

WILLIAM HOLMAN HUNT

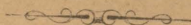
AND HIS WORKS.

A

MEMOIR OF THE ARTIST'S LIFE,

WITH

DESCRIPTION OF HIS PICTURES.

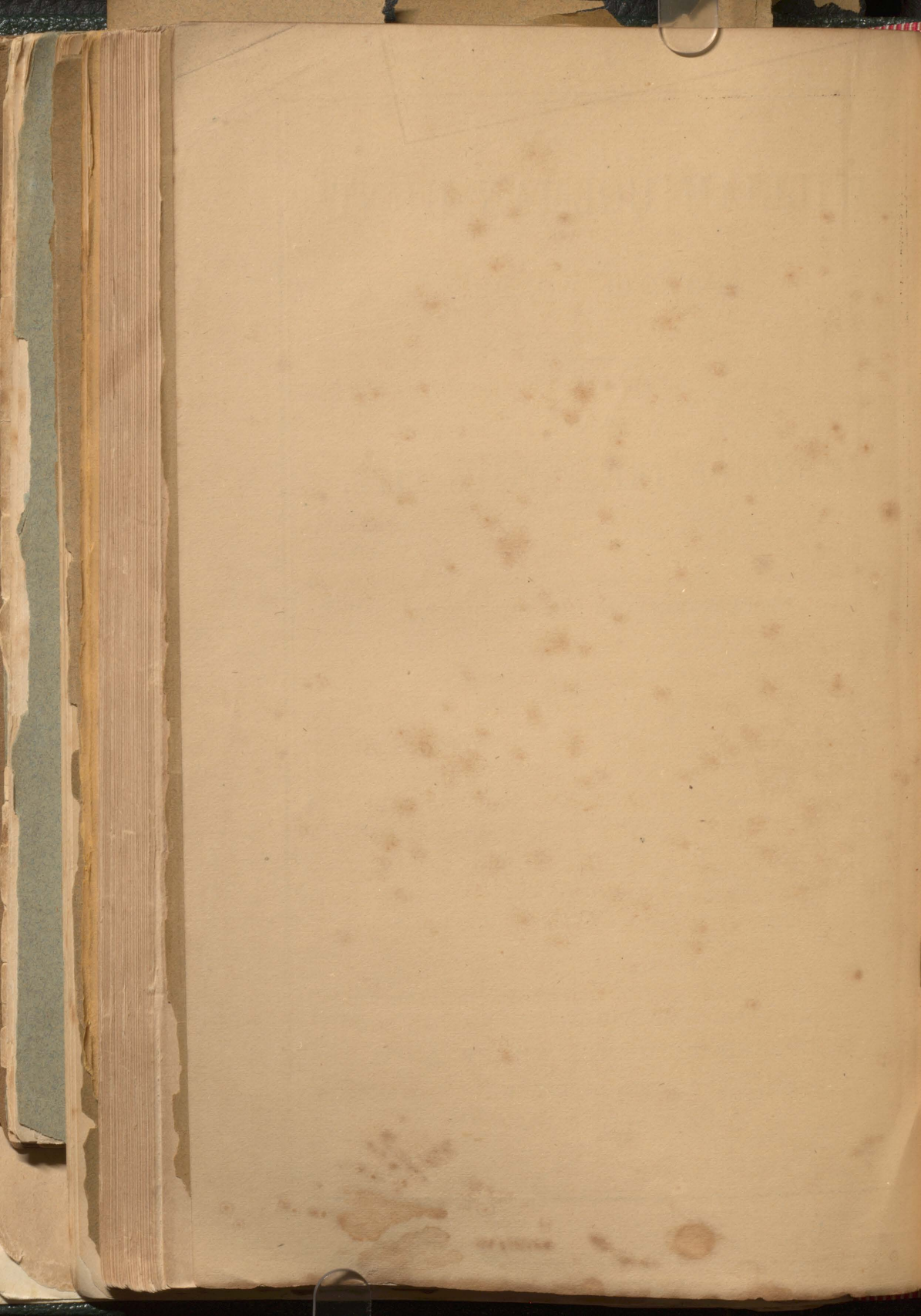


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PUBLISHED BY JAMES NISBET & CO.

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THE son of a warehouseman of London, who had passed his life in the Manchester trade, William Holman Hunt, even from the place of his birth, Wood Street, Cheapside, surrounded as he was by influences of the great English staple, seemed destined to no more enlarged rule of duty in the world than to follow the footsteps of his father, and become, primarily, a clerk in a great manufacturing house. His family, with this prospect for their eldest son, were more urgent that he should be committed to that career, from seeing how persistently he employed his leisure time, while at school, in practising drawing; the examples of George Morland, and another painter of the same moral and social stamp, being those best known to them, and, consequently, dreaded beyond measure, as the necessary lives of all men who practised painting. Indeed, for some years, until old enough to act alone, their authority

compelled Hunt to that occupation, and the age of sixteen found him an assistant to the London agents of Mr. R. Cobden, then calico-printer of Manchester, subject to those *désagrémens* which beset one who, with a heart and soul given to another pursuit, is compelled to perform tasks his mind is not interested in, while self-confidence urges to a wider flight. Born in April, 1827, 1842 found William Holman Hunt still so placed. Urged by the strong passion of a self-reliant mind, he broke through these family objections, and received, with the reluctant consent of his family, in the evenings of one day in each week, some instructions from a city portrait-painter. Fortunately, at the same time, they allowed him to visit the late John Varley, who, looking kindly over his amateur drawings, encouraged him, perhaps more than was intended, by pointing out the example of William Hunt, the great water-colour artist, to whom also Varley had given instruction in his youth. This ended in our subject's finally abandoning the desk in his seventeenth year, and entering himself as a student in the antique galleries of the British Museum, where he worked with no better guidance than the mutual criticism given by one tyro to his fellows.

Sharing much of the life and characteristic

boyish fun incidental to such places (indeed, legends of many a practical joke of which he was the leader or the partner, yet linger in the minds of his companions, some of whom have distinguished themselves), our subject was remarkable for that steadfast persistence in labour which has since developed his talents. A keen humour and sense of enjoyment only added zest to the hours of study. The occasional summer days which every student takes as holidays, were generally given, not to cricket, fishing, or the like, but to long walks and sketching excursions; and it was no uncommon thing for Hunt and a chosen companion or two to start off by dawn of a summer day, armed with a packet of sandwiches and but little cash, for a tramp to Hampton Court and back, doing the distance on foot, some five and thirty miles maybe,—to say nothing of marching about the palace on arrival, ostensibly to visit the Titians, Tintoretos, Holbeins, and Raffaelles, but really to bathe themselves deep in the fresh sunlight and air, to linger under the avenue in Bushy Park, or lie on the river bank, discussing Art questions, while eating their sandwiches with the zest of youth, and returning footsore, hungry, weary, yet happy, to the dingy homes in London, going to work the next day with a newer life and a wider experience. To Hunt's

father, much of this seemed idleness and neglect of business; and the apparent unprofitableness of the pursuit of art at all, strengthened those objections, which were hardly overcome when his son painted a portrait or two, of need at a trifling price, for any humble patron that appeared. Several of these juvenile works we have seen, and can say that the remarkable precision and firm manliness of handling which have since marked Hunt's productions, are to be found in them, although they possess little other merit, unless an uncompromising resemblance to the sitters be admitted as such. Even these, however, discover no common hand at work; for the honesty of execution places them far above their like.

