aims. They have since raised mezzotint engraving to its highest pinnacle, and have never wanted encouragement from publishers.

To me, however, the art was too slow and tedious, and I set to work to invent a positive process that would give me *tone*, and allow of rapid spontaneous workmanship. The reader may have heard of a favourite form of black-and-white, much practised by American artists, called the *Monotype*. On a polished copper plate the artist *paints* his subject with a soft black ink, such as is used for copper-plate printing. Being, however, but soft paint on the surface, and not subjected to any further treatment, only *one* impression could be taken of it. Now, it seemed to me a pity that this artistic and free method should not be secured for the rendering of many impressions. Again with the assistance of my intelligent printer, I

completed the process, and patented it in England and Germany. I did many freely handled portraits and landscapes in this method, but owing to the soft surface of the work having to be subjected to electro-deposition, it never could be made a dead certainty at all times of the year.

Etching, mezzotint engraving, and the "Herkomergravure" occupied me in all my spare time for some twenty-five years, and then a reaction stepped in, and the joy and interest in these branches of the graphic arts left me. After this cessation, some years passed without a renewal of such work. It had gone from me, at least in the forms I had so long practised. Other interests filled my life in the spare hours, not the least being music. This continued until the early part of last year, 1909, when once more the craving for the graphic arts took possession of me. But the "well-beloved" had to be found incarnated in some new guise, for I had lost her in the old forms. I found her hidden away in the one art I had not yet exploited—Lithography.

Once more, with all the zeal of youth, yet tempered by experience, this new investigation

obsessed me, and after some months of harassing experiments, I succeeded in getting some new qualities, hitherto unsought for, and certainly unattained. As I have completely described my entire experiments and results in a lecture, which has been published by Macmillan & Co., entitled "A Certain Phase of Lithography," the subject need not here be further entertained.

CHAPTER XVIII

"THE GUARDS' CHEER"

In the year 1898 I exhibited my picture, "The Guards' Cheer," ostensibly a companion picture to my "Last Muster," representing Crimean veterans of the Guards standing on the stage erected in front of their own monument in Waterloo Place, to view the Jubilee Procession of 1897. I witnessed the scene from the Athenaeum Club opposite. Once more, therefore, I produced a subject actually seen by me.

My choice of models was more limited than in the painting of the "Last Muster," as I had in this case to adhere strictly to those who were Crimean veterans of the Guards. Although all had their Crimean medals, only some of them were Chelsea Pensioners. In a way this was advantageous, as it not only obviated the monotony of unrelieved red coats,

but it gave me a transitional tone to the dark, smoke-begrimed bronze and stone monument behind the group. One difficulty that confronted me in the design was that the lower parts of the figures, being hidden behind the temporary balustrade, which was decked with the Union Jack and evergreens, deprived me of important lines and tones.

Without perhaps the pathos of the "Last Muster," the presence of those veterans, with the strangely appropriate figure above them, holding a wreath of immortelles in either hand, recalled a bitter and almost useless struggle, in a climate that vied with shot and shell to decimate the "imperfectly organized and badly equipped" allied armies at Alma, Inkerman, and Balaklava; at the same time it recorded a great event in the reign of a beloved sovereign—surely a truly historical subject!

The treatment, however, offered many difficulties. Each man with uplifted hat in the act of cheering Her Majesty as she was passing, naturally caused a confusion of lines that needed studied arrangement. With the impetuosity of former years sobered, and with

the consciousness of what was expected of me, I prepared the way for this work with carefully calculated methods, such as I thought would ensure all the success possible; in fact I approached it warily. But such methods do not leave the artist free and happy; his perpetual "reasoning out" of the problem deadens that spontaneity which gives the real vitality to a work of art. Over-anxious preparation to ensure a success is apt to deprive the mind of that aggressiveness which takes the subject by the throat, so to speak. In the painting of this picture, therefore, it was a struggle between caution and daring, between anxiety and belief in my experienced skill. Many an echo of the past ran through my mind, and made the newer aims, more than once, tremble in the balance.

I resorted to a plan, not infrequently made use of by painters, of modelling the figures in wax on a small scale, and then dressing them up. With these little manikins I could twist the arms about until, from the desired point of view, they made pictorial lines, and enabled me to grasp the composition, and thus prevent much alteration on the large canvas. The

mere painting of the different figures when once fixed in their places, and in their proper actions, was, comparatively speaking, a simple matter. One of the Pensioners had brought his little grandchild, in her brightest frock and hat, and had placed her by his side in the front row. This happy incident I at once grasped, as it gave me a touch of "sentiment" very dear to the artist who had been trained in the best of the Victorian period.

The picture, I rejoice to say, finally found a permanent resting-place in the Bristol Art Gallery.

From this period onward to the present day, the uncertainty of sale for such work has increased, until painters (and I amongst them) have shrunk more and more from the inevitable risk attendant on so much labour, with so uncertain a return. Although many a painter could have afforded to paint subject pictures without depending on their sale, he felt that there was always a stigma attached to failure in selling a work, which endangered his reputation, and it was this stigma that stung his sensitive nature far more than the loss of money. Depending entirely on my

portraiture for my income, I am now in a position to *give away* any important picture that I may care to paint, and this I have actually done with my last three large canvases, the two Landsberg groups, and the Council of the Royal Academy. In the face of bad times, of fashion turning the purchasers from the living to the dead, I feel a certain grim satisfaction in this resolve.

CHAPTER XIX

VERSATILITY—AS A MEDICINE

WHEN at any function where I have had to speak or lecture it has been my lot to listen to a laudatory introduction by a chairman, I have positively suffered when all the different branches to which I have devoted time and energy have been enumerated. No reason was ever given for my many excursions in the arts, no explanation of any meaning behind it all. The audience was always left to think that I had cut my talent into strips to make it go farther; to make, thereby, a bigger "show" of my capacity—in short, to prove what a clever fellow I was!

It always made me smart under a sense of injustice, particularly as I was prevented by a feeling of courtesy to the chairman from answering in anything but a jocular vein, which was fatal to the truth that I longed to

bring to the fore. The idea of enthusiasm is very readily turned into that of eccentricity and conceit, and the more readily in this country, where every kind of versatility, which is mostly the outcome of enthusiasm, is looked at with suspicion, if not with something worse. Later on I took some revenge by refusing to have a chairman and a vote of thanks, and gave as my reason for so doing that every word spoken by another person after a lecture weakens it, and every word spoken before muddles it.

But why should just the English people look so askance at versatility? It is not so in Germany, or, so far as my experience goes, in any other country. I certainly know that in Germany versatility is written down to the credit of the artist, as it was in the time of the renaissance.

It was a real necessity that drove me to vary my work, to give free vent to the experimental side of my nature. Had I not done so, but listened to the cry—"Stick to your painting, and to that only!"—I should long since have died of inanition.