Two unsuccessful attempts were followed by better fortune, when Hunt was admitted a probationer (July, 1844), and ultimately a student of the Royal Academy, in January, 1845. This was but just in time to save him from being compelled to relinquish the course in which he had so much disappointment and so many difficulties to encounter. The young student had indeed promised to return to commercial pursuits, should the third application to the Royal Academy be unsuccessful. The ill-paid portraits themselves were few and far between,

yet they produced something that allayed the active opposition of those upon whom for these years he was dependent. Naturally enough to them, success seemed problematical, and the immediate profit of a commercial life preferable to that which was certainly far enough off. But, "rowing hard against the stream," our painter kept a brave heart, and passed with fair credit into the more advanced Life School, where his studies exhibited the dry and elaborate character peculiar to the works of one who bent himself to represent the models as they were, rather than as some of his preceptors thought they should be. In comparison with other students, who decided on producing an immediate effect, rather than acquiring truly solid knowledge, Hunt neglected to cultivate the fascinating graces of style by which his competitors obtained the honours of the schools. On one occasion, indeed, we remember his drawings were rejected (when those of thirty or forty fellow-students were admitted), and found unworthy even of the honour of being submitted to the Council. Here we may as well remark, that he had, however, not lost time, although the doubt was painful, and his want of success in such attempts made him often fear he was relying too much upon self-instinct for his manner of study; he deter-

mined more closely to consider how the amenities of a less serious pursuit of the Art might be cultivated together with his own stronger aims; and soon after this, even those who had not before recognized his power as a draughtsman, began to acknowledge him to be, if not one of the most accomplished in the schools, yet a student whose progress was to be watched with respectful suspense. His purpose was to carry on the practice of drawing and painting at the same time. From the commencement of his career, he was engaged in making designs and compositions of one kind or another while at home during the leisure time of the day; these were worked at also through the long and frequent vacations of the Royal Academy. Mostly these only sufficed as experiments on certain principles of art which our student had had pressed upon his attention—as being countenanced by the great masters—by the books and the pupils in advance of himself,—to whom he always deferred most studiously as authorities whose opinions required at least to be carefully considered, whether finally accepted or not. Hunt, nevertheless, did not hesitate to confess his own convictions; and often, while studying the practice of some prince of painters, he professed only to be bowing in deference to the views of his elders, and protested against

tendering loyalty where he only admitted respect. In this way he certainly qualified himself to form a temperate opinion, for, perhaps, no student of his age acquired fuller knowledge of the laws and principles which were commonly accepted, than did Hunt, before declaring his own independent feelings in favour of interpreting Nature for himself. He was in this way deliberately putting into practice what Mr. Ruskin, some years later, declared to have been his meaning in advising an undeviating and unflinching adherence to Nature as a model. The advantage of Mr. Hunt's independent practice was, that he actually examined for himself what conventional art *did* contain, and did not reject the dogmas of a school only to follow those of a critic. It may be seen, therefore, that, whatever was the intention in the critic's mind, the same conviction had come independently to that of another, who, with characteristic resolution, was determined to carry it out.

In the year 1846, Hunt exhibited a small *genre* subject at the Royal Academy, entitled "Hark!" (No. 324)—a little girl holding a watch to her ear. This remained unsold, as did, in the year following, another, at the British Institution, representing "Little Nell and her Grandfather," from Dickens's "Master Humphrey's Clock."

In 1847, he was still, as far as the public was concerned, unknown, and the first painting which got even a glimpse of notice, had for subject "Doctor Rochcliffe performing Divine Service in the Cottage of Jocelyn Jolliffe," from Scott's novel of "Woodstock." This was cleverly but unsolidly executed; it was selected from the Royal Academy exhibition of the last-named year (where it was numbered 300), by Mr. F. Glendinning, a prizewinner in the London Art-Union to the amount of £21—the price of the picture being £42—as recorded in the catalogue of the Art-Union exhibition of that year. £21 was the sum received by the artist. 1848 produced a far superior picture: "The Flight of Madelaine and Porphyro," from Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" (Royal Academy, 1848, No. 804), wherein was work that showed the mastery of a broader style and considerable feeling for poetry of circumstance. This also was sold to the London Art-Union, but for £63, to a Mr. C. Bridger. It has since been resold, at the largely-increased price of 250 guineas.

For Pre-Raffaellism this was the year of concretion. The original seven students, styled the "Pre-Raffaelite Brethren," who had been drawn together in their studies by appreciation of the similarity of each other's purposes and views of

the end and intention of true art, and enthusiastic determination to carry them into practice, now took advantage of frequent meetings and consequent discussions, to adopt an opinion in common respecting the ruined state of English Art,—for such they considered it to be in, owing to a superstitious and blind consent with every dogma left behind by the masters of differing ages and countries in which the art had grown up from an infantine state in its native soils. They conceived that this had not declined in any until it attained a time of ripe fulness, and fell into a system of conventionalism which clogged every development of individual genius, so that the whole sank to be one mediocre and monotonous level. They recognized that each of these national schools had had an individual and idiosyncratic origin, that each had gone through the successive stages of development, based fundamentally in an exact and precise study of every incident that was to be represented in a picture, and due and faithful depicting of each portion, dresses, background, and countenances, as they were required. It was perceived that even each great and famous master of the older schools had drawn from Nature herself as a fountain-head, in temporary oblivion of the ease of handling and *bravura* of his instructor's consummated skill.

To explain how these motives operated upon the minds of the "Brethren," let us consider the contents of the exhibition-catalogues at that time. They indicate little other, amongst the mass of pictures contributed, than the ever-repeated themes taken from the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the like,—at best but second-hand ideas. Even to make anything like a picture from these, the majority of artists did little more than represent studies of dresses, cleverly executed accessories placed upon motionless lay-figures, each as inane as its fellow. This was a kind of art our students felt to be quite unworthy of the name, and little else than a disgrace to the nation, being, in short, worked only in the ideal adopted by the decorators of French plum-boxes. The alternative was then before them,—either to begin, as their contemporaries did, with conventionalisms, and be content with a quiet success and ordinary dexterity of execution, or, boldly—with independent consideration of the differing ages and countries—choosing the path followed by the really great masters of ancient art, face the public opprobrium certain to follow an unconventional attempt.

All doubts were rejected finally by consideration of the examples of Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Raffaele, and Michael Angelo, each of whom

adopted the fullest and most painstaking study at the commencement of their careers. To neglect such examples as these, the "Brethren" felt, could not but be fatal to the grandeur which was the implied aim of the English School. The names of men of sterling merit in Art in this country at that time, were Turner, Mulready, Leslie, Maclise, Creswick, Egg, Herbert, Dyce, Anthony, F. M. Brown, &c. In proportion as these artists delivered themselves from the conventional trammels, whatever they might profess to do, so was their native genius developed. In their work life was, more or less, making its way through the dull conventionalism. Excepting the first, whose case is hardly applicable to figure-painting, the man amongst these who had most stanchly fought for good English Art was Mulready; he had opposed, for the most part of his life, all dull conventionalities of the brown style, — had developed a luminous system of colour, which will be best appreciated by seeing how Wilkie failed in that respect. He had almost brought contempt upon the regulation dark corner, and the patent back of a man which, in the common order of trashy pictures, were always to be found cutting off the right or left angle at the bottom of the compositions. The question therefore was, could not the excellencies which had been already so

far developed by them, be better pursued by the rejection of all principles not found to be essential, and the trying of every dogma by the standard of the present age and country? To this our painters gave an affirmative decision, and banded themselves together to carry it out.