The reader will remember how from my

earliest years my father had set himself systematically to remedy a mental defect in me—want of application; how by various means he enticed me to take up work in which my interest had ceased, and which I had left unfinished; and how dexterously he did this, so that I should not be made aware of being under any treatment; and finally, when I had reached a certain age, how he told me the truth, and urged me to continue the watchfulness and apply the constant remedy myself. Let me here, therefore, once and for all put this matter in the right light: *my so-called versatility is the outcome of the necessary remedy which I have had to apply to rectify a mental deficiency.*

I had to do the many things in order to succeed with the one. Never to work too continuously at one thing was my only chance; that enabled the *governing* element of the mind to cheat the *governed* into fancying itself master of its sweet desires. In this way the talent I possessed—which is independent of the governing will of man—had its vitality apparently uncurbed. I know that this is no new theory in psychology, but in my case it was one that

grew out of dire necessity, and not out of books. Perhaps in many persons this dual nature is not so marked as in me, but as I grow older the distinctness in the separation of the governing and governed portions of the mind becomes more and more pronounced. Having adopted a method of always putting thoughts into words—even though unspoken—I seem sometimes to be mutely talking to my other self like a teacher or monitor. Let my reader not imagine this to be an unhealthy state of the mind. It is the essence of mental control; whereas, to put it bluntly and simply, *insanity* is the *want of self-control.* But let it be clearly understood that I am not preaching a gospel, I am relating only the methods which I have been forced to adopt to make *my* erratic personality give forth its best mental efforts, and work as smoothly as possible.

The office of the governing brain is often strained to the utmost in judiciously controlling capacity, especially when the latter is combined with enthusiasm, which is generally the case in the artistic temperament. But equally severely is the ingenuity of the governing brain

taxed in *arousing enthusiasm* for a given work at a given time, when the rest of the brain is riotously active in altogether other and impracticable directions. Nothing short of *auto-suggestion* will draw it back to what is required of it by the governing brain.

As I have already stated, there was a vital reason for my working in various branches of art other than painting : it was a temperamental reason, a psychological treatment of a mental deficiency, which rendered this deficiency less harmful by stimulating continuity into activity, and thus enabling me to give my best output in painting, for I never failed to consider painting as my anchor. But this corrective method was more than merely medicinal ; it was educational, for when I weighed anchor, and sailed on voyages of discovery, I enlarged the line of my mental horizon. I brought back the fruits of my explorations, with the result that my critical faculties were sharpened, laying bare more readily the faults in my painting, over which I had been stumbling,—in short, my painting became *recreative*.

There is an ingrained idea in man that *work*

and *recreation* are two entirely different factors in life; that the one means *drudgery*, and the other *pleasure*. But, in truth, what is *pleasure*? Pleasure is simply the state of doing just what one wants to do without let or hindrance, and in fifty per cent of cases that is—*nothing*. To many it is supreme beatitude to do nothing—just to idle. In my own profession I have heard it often enough expressed that to "shut up shop," and forget the worries of the studio is the only way to have a few pleasurable hours in the day. Health is frequently the excuse, and sometimes with justice, for a cessation of work. I know of a remarkable exception, when a distinguished painter, with but a few weeks to live, determined to finish a certain picture before his end, and told his friends that it was just a race whether he, or his picture, would first be placed in the frame. But such heroism is rare, and I only know its parallel in General Grant's determination to finish his book before his near end. Curiously enough it was the same disease that struck down both the painter and the statesman. To the painter it was a last frantic holding on to the pleasure of his life—*work*. To the statesman,

I am told, it was the tragic necessity of—money.

Work done as a mere necessity, work done unwillingly, is, under ordinary circumstances, drudgery ; nor is anything more likely to turn work sour than monotony and repetition. There is one remedy, however, that will sweeten work—versatility !

CHAPTER XX

THE ART OF LIVING—CONFIDENTIAL

A DISTINGUISHED author has said: "We may often ask ourselves and others, how many of a man's days does he really live?" If we take really living to mean getting daily all we can out of our capacity and circumstances, I can honestly assert that I have really lived my days. But really living is more simple in theory than in practice. To live fully there must be a careful planning of time, with a more or less immovable programme directed towards given work—however much varied—and that needs not only energy, but a sense of order, both often but feebly lodged in the artistic temperament. There are bustling natures that are for ever in active pursuit of something or other, whose whole life is one long "fuss," but who accomplish little. That fussiness is simply ill-regulated energy, which defeats its own ends.

Such people are painfully active, yet have time for nothing. With such natures there is a waste going on which is death to real living. Real living is an art, be it told, the bottom principle of which is—to do nothing that somebody else can do for you. It is not work that worries and wearies, half as much as the preparation for it, and for that preparation assistance is needed. This entails expense, but is true economy in the long run. If preparation for work be scamped, troubles of all kinds arise and cause needless and injurious irritation, besides causing *waste* of every description. A ruffled temper handicaps the sensitive nature of the artist; it jeopardizes the work, and disturbs health; and it is but a short cut from a ruffled temper to downright anger. In combative natures anger may sometimes be provocative of energy, but it is not enduring.

The principles of the art of living, as I understand them, have been forced on me by necessity, and are not the result of any influence from without, or of any cult. They arose out of two conditions; excessive energy, which is mental, and a weak body, which is physical. The first could not lead to results

without the assistance of the latter: it was therefore important to find methods by which the weak physique could give all the requisite assistance to the mind, with the minimum of physical exertion. To invent methods for the carrying out of such principles, however, some time in the waking hours must be devoted to it.

Although it is not invariable, I have noticed that most men sooner or later attain to the life most conformable to their temperaments. As a corollary it may be said that temperament becomes more conformable to life. But be that as it may, there are many natures to whom such orderly living as I have would be intolerable, to whom drifting is happiness, and muddle a joy; to whom variety of occupation is maddening, and undue excitement dangerous. Other natures, on the contrary, like certain machines, must be driven at full speed to be safe.

It will be admitted that the art of living cannot be established until the temperament has been thoroughly understood by the individual himself, and to this understanding he does not arrive until he approaches middle age. If

the secret of a man's art is discoverable in his irregularities, so surely is the secret of his disposition. But it takes some years to sift the irregularities from the regularities; the acquired habits from original tendencies. Even time is not enough; events must occur to test this true self.

It is not easy to arrive at an impersonal estimate of one's own disposition; and unless, like Montaigne, the individual has an insatiable curiosity about himself and his own idiosyncrasies, he may never learn to know himself truly, in which case all attempts to formulate an art of living would be futile.

Unlike infinity, which has its centre everywhere, and its boundary nowhere, man has his boundary everywhere, with a shifting centre. That shifting centre calls forth the delusion of imagining that we are different personalities, when in after years our feelings, opinions, capacity have settled into grooves, often diametrically opposed to those of our youth. These changes do not portend a *new brain*, or a new constitution; they simply mean a readjustment of the balance of power through excessive exercise of some of the faculties of

the brain, and a proportionate neglect of others. It must be constantly remembered that exercise but strengthens, it does not *make faculty*. Therefore to mistake the lessened vitality in age, with its accompanying quietude, for change of disposition, is to beg the whole question ; to mistake change in tastes, desires, longings, for alteration in "original make," is to misunderstand the influence of enforced habits of life and thought, of health, and dozens of other active agents.

I have marked this chapter confidential, which is as good as saying that I am a little doubtful about its appropriateness. But this book is altogether so full of pitfalls in those directions, that I must take my chance of making a friend or an enemy of my reader.

CHAPTER XXI

"LULULAUND"

A STRANGER of average intelligence and education in passing my house involuntarily arrests his steps to contemplate what seems to him an unusual type of architecture. If he be an Englishman, his first formulated thought will be that a house of such pretensions should stand in a park, with a one-mile private drive up to it. To have built it within 30 yards of a public road, with front gates so low that almost a five-year-old child could look over them, suggests to his mind that only a foreigner or an eccentric would have spent so much money on a mansion that had practically no privacy attached to it.

A foreigner is certainly struck in England by the insistence on this privacy; he is met everywhere by hedges, fences, and notices to

Trespassers, probably all a survival of those times when a sharp line of demarcation was in force between the rich and the poor. The hedges, so characteristic of our present England, are, by the way, not indigenous to this country, having been brought over by the Saxons from their homes in what we now call Schleswig-Holstein. With all this pride of privacy, however, it is not to be denied that the English mansion, standing within its sacred demesne, and surrounded by forbidding edicts, provides, to the favoured few, an hospitality within its walls probably unequalled by that of any other nation.

My attitude in the way I have domiciled myself may be put down by the "middle intelligence" to want of common sense. But it has been forced on me by three unavoidable conditions; chance, money, and sentiment. The accident of my settling in Bushey covers the first; the income, arising from my brush alone, covers the second; and my peculiar feelings towards my fellow creatures, the third. Without, of course, ignoring the necessity for certain protective measures—such as security against those men of misused genius,

the burglars—I wish to keep in close contact with mankind ; to let them see whatever I have made, or possess of artistic interest. Therefore I have no warning notices up, for I still have faith in the good feeling of my fellow creatures, which puts a moral check on them from entering my ever-open gates, unless they have business with me. And in all these years I have had no serious reason for giving up this faith. Further, the very limitation of my ground is in itself a protection, and prevents the vandalism only too often practised by irresponsible "trippers" in the grounds of generous landowners who have thrown open their parks to the public.

The road facing Lululaund branches off from the main road, and has little traffic. As I own the land on both sides of it, I might have diverted its position by transposing it farther back across one of my fields, thus securing more of the privacy so dear to the English. But the reader has already been informed of my sentiments in the matter.

The oaken gates with massive masonry of red sandstone on either side were designed by my young friend Mr. Giles Gilbert Scott (the

successful competitor for the Liverpool Cathedral), who has solved with conspicuous success a difficult problem. This entrance to the grounds had to be in keeping with the architecture of the house, yet without competing with it, which was made doubly difficult by its close proximity to the building; it had, in fact, to form a foreground *to the whole*, so to speak, and in a given space of considerable limitation. Running along the outside of the semi-circular masonry is the somewhat novel arrangement of a seat, carved in the stone, inviting the pedestrian to rest.

The front of the house, which faces South-East, represents the most imposing aspect of the structure, well calculated by Richardson to give the spectator a noble impression. To the left, the striking arch, springing from two turrets, somewhat differing in design, and which supports the large gable, first attracts the eye. To the right, and somewhat set back from the line of the gable, is the square tower, abruptly cut off beyond the line of the roof; in the base of this tower, and facing the gates, is placed the front-door entrance. Between the tower and right-hand turret, and set still

PART OF THE FRONT ELEVATION OF "LULULAUND."

farther back than the former, is a part of the main wall of the building, with windows of various rooms. The large window which gives the principal light to the drawing-room is placed on that side, between this wall and the turret. Passing round the house to the Western side, the façade that presents itself is beautiful, rather than imposing, well calculated again by Richardson to give contrast to the front elevation by not being so varied in its planes, which gives such light and shade and strength to the latter. The other two sides, facing North-West and North-East, are simpler in design, being mostly ordered by utilitarian exigencies.

Had Richardson seen the effect of the abruptly cut off tower, I feel convinced he would have abandoned his original design for the same, which certainly would have risen to a disproportionate height after alterations to the roof, which I had to lower considerably from the original plan, owing to certain arrangements of light for the studio. The reason why I stopped the tower when two-thirds up, was simply because the available funds had to be applied to the rest of the

building, so that we could inhabit it without unnecessary delay.

Now, this tower, a square mass of unbroken stone surface from above the first and second floors (which latter have each two deeply set windows) and cut off straight across the top line, suggested at once a "feature" rather than an "incompletion"—a "Keep," in fact; and by adopting this idea, rather than the lofty Campanello-like tower, Richardson had designed, which would undoubtedly have dwarfed the rest of the house, I believe I acted in consonance with his spirit, for of all men he was most prone to take suggestion from work *in situ*.

Beyond lowering the roof, concentrating the chimney-stacks, and changing the upper part of the tower, I have kept strictly to Richardson's masterly outline. But now came my turn to carry out his words to me that I should "play all over it with my imagination!" This meant nothing short of filling in Richardson's outline with the *living breath*. It meant amplification in form, colour, and surface texture. I know not whether to be more amazed at Richardson's generous trust in

me, or in my own temerity in undertaking such responsibilities.

Now, of all the arts, architecture is the one that permits least of all of hesitation. Unlike painting, which allows of endless alterations, experimenting, rubbing out, and re-trying, architecture is rigidly arbitrary ; the design must be practically complete on paper before a stone is set. Again, in few if any of the fine arts is *embellishment* fraught with so much danger of becoming commonplace, or with the difficulties of blending it harmoniously with the main theme. Ornate detail must enhance, and not corrupt ; it must add grace without loss of breadth, and brilliancy without loss of dignity or unity.

This reminds me of an incident when I took Cecil Rhodes to a distinguished sculptor, who was to execute a great monument for him, to be erected in South Africa, for it was just on this point, of balance of detail with largeness of structure, that they quarrelled. Some time after, Cecil Rhodes, in a letter to me, said he was glad it had come to nothing, as he "did not want an ornamental pepper-box in the middle of Africa !"

Without defending my position, the reader must not forget that collaboration was definitely thrust upon me by Richardson. I felt it to be an honour, and despite my inexperience, I was impelled at once to accept the situation.