Finding that the by-gone school of art, which bore the nearest resemblance in action to these principles, was that which preceded Raffaele, our students adopted amongst themselves the cognomen of "Pre-Raffaelite Brethren" (without intending to exclude the early practice of Raffaele himself thereby, or deny honour to the other great men his contemporaries). This was done more in fun than otherwise, and the signature "P-R. B.", upon their pictures, remained a mystery to the public mind for some time, until, finding their antagonists—for such soon sprang up, with or without reason—employed it as a term of reproach, the members boldly adopted it as a pass-word, and resolved to make their works a protest on the conventional slipshod execution and feeling then the rule of art. Their study should be honest and faithful at least, and they prepared to bear the brunt of a battle with public opinion, led, as it then was, by critics whose incompetence was equal to their intolerance. Above all, they determined these pictures should at

least *mean* something; be no longer the false representations of sham sentiment, but express thought, feeling, or purpose of the painter's own mind, not a chromatic translation of a novelist or poet. Here lies the gist of Pre-Raffaellism; this is what really distinguishes the movement; and herein consists the true service it has done to English Art. It has dignified the mere actor into the thinker and the poet.

It will be seen that this movement, so far from being the conceited and rashly-vain attempt it was popularly described to be, was really a thoughtful, purposeful, and deliberate decision, arrived at through long consideration of the matter in hand; was canvassed by men who have, several of them at least, proved their capacity to decide, their ability to execute, and their firmness to persevere in that which was not hastily undertaken. They put their fortunes upon the cast, and might at least have claimed the indulgence due to an honest and earnest conviction. What were the kind of opposition they met with, cannot be better shown than by this extract from the before-referred-to pamphlet — "Pre-Raffaellism," wherein Mr. Ruskin, after criticising the works of Millais and Hunt, thus writes, in 1851:

"But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised

against them, the utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other, — these are strangest of all, — unimaginable, unless they have been experienced. But, as if this were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small, slimy way. The very day I had written my second letter to the *Times* in defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, I received an anonymous letter respecting one of them, from some person apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a piece of petty malignity as ever blotted paper." Mutual encouragement at first was the chief support the members got in their bold venture; for, primarily, nearly the whole of the artistic professors discountenanced, and affected to treat it with contempt. The exceptions are those of Messrs. Egg and Dyce; the last gave the new movement some encouragement, and the former displayed an active sympathy in procuring the sale of Hunt's picture, the "Rienzi," which we shall presently describe, after it had remained unsold and heartily abused during the whole exhibition. Mr. Egg afterwards did more even than this, by giving our painter a commission on his own

responsibility for the "Claudio and Isabella." This intervention was the more grateful to its recipient, from the fact that he actually sought Hunt out for the purpose of testifying his appreciation of the former picture thus kindly and effectually. From Mr. Ruskin's letter it will be seen that this required some courage, as well as independence of judgment. Perfect fulfilment has ratified the friendly prognostications of the Royal Academician.

The fight was hard, very hard indeed,—seems less to the thoughtless, who laughed then, as they admire now; but we know no more interesting example of courage and devotion to a principle than that part of Hunt's life, when, with the £63 received for the Keats picture, he committed himself to fate, and, with only that provision of the coming year, took a studio in Cleveland Street, Fitzroy Square. It was a dreary, dreadful place, standing in a squalid locality, looking upon a moist timber-yard, and the dingy backs of a row of *passé* houses. Out of the little fund there was another picture to paint; be it borne in mind, that a Pre-Raphaelite picture costs far more to produce, not only in time, but money expended, in obtaining every actual object to be painted, than a conventional work. Far more models must be hired, more accessories pur-

chased or borrowed, taking time to procure at least. With these circumstances, one picture could only be produced : this, under difficulties, the reader can readily imagine, when he thinks what would remain out of so small a sum thus taxed.

Simple fare and scanty fires through the cold winter, working deep into the night and all through the dull and chilly day, were to be encountered, and were actually endured with the brave, light spirit of youth, self-devotion, conviction, and hope. No one gayer, no one kinder, than Hunt ; no one would more readily give the experience which was already esteemed amongst his fellows ; even time, so precious to a student, would be found for a friend's service. All the while a steadfast, adamant resolution animated him. He took the cold, hard iron of a great purpose, hammered it with an indomitable will, till getting hot, it could be modelled into a tool, to shape a life thereby. He and his companions were amused at the scorn of those who could not comprehend the aim so set before them. A few wiser men saw something shaping itself in the movement, and had hope in " Pre-Raffaelitism ;" but for the mass the very name became a term of scorn : with one section the system of painting

was held to be a "dodge" to attract attention—these wilfully forgot the trials of its professors; another party held them to be little less than lunatics, because such earnest students presumed to differ from the *dilettanti*, and were not primarily able to work up to their own ideas, or fairly express themselves. The first of Hunt's pictures painted under these conditions, was "Rienzi vowing to avenge the Death of his Brother," which attracted great notice when exhibited at the Royal Academy, in 1849. It did not win acceptance, but brought its painter a courteous note of recognition from the well-known novelist who had introduced this historical incident into one of his works. It was sold to Mr. Gibbons for £105. The picture was rather thin in execution,—natural result of a novel attempt,—but showed a vast advance in dramatic power, vigour of expression, and some exquisite manipulation.

"Rienzi" was anything but perfect as a Pre-Raffaelite picture; but that which followed, in 1850,—"A converted British Family sheltering a Christian Missionary from the pursuit of the Druids," had sounder qualities of execution. The painter's hand was maturing its mastery of the material; tone and colour were developing themselves with him, *chiaroscuro* getting its due,

and the work held place at the Royal Academy exhibition less by its novel style than by a certain solidity and power of painting that showed Pre-Raffaelitism to be a concrete thing—*un fait accompli*. Above all, this picture showed the partially successful representation of the natural effect of sunlight. Mr. Hunt carried this out more completely in the "Hireling Shepherd," in describing which we shall deal with it. The former was purchased by Mr. Combe, of Oxford, for £126.

"Valentine rescuing Sylvia from Proteus" (exhibited in 1851, at the Royal Academy), the well-known subject from the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," was chiefly remarkable, first, for the haughty nobility and grandeur of the face of Valentine, and the defeated, but repentant, attitude of Proteus, as well as the calm, happy, reliant repose of Sylvia's expression. In this composition, the growing power of the painter sprang forth, and the nascent breadth of a peculiarly masterly style of painting, with rich colouring and manly drawing, were suddenly united to vigorous power of design. The background, a forest of beech-trees, painted in Lord Amherst's park at Knowle, Kent, showed an enormous advance in execution, in potency, and fidelity of

treatment. Mr. T. Fairbairn, of Manchester, owns this work. It was originally purchased by Mr. McCracken, of Belfast, for £168. Even the increase of reputation gained by the painter for this admirable picture, did not bring him solid encouragement to persevere, for it was not sold till long after the exhibition. Mr. Hunt, therefore, was seriously considering the propriety of giving up his profession, and emigrating to Australia. The affectionate generosity of Mr. Millais, who afforded temporary assistance, and offered more, induced at least a trial for another year. This brought better fortune, as we shall see.