The peculiarity of Richardson's art was largeness of conception, massiveness, and unity. But no less striking was his treatment of surface. The crudity of a new building of stone was his horror, and he strove ever to avoid this by an artistic treatment of the stone surface. Not that he avoided the *hard* surface of mechanical perfection in the stone cutting, where required, but he so manipulated the stone in certain other parts that it partook of that particular charm given to ancient buildings by the "crumble of age."

As surface treatment is of such great artistic importance in all the arts, from stone cutting to painting, I must allow myself a little discursiveness on the subject. Let us take painting. It will be noticed that a person looks at a picture of five inches long at closer quarters than at a picture of five feet long, and for the simple reason that the eye cannot take in the whole surface nearer than at a distance

of twice the size of the picture. This distance must necessarily be increased in direct ratio to the increased size of the picture. It comes to this, therefore, that from the distance at which the whole surface can be taken in by the eye *the picture must look right.*

Now, it needs no art training to grasp the fact that the technique suited to a picture of five inches would be ineffective in a picture of five feet. The explanation is a physical one, not of optics, but of atmospheric conditions; hence the saying: "The artist must give the atmosphere something to do," which means that the technique must be of a nature —*i.e.* of sufficiently pronounced manipulation— to allow of the *softening* influence of the atmosphere intervening between the spectator and the work. Softening is synonymous with weakening, hence the necessity for *strong* workmanship in proportion to the size of the picture.

Richardson based the character of all his carved stone work on this principle: the higher the carved ornament, the more suggestive, or apparently, unfinished, he left it. He did not judge it from the scaffolding, but from

below, on the ground whereon the spectator would stand. This principle holds good *quantitively* as well as qualitatively. My course, therefore, was clear: whatever my carved ornamentation was to be, it must look right from *below*, and it must be so manipulated that the atmosphere between it and the spectator should be allowed to take its share in giving the work the aspect of completion.

Richardson had already indicated certain "courses" of red sandstone with "chipped" surfaces; but the selection of stone for the main walls was left to me, and in that I had not a moment's hesitation. The reader will remember my describing the tower, "Mutterturm," that I had built to the memory of my mother in Landsberg. For this I used a native stone called "Tufa." Although of a volcanic appearance, it is strictly a limestone; one moreover which hardens in the air, and is specially suited to damp climates. Throughout Southern Germany, tenth and twelfth century churches built of this stone are still in existence, showing little if any signs of decay. But in modern times Tufa has been used chiefly for

foundations, or where a stone was required to resist the injurious effect of water. For any higher architecture I think I was one of the earliest in our times to employ it. The generic character of this stone gave me, unsought, the "crumble of age." Cut the surface never so mechanically perfectly, there is always left visible the indented impress of moss, leaves, and twigs, upon which in its creation, the lime was deposited. It is ever in the making: through my garden in Landsberg runs a brook ot crystal clearness, yet where, owing to some obstacle in the way, its course is interrupted, the splashing of the water will leave a deposit of lime. Place a bird's nest, or any object where it will receive these "splashes," and in a few years it will be delicately covered with fine Tufa. On every stone of my house is an imprint of history; a story of past life petrified, yet serving a fresh purpose to living man! Surely, an apotheosis of the romanticism of "The Herkomers"! It is not found in England, and has never been imported before. Thus a Bavarian stone shelters a Bavarian in the country of his adoption.

Of my share in the collaboration, I will only say that perhaps the best testimony of Richardson's justification in entrusting the ornamentation of his structural outline to me, is that nobody, not specially informed, has ever detected in the completed result signs that it has been the work of two minds.

Before I ask the reader to enter Lululaund with me, I must describe as concisely as I can the grounds that surround it.

My freehold land in Bushey is curiously and irregularly distributed around the house, having been acquired from various owners in plots, as they became purchasable, and as my means permitted. Near on forty years ago now, I had rented a small semi-detached cottage for my parents, facing the main road in the older part of the village. It was not long, however, before my first marriage necessitated the establishment of some home for myself, and I rented accordingly the other cottage of the pair, making them into one by certain inner alterations. Within their narrow walls all my children were born, and my heaviest sorrows endured.

These cottages, and a little later a

Methodist Chapel almost adjoining, were my first purchases. I had still retained my rooms and studio in London, but after "The Last Muster," which was painted in the little studio erected in the back yard in Chelsea (described in the first volume), I painted entirely in Bushey, having put up a large wooden studio behind the cottages amongst the fruit trees. A small room with sky-light was arranged within the cottages for my father to continue his making of furniture for the future house.

In dreaming of this ideal house, I naturally measured in my mind's eye the amount of ground I should like to secure for it, which all stretched backward from the main road, and was situated on both sides of the branch road, which now faces Lululaund. This coveted land belonged, as I have said, to various owners. Some of it consisted of cottages with gardens, and some of considerable fields of glebe land, the property of the Church. After some years, and by dint of considerable manœuvring, I managed to get into my possession some thirty-two acres of freehold land, before the actual

erection of Lululaund was begun. Yet it might reasonably be asked why I did not seek another place, complete in itself, rather than pay heavily for this patchwork property. My answer is that it was sentiment which made me cling to the spot; and sentiment has its price.

Next to these cottages, which are now converted into garages and dwelling for the gardener, I built my theatre. Between these buildings and Lululaund lies the garden, specially laid out by me twenty-five years ago, and which has fully realized what I had then only visualized. The trees, selected for variety of foliage, and planted for *grouping* rather than for single growth, were of considerable size, by which system—although a few trees were lost—I gained, with the remainder, fifty years of growth. Two small artificial ponds, joined by a quaint stone bridge, help to make this garden of leafage one of artistic attraction not easily met with in a compass of an acre.

On the opposite side of the branch road, at the corner facing the main road, I built two villas, of the early English timbered type. Farther down, first a block of studios, built

of wood (the last wooden erection before corrugated iron was made compulsory), one of which is used by my carver; then, close on this block, two pairs of semi-detached cottages, of extremely simple but artistic design, from the hand of Mr. Adrian Gilbert Scott, wherein those of my staff live whom I need near me. Still farther down on that side, and hidden among the trees, is my smithy. Equally hidden among trees, but on the side of Lululaund, is my large carpenter's shop, equipped with every kind of wood-working machinery, and driven by a 12 horse-power engine; the engine-house for the making of my electric light; the dairy, and a storage house for the fruit. At the back of Lululaund are three acres, divided between the kitchen garden, green-houses, the farm, and tennis and croquet lawns, from which latter there is an almost uninterrupted view to St. Albans, nine miles distant.

CHAPTER XXII

"LULULAUND" (*continued*)

I HAVE now dragged the patient reader around my grounds, and perhaps wearied him with what might seem trivial details. I have perchance shown too plainly an inner satisfaction in pointing out the development that has followed on the smallest of beginnings. The temptation to do so was great, and could not be resisted without putting myself in a false position towards my reader. Yet, let me add, pride of position has never entered my heart. If I look around me now, and see what *there is*, after being reminded by some lingering landmarks of what *there was*, it casts over me, I can honestly say, a mood of wonderment, and not of arrogance. But enough of this. If the reader be not over-weary of me—and I opine he would long since have thrown aside this book if he had been—

I will ask him to accompany me into the interior of Lululaund, of which he has so far only seen the massive walls from without.

Mounting a couple of granite steps, we stand before the plain copper-covered front door of Lululaund, with its massively wrought iron handle. On our right is an electric knob at the foot of a small allegorical figure in relief, signifying "Sound," of copper, which is let into the stone-work. Below this knob is an electric light, hidden to the eye by a copper cup covered with enamel; this light illumines the knob and the figure at night. Above the door is also an electric light shining on the copper surface, but shaded from the spectator's eye, giving the whole, when darkness is around, a somewhat weird aspect, not unlike what we, in our phantasy, imagine the entrance to a magician's dwelling to be.

As we pass through the opened front door into a vestibule of moderate dimensions, with red marble floor and red-wood walls, I wish the reader first to understand clearly that *I alone* am responsible for the design of whatever meets his eye throughout the interior of Lululaund.

Turning to the left, we enter the hall. This hall is intended to act on the mind of the visitor as a preparation for what might still be offered him; it is to arouse curiosity. With the massive stone-work of the exterior still in his mind, he is pleasurably impressed by finding an echo of it here, for the side opposite the three windows is of red sandstone, and contains the fire-place, the door leading to the studio, and the arch from which one ascends the main staircase to the first floor. In this, too, the visitor first sees the brocade-velvet curtains, the work of my uncle Anton, one of the three makers of my house. Notwithstanding that *seven* practicable exits lead out of this hall, it offers a reposeful welcome to afternoon tea, which is served on the long table that occupies the central space.

Before we penetrate farther into Lululaund, let me say a word on the meaning of "home" as I understand it.

It has often been said: "Show me a man's library and I will tell you his mind." It would be equally true to say: "Show me a man's house, and I will tell you his temperament." In modern America this

would probably be truer than in England, for there a son's ambition is to erect something of greater splendour than his father had accomplished; whereas in England hereditary properties—often hideous in design—are held in reverent trust by succeeding generations, which deadens art feeling and art enterprise. English architects, therefore, have less chance of advancing domestic architecture than their American cousins. In the case of the former, it may be love of display rather than love of home which gives rise to the encouragement of this great art across the Atlantic. But the American is no less proud of his country than the Englishman, and his home must become a part of his country's assets.

Comfort, no doubt, is the first physical qualification for a home, but being physical, it is not its entire qualification. The eye, the aesthetic side of the occupier's mind, must be equally satisfied. Goethe says:—

> Hier sind wir denn ganz still zu Haus:
> Von Tür zu Tür sieht es lieblich aus;
> Der Künstler froh die stillen Blicke hegt,
> Wo Leben sich zum Leben freundlich regt . . .

Restful and at peace in the house; from

door to door the beautiful should meet the eye; we gaze up from our book, and the eye rests on a familiar object; let that object be of a nature to satisfy the eye. To become indifferent to objects around is to deprive the mind of half its functions. Morally it may act as a discipline, but artistically as a degradation. It is true, however, that love of home is apt to deaden the critical faculty. Such love will sanctify decorative horrors, and put a halo around banalities; will look upon improvement and change as irreverence.

The reader will say that these last-named theories belong to an inherited home. That is true; but I name them to show how essential it is whilst making a new home, to avoid introducing objects likely to deaden taste by custom. There is no longer any excuse for the introduction of the ghastly things met with in the early Victorian period. Fabrics, furniture, and objects for the beautifying of a home can now be obtained in overwhelming variety, of real artistic worth, and in the very effort of selection an individuality can be manifested. By individuality I do not mean eccentricity, oddity, mere quaintness, or blatant

anachronism. I mean the expression of a rational temperament.

In the making of a home, rationalism and aestheticism must go hand in hand; the first being the active agent of convenience and comfort, the latter of beauty of form. A home inconveniently constructed, entailing difficulties and cost in service, fails in the first principles of domestic architecture, which no embellishment can make justifiable: a house so constructed that it is hot in summer and cold in winter fails in the first principles of comfort. The architect who harks back to the picturesque past, without infusing into it the modern spirit; who tortures you with archaism; who destroys the clear view through your windows by the introduction of little diamond panes of glass, with lead lines; who confounds philistinism with comfort, fails to understand the potential meaning of progress.

But there is the obverse to this re-introduction of the uncomfortable past, which at least was picturesque. The myriads of small dwellings that are springing up on every available bit of land throughout this country,

built by small and large builders, by retired tradesmen, even by frugal workmen (they do exist) who have saved a little money, poison this fair England of ours like a black plague. The origin of this satanic scourge was made clear to me when a builder showed a friend of mine a new street that he had perpetrated, and exclaimed: "There! that is what I call a beautiful sight, all the houses alike, and all let!"

I fear nothing short of an Act of Parliament, making it compulsory for all plans of new houses to be submitted to a carefully elected "Central Committee of Taste," can check this disease. A strong movement is certainly afoot now to combat the evil, and I am watching with great interest and not a little anxiety the effect of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909.

Let me here say that it is a mistake to think great wealth is indispensable in order to show individuality and taste in a home. My father, who was one of the early pioneers in South Germany in the revival of the Gothic style, built himself a house in his village, simple and inexpensive, but of artistic indi-

viduality. The moment you enter it (for it stands to this day in its original shape) you are aware of a personality, of the stamp of mind that not only constructed and decorated it, but intended to *live in it*. It is just that element that should permeate a house—*personality*. I have not inherited a home, but I have inherited the foregoing principles; they were handed down to me on an otherwise clean slate, whereon I was to write the last word of three generations of craftsmen, whose prototype was that master of the fifteenth century, Sirlin.

We now open a door to the left of the hall, and enter the drawing-room, the most elaborately wrought room in the house.

I like first to invite my visitor to sit on the long seat at that end of the room where we enter, and grasp the general aspect of the planning and decoration, before he examines more closely the details, for I, myself, had *mentally* sat on that proposed seat, and had visualized the whole room, before a stroke was placed on paper. Over this seat, and just above the visitor's shoulders, is a row of small windows, through which, if he turn his head,

he will get peeps at the front entrance. These small glazed apertures are set in little vaulted and groined casements, which, projecting forward, support a row of small cupboards with elaborately carved doors and ornamental hinges of bright steel. Above these is the large window from which the room receives its dignified light. As only two comparatively small windows are added on the left-hand wall (viewing it from the seat) there are no cross-lights to disturb or confuse the elaborate carvings that enrich the high wainscoting, and the great arch, in the recess of which is placed the ingle-nook. It is a lighting not unlike what one finds in studios, facing North, in this case North-East. Many who saw the room before it was decorated doubted the eventual success of that concentrated form of lighting, and one went so far as to prophesy a resemblance to a "glorified dungeon." The Shibboleth of the English is "plenty of light" in a room, ignoring the fact that repose is positively *extracted* from a room that is over-lighted. Let the reader, however, not imagine that I advocate the other extreme of gloom and semi-darkness, as inducers of repose;

they are essentially antagonistic to that quality, which I would liken to the loving hand that soothes. It goes without saying that no principles of decoration can give repose to the spirit overwhelmed with a great sorrow, or broken down by domestic discord and strife; the decorative element is powerless to combat an unhappy union. I asked my young daughter, a girl in her teens, what she considered to be the essentials of an ideal home. I naturally had in my mind "artistic ideality." But true to her sex she unhesitatingly said that "above all things a home should be happy."