“The Hireling Shepherd,” picture of 1852, showed Hunt making a still greater advance. Independent invention of subject distinguished that of the “Converted British Family sheltering a Christian Missionary from the pursuit of the Druids;” by the one we now come to, is embodied a genuine thought, in glowing and intense colours, victorious rendering of nature in every detail, solid and manly execution unflinchingly carried out, with the representation of sunlight effect, which was an entirely new thing in art. For the painter first put into practice, in an historical picture, based upon his own observations, the

scientific elucidation of that peculiar effect which, having been hinted at by Leonardo da Vinci, in one of his wonderful world-guesses, was partly explained by Newton, and fully developed by Davy and Brewster. He was absolutely the first figure-painter who gave the true colour to sun-shadows, made them partake of the tint of the object on which they were cast, and deepened such shadows to pure blue where he found them to be so, painted trees like trees, and far-off hedgerows standing clearly in pure summer air. For the *motive* of the "Hireling Shepherd," take this account of its design. It represents a shepherd who has neglected his charge, to make love to a girl of his class; she sits on the ground nursing in her lap a lamb of the flock, and with affected unconcern receives his attentions; he kneels beside her, and superstitiously descants upon the evil omen of having caught a moth (it is of the "Death's Head" kind); shows it to her, while the lamb is feeding upon an unripe apple, and the sheep go into miry places, and plunge deep in the neighbours' corn, by which they will not alone do mischief to the cultivated land, but injure themselves in eating the grain, that is, as yet, unfit for food; so that they get "blown," as shepherds say. Thus, while their guardian busied himself with idle fears, his duty was

neglected, and the flock got into real trouble. The motto of this picture was—

“Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And, for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.”

She is a full-blown, robust, rustic beauty—blown upon by the wind, and rained upon by the rain, fearing neither—none of those elegant country lasses one sees dressed in elaborate ribbon ornaments, short kirtles, and broad hats, so frequent on china, at masquerades, and the theatres, but nowhere else,—not of them, but strong as a man—“a daughter of the plough,” with a head such as might have become the wife of Cain. He is a goodly rustic, rough and coarse. Many of his sheep lie about the meadow in the sun; the field is separated from the corn-land by a shallow watercourse, nigh dried up by the summer, and overhung by willows on either side. Further off is a row of pollard elms, and a bean-field newly cut. The feet of the pair are in the long, rank, summer grass, and about them grow the wild marsh-mallow flowers, from the uncultured strength of which the bees are gaining their winter’s store. This picture was sold to Mr. Broderip for 300 guineas.

“Claudio and Isabella,” exhibited at the

Royal Academy in 1853, was a small, narrow picture, representing that scene in the prison in "Measure for Measure," when Isabella relates the conditions which may save the life of her brother Claudio. The slight-hearted man, clinging to life, says, "Death is a fearful thing;" she replies, "And shamed life a hateful," rebuking the sophistry of his weakness. They stand together by the window of the cell; he restlessly trifling with the manacles on his foot,—an action finely expressive of the impatience which gnaws his heart, looks gloomily forward into the darkness of the room, and has dreadingly turned his back upon the light and the window, close by which are the flowers of an apple-tree in full blossom; she, startled thus with the idea that he would sacrifice her honour for his life, lays both hands upon his breast with force, and glares with full askant eyes upon the face of him who so vilely shrunk from death. Nothing more perfect than the faces and actions can be conceived. He lolls against the wall with unnerved wretchedness, anticipating fate; she, erect, looks startled from that faith which nature taught her to have in her brother. The gloomy, narrow prison, the bright sky, the rosy apple-blossoms, telling of sun and air and spring without, are all suggestive of deep feeling

for the subject: Claudio has carved "Juliette" upon the wall. Perchance he even now sees the face of her he betrayed, yet whose brave heart took the weight of sin upon herself; thus,

Duke.—Love you the man that wronged you?

Juliet.—Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him."

This splendid little work was sold to and remains the property of A. L. Egg, Esq., R.A.

"Our English Coasts," also exhibited (R.A.), 1853, might be taken as a satire on the reported defenceless state of the country against foreign invasion. Some sheep were straying along the high cliffs that stand the southern bulwark of the island. It seemed to have a deeper meaning, however, and was of men, and not of sheep. One black mutton had got into trouble and thorns by going over the edge of the cliff, where he stands bewildered and entangled, without effort to free himself; others are following him into difficulty, as men do, blindly; and, as men also do, you saw some of the flock reposing heedlessly in the sun, while the frisky lambs jump over their indolent comrades, all heedless of the mischief before their eyes. This was a wonderful piece of painting, the texture and colour of the sheep's wool a perfect rendering of nature, and the artist's power of expression was singularly manifested

by the varied character given to their faces. The background, painted from the east side of Farlight Glen, Hastings, was a portrait of the *locale*,—a broken cliff, grassed and weeded to the base, looking beyond to rolling downs, which sloped towards the sea; a portion of the sea itself; at the place where the cliff receded from the angle, and turned its back, as it were, upon the spectator; so that the front was completely hidden,—the sunlight lying upon the place was reflected into a whitish hazy glare, originated by the exhalations that arise from the cliff, which showed above and around it, softening the line of the horizon on the sea, though the cause was invisible,—a very subtle piece of observation, which we never remember to have seen painted before. Mr. Maud, of Bath, gave £126 for, and is the possessor of, this picture. In the same year, Mr. Hunt exhibited the portrait of a clerical friend, by the title of “New College Cloisters, 1852.”

With the picture exhibited in 1854,—the famous “Light of the World,”—Mr. Hunt continued to develop his own ideal of art, carrying it, indeed, to a most noble and high pitch of invention and thoughtfulness. Here he climbed into a fine range of spiritual feeling, and, as we are bound to express our belief, entered upon a kingdom of imaginative creation, untrodden

except by the greatest artists of all time. The subject was, the Saviour knocking at the door of a neglected house, — “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”—(Rev. iii. 20.) With the exception of the marvellous picture of the present year, this has been the artist’s greatest work as yet, whether for earnestness of feeling, for creative power, vigour and subtlety of execution, or poetic judgment and knowledge of expression. As if to show that he who could paint an intense sunlight picture such as the “English Coasts,” or the “Hireling Shepherd,” was also master enough to do the same with the converse, it was a moonlight effect, and that not of the ordinary masses of great black shadow and broad spaces of light, like day, but a strange mystic time, between the night and morn, while the light of the sinking moon lingers, mingling with the pale shine of the stars, which coming day cannot yet overpower. High over-head clear blackness is; while on the low horizon broadens the grey gold light that precedes the dawn. The scene is a waste orchard; the branches of the neglected trees stand ghostly, mingled with the sky; while among the long grass, sprinkled with frosty *spiculae*, evincing how keenly cold the night is,

lies the unripe and abortive produce of the trees.