This remark, so simple in its truth, rather upset my theories; it almost pointed out that my laborious methods of arriving at "repose" in a home were beyond the mark. It was as much as to say that happiness—inner happiness, born of love—can make the most sordid and inadequate surroundings appear beautiful. This is to a certain degree true, and I have already mentioned the fact; but this "psychical beautifying" is, after all, only a trick of our senses, or our *seeing*, and fades with the light of the daily life. And if, as has been contended,

the most ideal principles of decoration can remind us of sorrows, they can equally remind us of sorrows bravely borne, or strife removed, and can help us constantly to *re-date our years*.

After giving my visitor time to take in the essentials of the room, it interests me to know the impression it has produced. To my question on that point I almost uniformly get two answers; the first, that he had never seen a room like it, and the second, that it gave him the feeling of being in church.

Now, to the majority of average English people, Gothic architecture is a style belonging only to churches; they do not know it in its domestic application. It is not exploited in Tottenham Court Road or Oxford Street; it is not to be obtained on the three years' hire system. Hence, when they see it, it seems a strange innovation, an odd introduction, which does not suggest *home*, but church. Hence, again, it makes them feel a certain solemnity which is not supposed to be an accompaniment of a home. Its ornamentation is all too much attached to the walls; all too well and proportionately distributed to give a

home-like feeling; there are none of those endless little tables about, covered with bric-à-brac, which make gesticulation in speaking positively dangerous.

And now, why did I select the later German Gothic style for the interior of my home? Simply because it was an heritage. It was felt by my father when he stood in the forest of his native country; he traced the origin of Sirlin's detail to the broad-leafed lichen, which he tore from the trunks of the stately pines. Thrilled as he always was with the deep romance that permeated such forests, he felt no other architectural expression could reflect this particular romanticism. He was with nature, most truly, when he carved his Gothic ornamentation. My baby eyes first looked on such imitation of spiritualized nature; my boyhood carved imitations of his imitations; my manhood realized the force of this romanticism, and acknowledged it as an heritage. How could any other style have been grafted on to my idiosyncrasy? The house was to be a monument to those master-craftsmen—my father and his two brothers—the direct descendants of their mediaeval

prototypes. How could I, therefore, have expressed this idea in any other language?

If one come to think of it, how few and simple are the basis lines of architectural "emotions"! From the "Greeks (who) stuck four posts in the ground, and put a roof over them . . . accepting laws of equilibrium so simple (that) they were free to expend their whole energies on the beautifying of such a shell"; to the Byzantine period, which discovered the laws of building the long-delayed simple arch; and finally to the Gothic pointed arch, we have the entire gamut of architectural lines. Every combination, every attempt at collective forms can add no single fundamental line, any more than polyphonic music can introduce more than the fundamental sounds of twelve notes.

The room into which I have taken the visitor is Gothic; but it is only the spirit of the Gothic period that I have adopted, and not its strictly archaeological peculiarities and inconveniences, as judged by modern standards. Plate-glass windows and comfortable chairs and sofas do not dislocate that spirit; I have not adopted what a colleague of mine once

called "the wooden legs of the old masters"; I have *not transposed myself back* to that period, but have brought that period *forward to myself* and my requirements as a modern person.

In looking round the drawing-room, not only is the visitor struck with the elaboration of the carving, but with the seeming irregularity of its walls; with the variety of recesses, as well as projections, from the main wainscoting, which reaches ten feet up, and with the admixture of carved oak work and metal work. Looking straight ahead from the same seat, the visitor sees the elaborate wainscoting at the farther end of the room, and in its centre a richly carved cabinet with doors of chiselled iron work. Above the wainscot, and extending the width of the room, is a frieze of beaten copper against an aluminium background, and above this again a balcony, divided by columns into three Gothic archways, and hung with rich curtains of gold and plush velvet, between which, in the centre, a distant window is seen with a dancing figure curiously wrought in the transparent curtain that covers it. This upper space, which is reached from the drawing-

room by a short circular staircase of granite steps, is the music gallery, and by great good fortune that most evasive and vagarious of properties—acoustics—has turned out to be perfect. In spite of the curtains, and notwithstanding that the walls of that balcony-room are more or less covered with brocaded velvet, nothing seems to prevent the sound of voice or instrument issuing forth in all its fullness. Singers assure me that the place "draws out" the tone from their throats without effort; instrumentalists tell me the tone seems to be charged with a charm not often producible.

On the right we have before us the feature of the room, the great arch which encloses the ingle-nook. The chimney-piece, on either side of which are semi-circular seats, is of red sandstone, with carved ornamentation, and in raised lettering an Emerson phrase: "Thus we sit by the fire, and take hold on the Poles of the Earth." In the centre of this chimney-piece is a small figure carved in wood, but gilt and somewhat coloured, representing the Spirit of Welcome. Above this great arch, which springs from two architectural supports, are two large panels of "broken through"

ornamentation, very bold in design and treatment. Projecting from the centre, between the two panels, is a bracket of unusual elaboration in wrought iron, from which hangs the pendant that contains the globular electric lights. This pendant is ornamented with pewter beaten into forms, and resembles a giant jewel pendant. To the left of this arch is a recess—richly ornamented, leading to the dining-room.

Opposite the ingle-nook is a carved settee crowned by a sort of canopy of richly carved ornamentation. On the panelling just above the cushions of the settee are fixed three of my enamel paintings, the central one being a portrait of myself, the other two on either side allegorical subjects.

On the one side (to the left) of the settee is an ample sofa, and beyond, a circular recess, which is located in one of the turrets, the other containing the staircase to the music gallery; hence the divergence in the design of the two turrets.

The ceiling of the drawing-room is of massive and slightly fluted beams, with heavy "bosses" in the centre and at the ends

adjoining the wall. From the ceiling to the top of the wainscot the walls are plain, being only covered with aluminium leaf and lacquered.