There is a pathway on the earth, to show the way the Saviour has come, who now stands before the door, with one hand knocking, the other bearing the lantern that contains the light of faith. The interspaces of light and darkness from this fall upon the grass, the door, and upon the drapery and face of Him who knocketh. The royalty of His function is shown by the crown upon His head intertwined with the thorns of the passion; He is robed like a king in white and crimson. Upon his breast,—as a clasp holding the mantle together,—the mystic Urim and Thummim, in which is set the precious stones that bear the names of the chosen tribes, is united by the cross with an orbed ornament, significant of the heathen priesthoods, some of whom bore a symbol of this kind. The lantern is bound to the hand by a golden chain, and the hand itself shows the marks of the suffering of the cross. The face, upon which the effect of both lights which pervade the picture is contending,—that from the sky above and from the lantern which the hand sustains below, is inexpressibly awful and beautiful; a royal dignity and a godlike mercy are blended therein. It is not merely the countenance of an

intellectual *man*, neither is it feminine in softness and delicacy, but a wonderful combination of expression and feature, suggestive of love, and goodness, and godlike judgment, when engaged in the performance of a godlike act and function. The door is overgrown with weeds, long briars creep before it, while the clinging ivy has ascended its surface from the earth, and hangs from the roof over the heavy architrave: rust has deeply eaten the hinges and fastenings. The form and design of the lantern is Gothic, expressing that faith which is given the northern nations to keep, as it contains the light; the dome forming its top is pierced with starlike openings, through which long streams of light issue forth. "Thy word," says the Psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path;" also Prov. vi. 23, "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light." The larger openings through which the light issues at the sides are not of uniform design, but seven in number, and varied to express the universality of the Church. It will be seen that Mr. Hunt has taken a new notion of art and art's functions. This picture was a mystical allegory; not more an allegory than the parabolic expression of the text which suggested it. The text which goes before that first quoted should be studied at the same time. "Because thou sayest, I am

rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne." "Even as I also overcame," marks the humanity of Christ's personation, justifies the indication of the sufferings of the cross in the representation of the Saviour, even now after the sacrifice, when He comes as bearer of the light eternal to the shut-up, the blinded, poor, and neglected soul, over whose door heavy ignorance in the form of a bat is flitting away before the light borne by the divine applicant. "Sit with me in my throne" indicates the kingly right and function of him who knocketh. The indolent ivy bars the door in upright lines; the red-armed briar creeps, in

prostrate and rigid obstinacy, through the weeds, over the broken and neglected threshold. "Will he answer, he who is within, to Him who knocketh?" is often asked by the spectator's soul when looking upon this picture. Who can doubt? Christ waits patiently, the pathetic *storge* is brimming in his eyes. True, He cannot wait for ever. But have we no signs of the inmate; he who neglected the orchard? There was good in him at one time, surely; else those goodly trees had not been planted, nor cultivated, pruned, and coerced into bearing. Indeed, it is well to observe that the artist tells us of the future in the past, giving hope. There are marks of the axe and saw upon the trees; the fruit is choice, no crude product of the wild wood, though it lies upon the ground. What hope, do we say? Is it not dawn that glimmers palely over that mystic and misty river, that flows beyond the life-work of man in the orchard? Does not the bat flutter away? But most of all, how is it that people have not seen the whole tale of the future in the position of the red-armed briar, whose every idea is persistent bitterness, that clings to and struggles with all things. This is the obstinacy and blindness of heart that has kept close guard upon the entrance so long. Because of the red-armed and antagonistic thing the ivy of indolence clung un-

removed upon the door; now it crawls prostrate through noisome weeds, smitten with frost, shorn of its garish and triumphant blooms that erst flaunted before the porch. There it lies, languid in a scarlet death; and the moved heart surely will open the door, and supper be spread within.

“Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.”
Another said: “The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.”
And one: “He had not wholly quench’d his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour.”
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, “Is there any hope?”
To which an answer peal’d from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

When this picture was exhibited, the public, never too thoughtful, were inclined to question that which was not patent to the eyesight, and various critics showed a more than usual want of thought in heartily misunderstanding it. To bear no longer with the blind prejudice which thus shut its eyes and roared, Mr. Ruskin addressed a hastily-written letter to the *Times*, to which we have before alluded, doing justice to the artist and his work, in trenchantly exposing the popular misconception. Since that time Pre-

Raffaelitism has had fairer play, and people began to see, that to understand deep thought and poetry, at least a little attention was required. Mr. Ruskin's address to the public was but the old story of Dr. Johnson over again : " Sir, I can find you in reasons, but not in sense to comprehend them ! " Upon this the critics grew more sparing in their condemnations, and looked with some indulgence upon the artist for the future.

Mr. Combe, of Oxford, purchased the " Light of the World " from the painter. It has since been engraved by Mr. Simmons, in mixed line and etching (See Appendix, p. 117), with extraordinary success for the style, and, what is perhaps the truest testimony to the merit of the reproduction, to the entire satisfaction of Mr. Hunt. Success with such a task—to render a just translation of the varied effects of light and shade and tone in black and white only—is, indeed, a triumph of modern art. Of the rendering, under those conditions, of the above qualities, as well as of the sentiment and expression, Mr. Hunt has recorded his opinion that they are perfect.

The " Light of the World " was part of the Great Paris Exhibition of modern Art ; a small *replica* thereof, which was sent to New York, excited a *furor* there far beyond any picture

that had been seen in America, where it was purchased for probably the greatest price yet given for any painting on that side of the Atlantic. Among the "Art Treasures" at Manchester, in 1857, were "The Hireling Shepherd;" the "Valentine rescuing Sylvia;" the "Strayed Sheep" ("Our English Coasts"); the "Awakened Conscience;" and the "Claudio and Isabella."

If anything could have persuaded the world that our subject was no ordinary man, it would have been the exhibition in the same year with the "Light of the World," of the "Awakened Conscience," which work may be said to have done not a little in calling attention to the class concerned in it. It showed the interior of one of those *maisons damnées* which the wealth of a seducer has furnished for the luxury of a woman who has sold herself and her soul to him. In front, and opposed to the large mirror that lighted the room by reflection from without, was a man, a showy, handsome tiger of the human species, heartless and indifferent as death. One of his patrician arms surrounds the victim of his passions, while, with the hand at liberty, he strikes the keys of a pianoforte, the music of which he is accompanying with his voice; the air is "Oft in the stilly night," a piece of

Moore's *clinquanterie*, as is shown by the music-sheet lying on the instrument:—

“ Oft in the stilly night,
 Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,
 Fond memory brings the light
 Of other days around me ;
 The smiles, the tears,
 Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken,
The eyes that shone,
Now dimm'd and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken ;
 Thus, in the stilly night,
 Ere slumber's chain hath bound me,
 Sad memory brings the light
 Of other days around me.”

The music, the words, or some train of thought connected therewith, has aroused the dormant conscience of the light woman; her idle heart is stirred, and, starting from the arm of her companion, she stands erect, and turns from him, so that we see her face;—the lips drawn against the teeth, the retracted and expanded nostril, with the hard-set cheek, show the force of the sudden blow that has awakened her memory; her wide eyes straining on vacancy, seem as if seeing Hell open; the hands clutched together show how keenly is felt the evil which has befallen her; the trinkets upon them drive into the flesh, and the fingers are intertwined with spasmodic

the metropolis, modern art has found its best critics and truest encouragers. The aristocracy, "who neglected Turner, and let Wilson starve" (with one notable exception), saw nothing in Leslie, and are content to admire Millais, completely ignored Holman Hunt, as will be seen from the names of the purchasers of his pictures we render here.

The so-called middle class of England has been, and is, that which has done most for national Art. While the nobles bought pictures by the Old Masters, and squandered thousands upon dubious, and even, if original, meaningless paintings of the very worst times of Italian Art, would give almost as much for a Gaspar Poussin as for a Raffaele,—*praised* "Pietro Perugino," but were ignorant of Masaccio, Fra Angelico, and Lippi,—while this was done, the class of merchant princes, as in Florence of old, aided their own native art, and, with characteristic common sense, inquired the sterling *meaning* of a picture before they bought one. The patronage and warmest friendship of Mr. Combe to Hunt is an example of this kind: he bought the paintings that hung month after month on the walls of the exhibition unpurchased. Mr. Thomas Fairbairn's accuracy of judgment led him to buy the "Valentine rescuing Sylvia" and Awakened

Conscience" when the artist's fame stood still in the balance.

Soon after the completion of the "Light of the World," Mr. Hunt set out for a tour in the East, where he remained two years, visiting all the scenes of Biblical interest, and familiarizing himself with the materials to be employed upon the great picture of "The Finding of Christ in the Temple," which has recently put him far above all modern competition as a painter of Scriptural subjects, even if the "Light of the World" had not sufficiently marked the intense spirituality of his intellect. The prime object of this journey was the great picture referred to; but as he executed also the much-controverted "Scapegoat," we will dispose of that primarily.

After referring to the subject of his journey and adventures while in the East, it will be proper here to introduce some particulars of the manner in which Mr. Hunt proceeded to execute the task thus undertaken. In the first case, he went to Egypt as the best portal to the regions of the Oriental world. The difficulty of getting models compelled him to consider what subject it would be best to execute out of a number he had long contemplated; for it was very needful to decide how he could best employ the opportunity of a

journey such as few artists would undertake. To do this effectually, he remained in Egypt several months, familiarizing himself with the Oriental character, studying Eastern life as it was to be found round about him, and visiting many historically famous localities of that country. With this aim he made studies of the people, at one time in the cities, and at another in the desert. This afforded leisure to go over all the subjects of a Scriptural kind, and, if we may so phrase it, *Orientalize* himself, and divest his mind of the conventional ideas incident to a northern education.

In the period while thus engaged, our subject had a foretaste of the difficulties that were to be encountered in carrying out such a subject as that of the "Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple," to execute which his inclination, and, indeed, previous studies, most seriously inclined him. Take the following anecdote of what attended the aforesaid obstacle in procuring models:—He had engaged a boy to sit, and so far employed him as to have already expended three days upon a work, which required about the same period for its completion. While the artist was so situated, the sitter, despite the prospective *backsheesh*, to be paid on termination of the task and urgent inquiries, persisted

in absenting himself, and when repeatedly questioned as to the reason of this extraordinary conduct, stated that he would not, on any account, place his soul in such jeopardy as sitting would incur; and further explained that a wise elder had assured him that the artist's object in painting him and visiting their country was simply to traffic in the souls of the believers, with which view he had come: inducing the unwary to be painted, in order that, on his return to England, and as a condition of a compact with his Satanic Majesty, to be fulfilled on part of the latter by money paid down in return for the soul of the sitter, which was to be made over by the artist sponging out the image he had painted, and so causing the original to separate from his body, and speed through the air to the cruel painter and his diabolical employer.

Such superstitions, varying more or less in detail, existed in the minds of nearly every person, so that almost every native that was applied to to become a model received the proposal with a shout of indignant horror. (The reader will not fail to call to mind the well-reputed Eastern superstition, that every artist will be compelled, at the last day, to furnish a soul to each one of the images he may produce in the course of his

life.) Even the servants of Mr. Hunt's friends, who kindly interested themselves in his behalf, seemed ready to break with their masters when sitting was proposed, however much in other matters they might be ready to serve them. The difficulty of obtaining females to sit was even greater. Constant experience, latterly, of this difficulty rendered Mr. Hunt more cautious in approaching the people with the request. After leaving Egypt, he purposed to paint the subject of the "Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple," which was decided upon by anticipation of the difficulties above dwelt upon, and recollection that the task of finding models for the old men, who formed the greater number of characters in that picture, would be less onerous, and, above all, not render him obnoxious to the charge of endeavouring to entrap the unsophisticated and unwary juvenile population.

Our subject was not prepared, however, for the suspicions under which he found himself constantly placed, of being an emissary of the Church Missions in disguise, come to Jerusalem with his painting tools, in order to be able to baptize their pictures, and so convert the originals, who had not been gained by fairer means, to Christianity. Nor did the artist expect another difficulty, which occurred in the case of a native

whose mind was of less suspicious though not less cautious nature, who, holding that it was not wicked to be painted, yet thought such an action was attended with very great risks, seeing that it was by no means certain that, on the last day, when the Angel called out the names of "Däood Levi," the picture might not, by an oversight, be admitted to the regions of the blest, to the exclusion of the luckless original.

An obstacle, perhaps even more insurmountable than these freaks and superstitions, Mr. Hunt found to exist in the dreadful indolent indifference and impracticability of the whole people, who, although when employed by him earned far more than they had been accustomed to gain, often left him vainly waiting day after day in perfect uncertainty whether to proceed with another task to that for which he required the heedless fellows. So serious an annoyance was this, that, after some months' experience of it, he at one period felt his plans to be utterly impracticable, and would have turned home again straightway, in despair, if he had not by this time become deeply interested in the theme of the Scapegoat, a picture we shall presently describe, and grown earnestly impressed with the importance of painting that subject in the very wilderness of the Dead Sea. He then gave his whole

attention to this matter, and proceeded on a journey, going down in company with some friendly travellers to the extreme southern point of that desolate inland water, tracing its entire western margin, in order to discover the most suitable spot wherein to represent the condition of the goat, which, bearing the transgressions of the Israelitish nation, had been expelled from all the habitations of the living.

Inconveniently enough, this seemed to be best found at Oosdoom, a desert spot on the salt-incrusted shallows of the Dead Sea, looking across which, the mountains of Edom were visible; a place the most remote from fertility and civilization. Returning to Jerusalem, he had time before the right season arrived, to make preparations for setting out again alone, under the escort of a small tribe of Arabs. Very wonderful are the events and experiences Mr. Hunt met with while painting on this spot: his tent was pitched in the then dry bed of one of the wildest mountain torrents, and under the shade of the walls of a ruined castle, probably of Jewish times; in this situation he wrought from before sunrise, till after sunset, going down to the margin of the pestilential sea, accompanied by an Arab and the ass who bore the picture. Very strange in wildest romance were the days passed over this task,

which was brought to a termination earlier than our artist might have wished by want of provisions, and the restlessness of the Arabs, who stayed in terror of their enemies; they insisted on getting back. The goat itself, although sketched at Oosdoom, was painted at Jerusalem.

After the extraordinary circumstances under which this picture was painted, in the midst of scenes such as but few Europeans had visited, it is not perhaps surprising that the work should have struck the public as strangely novel, accustomed as they were to the representations of landscape painters, who execute no subjects but those with which our countrymen are familiar. Mr. Hunt's transcript of the borders of the Dead Sea, an almost unknown *locale*, under a rarely if ever before faithfully painted climate, did indeed appear novel at the Academy Exhibition. Let us now consider this subject in detail.