The whole of the wood-work in this room is of oak, darkened by a method of fumigation, and then merely oiled. This is only a preliminary start for the darkening process of time itself, yet a very essential procedure, as *new* oak is entirely devoid of dignity. Even the old masters must have felt this, for they *did* darken the wood-work when finished, and for this statement I have data: my father once had the opportunity of looking through some documents of the fifteenth century—accounts, bills, etc.—that had passed between the master craftsmen and the Town Councils, and there was one particular charge for "darkening the wood."

There is one special characteristic of the carving in this room that I wish to point out here. I have always noticed that wherever carved ornamentation has been introduced, whether modern or ancient, there has been a repetition of *one* particular scale throughout. Whatever the beauty of the workmanship may

be, monotony is unavoidable, and monotony deadens. I have therefore adopted a varied scale, from the boldest ornamentation, heavy, almost rude in its character, to that of lace-work delicacy. It is the equivalent to the crescendos and diminuendos in musical expression; of varied touches in pictorial art.

Before we pass into the dining-room, we pause for a moment before the seemingly solid wainscoting at the end of the drawing-room. I lay my hand, with a slight pressure, on a projection in the wainscot, and to the surprise of the visitor it opens, and reveals to us a small room—a sanctum—occupying the space under the music gallery. This room is shut off from all sounds of the house; it is intended to give peace to the worried mind, to enable it to recover quietude. Herein have I also placed that great Gothic arm-chair which my father made me some forty-five years ago, and which adorned my lodgings in Chelsea. It stands within an arch on a dais, and in front of it is a richly carved writing-table, the joint work of father, uncle, and myself. Beyond this the room is of simple

wood panelling, and contains cupboards of oak, without ornamentation, for books.

Returning we pass from the drawing-room to the dining-room. Here the visitor is suddenly confronted with a scheme of decoration far more unusual than that of the drawing-room, richly decorated as it is. For that ornamentation would, after all, not be so novel to a foreigner, who was acquainted with the Gothic of France and Germany; while the dining-room, I fancy, would be novel to any nation. There is but little in it to connect it with any period of the past: it is the expression of an emotion probably never before made articulate in decorative art, of a subject never before connected with dining. A dining-room is usually treated with a subject of festive or of gastronomic import. In the dining halls of old have been enacted scenes of gaiety and song, of lavish display of welcome, of drunkenness, debauch, and murder.

Yet but one moment's reflection will make it clear that there is not a room in the home of man wherein that coming together of a family and friends has so much meaning. The breaking of bread with wife, children,

and friends, the giving and sharing of that which keeps life warm, and keeps the heart pulse beating, is the fullest expression of the great bond of brotherhood, embodied in the idea "Human Sympathy."

Around the walls, forming a mystic cordon of clasped hands, are some thirty life-sized female figures, modelled in relief and coloured, on a background of brilliant red. These figures start from either side of a majestic but "all-pitying" figure. Once within that unbroken chain of hands I wish those who sit with me at the table to feel the true hospitality, to which the key-stone is human sympathy.

But, if expressed in the formative arts, such an idea, to be impressive, demands an aureole of mystery, and that can only be consummated by further treatment *of lighting*. It is impossible to overstate the importance of the treatment and use of lighting in all the arts. Light is the very essence of colour in pictorial art; it is the basis of chiaroscuro. Yet the greatest achievement in pictorial representation of nature can be falsified if seen in a wrong light. The plastic arts are similarly affected,

although, owing to absence of colour, not quite to the same extent. Yet every sculptor knows how his chiselled marble surface is subject to the light in which it is seen. Hence how extraordinarily beautiful is the carved surface of Michael Angelo's figures in the Medici Chapel, and for the reason that they were chiselled on the very spot, and in the light, in which they were to remain.

Now, my frieze of figures in the dining-room has been worked *in situ*, and in the peculiar light that was to cast over them the aureole, without which the *Idea* I wished to illustrate would have been bald and common-place. This I have accomplished by illuminating the wall, without allowing the lights to be visible. For the table I have introduced lights which throw their rays on to the plates and food, but which are shaded and do not disturb the eyes.

As the reader will have gathered, this peculiar lighting is by artificial means, and more especially intended for the principal—the evening—meal. But as it is impossible to make such a decoration look right in *two* lights, I allow but little daylight to come

through the curtained windows for the mid-day meal, for which the artificial lights are always burning as well. This may seem theatrical; it may be a strange fancy of mine; it may have a touch of eccentricity lurking in it, but I never could enjoy a meal served in the open air; it does not taste the same. I do not defend this peculiarity of mine; I do not explain it; I can but give the assurance that it is so. But even the wanderer does not partake of his frugal repast in the open glare; he seeks the shade and shelter of tree or bush. Let nobody tell me that that ghastly entertainment called a "picnic" is a real enjoyment! Be that as it may, be my fancy rational or irrational, I seek the subdued light in my house for my frugal meal. I am not without some suspicion that there may be others who share this fancy in some degree, a fancy I may, however, have pushed to its extremity.

I have said that the dining-room has but little reference to a past period. The many-beamed ceiling of *Sequoia sempervirens* is hardly Gothic in detail; nor is the bold copper-work that fringes the upper line of the stone fire-place. The tall wrought-iron

fender in front of the grate, and the sideboard alone touch the style that is so pronounced in the drawing-room. Desiring, as a matter of sentiment, to utilize a sideboard made in the early days by my father, I made it practicable by enlarging it on either side, adding the buttery-hatch for serving purposes, and made it richer in design by placing over its upper part an elaborate piece of broken-through carving, a conventionalized briar rose, growing out of its twisted stems, that reach half-way down the sideboard, forming columns ; a piece of work that occupied my uncle a year and a half.

The idea of the wall decoration in this room was quickly conceived, but slowly evolved. Indeed, the first tentative attempt remained ten years in its imperfect state. Then suddenly I seemed ripe for it, and completed the figures in two months.

We now return to the hall, and pass into the studio. It is of unusual dimensions, but beyond being richly carpeted it is without any decoration. It is above all a workshop ; it has none of those accumulations of picturesque antiquities, armour, and weapons—favourite

accessories of the studio. The whole attention has been directed to the lights: there is a large side window, and a top-light spreading half across the ceiling, to be used or shut off as desired—with the addition of a glass-house attached to the North-West side. Three large carved cabinets, various sofas and chairs of a heterogeneous type make up the furniture of the studio. Next to this studio is my printing-room, with large lithographic press, and beyond, the room occupied by my factotum.

Again returning into the hall, we pass up the main staircase to the first floor. This staircase is of oak, with boldly carved finials, and the walls around it are panelled in American red-wood, some of the panels consisting of boards over three feet wide and nearly thirty feet in height, with scarce a knot to be seen over the whole surface. Mounting a few more steps from the landing we enter the large gallery, which, in the plan of the house, occupied the whole of the front gable, and is only lighted by the sky-lights in the roof. In this gallery I hang all the pictures and portraits in my possession, or in

my keeping on behalf of the owners, and being always on the wander to various exhibitions in many countries, they are constantly being changed. Next to this gallery is a smaller one, also top-lighted, which combines the treble functions of sitting-room, studio, and gallery. Covering the large double doors between the two galleries hangs a large Turkish carpet made in the seventeenth century, the only really valuable article I possess not made by "the Herkomers," and whereby hangs a tale I must tell.