In Leviticus xiv. it is commanded as an atonement for the sins of Israel, that a chosen goat, having had "confessed over him the iniquities of the children of Israel," should be driven forth into the wilderness—"into a land not inhabited." It was the custom of the Jews to tie round the horns of this goat a fillet of red worsted, which, should the animal be afterwards discovered, and this found to be bleached white, was considered

as a sign that the atonement was accepted. Hunt has painted the scapegoat bearing this. The "land not inhabited" is here shown as the borders of the Dead Sea, upon whose salt-incrusted margin the creature is staggering, nigh at death;—utterly exhausted, he sways upon his hoofs, which are trammelled in the brittle crust of salt,—his hard, glazing eyes look out with a piteous bitterness, as if to see if any persecutor waited him in that waste land; you notice by the hoof-marks upon the mineral snow that he has been down to drink of the nauseous sea, and returned therefrom, repelled by its bitter savour, and now sees no hope of relief. A masterpiece of painting was the long hairy wool of the animal, in which all who have ever seen such a thing (or even the hide of a camel, that perhaps most resembles it), recognize the peculiar dry lustre and dead silky shine, not unlike fine worsted (which, in fact, it really is), and the wavy appearance that characterizes such skin-coverings: if we may say so, it looks somewhat opalescent. Mr. Ruskin, who ridiculed this portion of the work, certainly did but show his own thoughtlessness in condemning the wool of the animal.

In the foreground, white with the incrustated salt, which the floodings of the sea have left upon

the shore, you see skeletons of camels and other beasts of burthen just within the margin of the shallow water,—they have wandered to the false glitter to die. Across the sea, which reflects the clear, brilliant sky, are the rocky mountains of Moab, a waste purple and orange splendour lying upon them from the setting sun; the great full-moon shines lucently pale in the heavens, and is reflected, with the hills, and the clouds, and the daylight in those deceitful deeps. The whole was magnificently splendid for colour, brilliancy, clearness, and force of tone. It held its place upon the Academy wall with astonishing power, seeming, as you regarded it, more like a mirrored scene of reality than a mere transcript in oil. It excited great controversy at the time. People, who demanded that art should always be agreeable, and a pastime rather than a teaching, were very bitter against the painter for doing something that was not at all “pretty.” Others thought a little, recognized Mr. Hunt’s idea of the Jewish scheme of atonement, and compared the picture with the “Light of the World,” which referred to that of the Christian dispensation. Mr. Windus, of Tottenham, was the purchaser, for £420, and is the owner of this picture.

During the progress of “The Scapegoat,” the

“Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple” had been suspended; but on its completion, the difficulties with indolent and intractable natives were partially forgotten, and Mr. Hunt re-commenced the greater task. He was no stranger in Jerusalem by this time, but a frequent visitor to the Jewish synagogues of that city, and at some of the houses of the wealthy Jews, to whom Doctors Macgowan and Sim introduced him. The obstacles, though still most disheartening, were somewhat decreased, and he proceeded patiently, step by step, until he had completed the whole of the Jewish Rabbis, who form so conspicuous a portion of the “Temple” picture, with the exception of two; also the head of “Joseph,” and some of the attendants behind the main group. Studies and observations were all he could make for the heads of the “Virgin” and our “Saviour:” these being stayed in their execution in order to avoid offending the Jews who sat, by exhibiting the picture as of a Christian subject; they having, despite their general objections, taken an interest in it, as of a collection of Jewish Rabbis.

It may be necessary at this point to consider some cognate matters, before entering upon this picture, which we shall defer doing, in order to maintain the chronological order of our account

of Mr. Hunt's labours, until we have disposed of several minor works that occupied him in the mean time, and after his return to England. Before enlarging upon these, we shall consider a point that, at this time, much interested the artist. This was concerning the physiognomical character of the Jews in the East. This he found to vary considerably from that prevalent amongst those members of the tribes located with the Northern nations, from whom we derive our common notions of the Israelitish countenance and *physique*. He was able to confirm, by his own observations, the remarks of Sir Gardner Wilkinson, who, in his erudite book upon the ancient Egyptians, when referring to the sculptured representations of these people at Thebes, says:—"It is not very consistent, nor logical, to argue that, because the Jews made bricks, and the persons here introduced are so engaged, these must necessarily be Jews; since the Egyptians and their captives were constantly required to perform the same task; and the great quantity made at all times is proved by the number of buildings which still remain, constructed of those materials. And a sufficient contradiction is given to that conclusion by their being said to be working at Thebes, where the Jews never were, and by the

names of the various Asiatic captives of the time being recorded in the same tomb, among which no mention is made of Jews. With regard to the features of foreigners resembling the Jews, it is only necessary to observe that the Egyptians adopted the same character for all the inhabitants of Syria: as may be seen in the sculptures of Karnak and other places, where those people occur, as well as in one of the sets of figures in Belzoni's tomb; and the brickmakers, far from having what is considered the very Jewish expressions found in many of these figures, have not even the long beard, so marked in the people of Syria, and the prisoners of Shesonk (Shishak). They are represented as a white people, like others from Asia introduced into the paintings; and some have blue eyes and red hair, which are also given to the people of Rot-ñ-n, in the same tomb. Indeed, if I were disposed to think them Jews, I should rather argue it from many of these figures *not* having the large nose and dark eyes and hair we consider as Jewish types; for some of these brickmakers are painted yellow, with blue eyes and small beards. Others are red, with *retroussé* nose.

“These last,” Sir G. Wilkinson goes on to say, “may be Egyptians, or people of Pount, who are represented bringing tribute in the same tomb.

The fact of some having small beards, others merely the 'stubble-field' of an unshaven chin, might accord with Jews as well as with the Rot-ñ-n, or other northern races; but their making bricks at Thebes, and the name of Jews not being mentioned in the whole tomb, are insuperable objections. And here I may mention a remarkable circumstance, that the Jews of the East to this day often have red hair and blue eyes, with a nose of delicate form and nearly straight, and are quite unlike their brethren in Europe; and the children in modern Jerusalem have the pink and white complexions of Europeans. The Oriental Jews are at the same time, unlike the other Syrians in features: and it is the Syrians who have the large nose that strikes us as the peculiarity of the western Israelites. This prominent feature was always a characteristic of the Syrians; but not of the ancient, nor the modern Jews of Judea; and the Saviour's head, though not really a portrait, is evidently a traditional representation of the Jewish face, which is still traceable at Jerusalem. No real portrait of Him was ever handed down, and Eusebius of Cæsarea pronounced the impossibility of obtaining one for the sister of Constantine; but the character of the Jewish face would necessarily be known in those early days (in the fourth century), when the first

representations of Him were attempted; and we should be surprised to find any artist abandon the style of features thus agreed upon for ages, and represent the Saviour's with those of our western Jews. Yet this would be perfectly correct if the Jews of this day had those features; and such would have been, in that case, His traditional portrait. I had often remarked the colour and features of the Jews in the East, so unlike those known in Europe, and my wish to ascertain if they were the same in Judea was at length gratified by a visit to Jerusalem, where I found the same type in all those really of Eastern origin: and the large nose is there an invariable proof of mixture with a Western family. It may be difficult to explain this great difference in the Eastern and Western face (and the former is said to be also found in Hungary); but the subject is worthy of investigation, as is the origin of those Jews now living in Europe, and the early migrations that took place from Judea long before the Christian Era. This would be more satisfactory than mere speculations on the Lost Tribes."

Coinciding with the distinguished traveller we have quoted, it occurred to our artist to avail himself of the opportunity he enjoyed while at Jerusalem, of painting those Jews whose features were of a kind other than the common types

known in England. It will be seen from the picture itself that these are a people widely differing from those amongst ourselves, although certainly retaining some points in common.