This rug had been in one of the Landsberg churches since the seventeenth century, and was brought over, so tradition says, by the "Malteser Ritter" (Maltese Knights). Until some sixty years ago it had served as a cover for the altar; it was then, for better preservation, removed and rolled on a big "drum," and kept in the sacristy. I greatly admired it when shown me, and I expressed my wonder that none of those antiquarian dealers who had scoured every corner of Germany in the last thirty years had got hold of it. I was told that many had been after it, but the church could not sell it without special leave

from the State. Knowing that I admired and coveted it, and wishing to present me with something as a token of respect, the Burghers of Landsberg obtained the permission of the State for the church to *sell* it to the town, so that the Council could present it to me. It was brought me folded up, and carried by two men on a kind of litter to the Tower, and formally handed over to me by the Mayor (who was accompanied by a few Members of the Town Council) in a neat little speech. At the same time I was presented with the official document, in which it was specially notified that I might "take it out of the country." A friend, an expert in England, told me its value could not be estimated. Only one other carpet of that particular pattern and period, and equal in size, quality, and preservation, was known, and that was in the Museum in Berlin.

To return to my description of the house, on this first floor are several bedrooms, but only two of them need take up our attention, one the room occupied by my wife and myself, and the other the principal spare room. The former is decorated by a scheme

of freely modelled ornamentation on the walls, and covered with gold leaf. The ceiling, which is flat, is covered with copper leaf, which has been allowed to tarnish into iridescent colours before being lacquered, thus securing the interesting dicoloration.

The spare room is an attempt to test how much gold surface can be agreeably applied without causing vulgarity and garishness. Around the room a dado, reaching almost to the ceiling, is composed of a number of panels carved in wood in peculiar relief and gilt. They are separated by fillets of plain pine, which is only covered with a coating of shellac, as is also the wooden ceiling. The effect of the panels is a golden glow throughout the room, rich yet mellow.

The upper floor need not be described, further than that bedrooms, sitting-rooms, and offices for secretary are located there.

There is, however, one other aspect of Lululaund that deserves a word, and that is its working practicability. For so large a house it is but a comparatively small staff of servants that is required to keep the order—rigid in our case—so necessary for a workable life

within doors. Now, to enable a few servants to get through their work readily, not only must the tasks be carefully regulated and appointed to each, but labour-saving devices must be introduced. Thus the two most time-robbing and irritating of labour items in a household are the carrying of hot water and coals to the bedrooms. Barbarous customs die hard; could anything be more primitive and inconvenient than the orthodox basin and jug? Too heavy for a delicate lady to lift, and awkward in the pouring out, there is also the distress of limitation in the quantity of available water: furthermore there is the ubiquitous *can* of hot water, also most limited in quantity, which, after weary waiting, is generally deposited outside the door, to be surreptitiously captured by the partially dressed occupant of the room. I have adopted the American system of laying on in every bedroom or dressing-room hot and cold water, and have introduced a system of heating, which is not only under perfect control, but hygienically sound, and requires no labour. Hot and cold water, therefore, and in unlimited quantities, are available at any moment,

day or night, and warmth is under the regulating control of every user of the bed-room.

In Lululaund punctuality and order reign supreme. Frequently have we been asked by visitors, after they have been shown round the house, *where we live*? Signs of disorder, to many people, are signs of life. To me disorder and untidiness around me paralyse my thoughts, and lame my hand.

Opportunities for the supervision of personal appearance are certainly scarce in Lululaund, as there are no looking-glasses in any of the living rooms, these being strictly confined—on principle—to the bed- and dressing-rooms, where they are to be found in abundance. Of all the lying, distorting, cheating elements in decoration, the mirror is the worst sinner. Painted and grained wood is bad enough, but that, at least, retains its physical position, and you see it only *once*; whereas the mirror makes you see it twenty times.

The mirror may be quite in its place in a restaurant, where attractiveness is obtained by every device of artificiality and make-believe. I must have written to little purpose if I have

"THE MAKERS OF MY HOUSE."

(From my Oil Portraits.)

My Uncle John, carver (left). My Father, carver (right).
My Uncle Anton, weaver (centre).

left the impression on my reader's mind that Lululaund is an artificiality or a make-believe. If the house is *that*, then so am I, for I venture to say that seldom has a home been more the expression of its occupant than Lululaund. It is more than the expression of myself; it is the representation of the dream of two generations of craftsmen before me, for my grandsire already touched his home with his personality.

Completed it is not, nor would I wish to feel that the last touch had been put to it. It should still have the possibility of growth, otherwise *expectancy* would cease, and with it life's greatest stimulant.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION

ASSUREDLY "Inconclusion" would be a more appropriate word to characterize the chapter that closes this narrative! If worlds are ever in the making, so is the mind of man, individually and collectively, ever passing through stages of progression and retrogression, always in result—inconclusive. Man individually and collectively is forever making, remaking, mending, managing, restraining, correcting, replacing: he is "a subtle fugitive spirit which no base can absorb or fix entirely." I am but a fractional illustration of the immutable laws to which man is bound. I suspect, moreover, that I am merely "an empirical Ego, with powers that have brought (me) success." But as such I have honestly, frankly, and unreservedly endeavoured to combine the offices of narrator and critic of a temperament

structurally full of anomalies. I have traced it to its progenitors ; have followed it through the thicket of events into light. Yet truly may I assert that not yet have I made a grave step towards the age of decline. The gift of work is still my most cherished possession : it is the talisman against evil ; it is the compass that points to the good that may still be before me. The gift of work enables me to appreciate the gift of life ; yet, so long as that lasts, my productiveness must be inconclusive. I would not have it otherwise. Indeterminate must ever be our efforts, as we can only work within the limits of given capacity, rigidly enforced on us. But let us not miss the fact that inconclusiveness and indeterminateness leave the door of Hope ever open, enabling us to descry, however distantly, the *yet unattained*! The yet unattained is the life-giving stimulus to the worker, without which he must inevitably fall back on mere memory, and sink in the slough of inertion, for "the phenomena of self and that of memory are merely two sides of the same fact." If the power *to forget* had not been stronger in me than the power *to remember*, I might, in Pope's

words, have referred to my life as "that long disease."

It would be of little avail to point out the many deficiencies in this narrative; they are all plainly visible to the intelligent reader. I only ask that he will give me credence for having fearlessly given prominence to the shortcomings of a temperament, whilst describing what could without affectation be considered the successes of a career.

Wer Grosses will, muss sich zusammenraffen:
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister.

THE END

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