Let us conclude our account of the working out of this picture here. Mr. Hunt left Jerusalem, after having been there occupied about a year and a half. On his return to England, the great work was continued, with the same strict regard to truth of national character. Baron Rothschild kindly recommended him to the Jewish School in Spitalfields, for models for the younger personages in the picture. The character of the head of the Virgin was derived from a lady of the ancient race, distinguished alike for her amiability and beauty. The Saviour was painted from a pupil of one of the Jewish schools, to which the husband of the lady last referred to friendlily furnished an introduction. It is almost needless to say, that in every case it was most important for the artist to refer to English models; as, for instance, for the limbs of the figure of Christ, which could not be found amongst children not exposed to the open air. It would have been almost impossible to discover amongst the Jews of this country any with the marks of active life to which our Saviour was born. Keeping the chronological and progressive order of

this account, in the gradations by which circumstances compelled Mr. Hunt to carry on his works, we will now briefly digress, to state what were the tasks performed between his leaving Jerusalem and completing the great painting which is, after all, the main subject of our dissertation here.

After his return from the East, Mr. Hunt, taking advantage of the intervals of labour while completing "The Finding of Christ in the Temple," executed a charming little picture, which was shown in the French Gallery,—Winter Exhibition, 1859. This was entitled "The School-Girl's Hymn,"—a country girl, satchel on back, tripping to school, and singing as she goes. "She is singing one of the old melancholy hymn-tunes, such as, since the Puritan times, have taken the place of the droning burthen of the old chivalric ballads,—one that might have the very notes the Pilgrim Fathers chanted when they landed on the beach of New England. All these burthens are melancholy in their monotony, just as the sea-burthen is, that the ever-beating waves chant; not melancholy because depressed, but sad because earnest and monotonous, and potent for effort, suffering, and hope. It is the droning of the bagpipe, this sad 'air' of the people's thoughts, the chanted 'croon' of Irish wakes,

the monotonous drummings of the Red Indian's music, and the one-noted beat of the Hindoo's tom-tom. Just such is this the child sings. It may be some old Puritan psalm, to the tune of 'Plymouth' or 'Newhaven;' and her fine girlish notes have a ring about them that brings a clear echo from out of the lofty hedges and high trees of the background, which is mightily like the chafe of sword on steel at the saddle of one of old Oliver's Ironsides. The lower part of her face sways itself, if we may so speak, the lips curving with a sort of ripple, which aids greatly the earnest suggestions given by the brow-lines, that are knotted like a strong pulse, and the eyes that fix themselves abstractedly. The painting is not less admirable than the expression. The flesh is the purest, deepest, soundest piece of textural imitation we ever saw; for colour and firmness unequalled; the drawing marvellous for perfect fidelity, from the way in which the eyes and mouth have been studied, to the rendering of the curving lines of light that glitter through the interstices of her straw hat. The whole picture is real, rounded, sound, and firm to a marvel." Such is the opinion of a critic writing in the *Dublin University Magazine*.

This writer thus expresses himself also upon a small, but by no means unimportant landscape

which Mr. Hunt contributed to the same exhibition in the previous year. This was styled "Fairlight Downs—Sunlight on the Sea:"—"One of those pure gray hazy days that mark early autumn: the scene, a view from the lofty Downs of Sussex, looking through the gap of a distant glen on to the sea. The sea itself bears a long track of the sun's light upon it, but subdued with the most exquisite tenderness into the softest delicacy of lustre, so that an opaline-gray brilliancy, or tender radiance, shone about it. Over-head the fairest clouds hung ineffably soft, and, what was a remarkable proof of the extraordinary observing power of this great painter, the mist rendered these clouds slightly prismatic, and gave a delicate beauty through the diaphanous veil it hung about them. The cloud-shadows that fell on to the subdued sparkling sea were deliciously fine in colour. Nearer at hand, the Downs themselves looked darker to the eye, because that was impressed with the full light upon the sea itself. This was a very subtle point made by the artist, so to graduate his tints that all should keep a place in perfect unison, and yet to render a just account of each portion of the scene represented." This critic proceeds to comment on the intense variety in unity of colour,—the real secret of beauty in that quality,

as may be observed in the works of Titian, which this charming little picture exhibited. He concludes thus:—"This was particularly remarkable in the place where the angle, or crest of the distant glen, broke down to the sea-level; here the colour was of the most perfect description imaginable, the soft light that seems to hang about semi-opaque jewels, such as turquoises and pearls, being the only image we can offer as a suggestion by which to give an idea of the ineffable beauty of its execution." We have introduced these remarks in order to show what our artist has done in the way of landscape-painting, as we have been unable to dwell upon that portion of his more important pictures.

Before we enter upon consideration of the great "Temple" picture, it will be well to look back over the years that were passed in the production of the before-mentioned works, and we shall not fail to see the peculiar character of the artist, and what a man he is. Of his single-mindedness and devotion to a principle, the mere enumeration of the difficulties that must have been encountered in the completion of these paintings will suffice. He sought the borders of the Dead Sea, to illustrate the subject of the "Scapegoat." The background of the "Light of the World" was painted in the bitter nights of an English

by M. Place, at Khorasabad, of some thin plates of copper, moulded in the form of the trunk of a palm-tree. Close beside these were found some scraps of thin gold, which fitted exactly over the raised ornaments of the copper, and were undoubtedly so originally placed. It is probable, therefore, that the columns of the Temple were coated with copper to receive a thin covering of solid gold. (See 2 Chronicles, iii. 7,—“ He overlaid the posts with fine gold.”)

Overhead, in the deep covings of the ceiling, are richly-tinted quarries of coloured glass, interchanged with ornaments, in low relief, of grapes, pomegranates, and pine-cones; from each coving is pendent a chandelier, or circle of lamps,—in the centre a magnificent one, of silver in broad bands, sustaining egg-shaped vessels to carry the oil, ostrich-eggs, and tassels of silk. When the observer has exhausted the other marvels of the picture, it will be well to examine this chandelier, and admire the accuracy with which its many elements are represented, all in diverse planes, to form a triumph of foreshortening. The floor of the apartment, which is supposed to be one of the lesser and exterior courts of the Temple, is of a coarse red marble streaked and veined with white; indeed, the solid mother rock, such as tradition yet shows for the original pave-

ment of the sacred edifice. The vista is terminated by an open-work screen of bronze, of elaborate and varied design in conventional forms. A portion of this lattice being set back in the centre, leaves a space of view free, through which is discernible a hill, with buildings upon it, afar off. The door of the court is put wide open, one leaf flat before us, overlaid with plates of gold, and ornamented with a circle, within which radiate, wheel-like, the fans of the papyrus-plant, their intersections being filled up with unopened buds of the same; over this disc is the following significant inscription, engraved upon the plates of gold:—

“ET STATIM VENIET AD TEMPLUM SUUM
DOMINATOR QUEM VOS QUÆRITIS.”

Malachia, Caput 3, v. 1.

Tear-shaped drops are represented upon the flat surface of the plates: a spiral ornament, set with a great crystal, is on the centre of the door, the foot whereof bears other and beautiful forms of design. On the stone threshold are carved pomegranates and papyrus-leaves. Upon these lies an ear of wheat, significant symbol, which, falling from the dress of Mary, has been deposited within the holy precinct. Outside, we see through the opening the outer court of the Temple, with work-

men yet labouring to its completion, and finishing a stone which, when raised, will be the "head stone of the corner." Shafts of rich coloured marble lie upon the ground, yet to be erected; over the bounding colonnade that already stands, are guardian cypress-trees, and the suburbs of the city about Mount Scopas, and the hill-country beyond all, lying in the light of a Syrian afternoon. Such is the rich and golden framework in which this picture is set, and it will be well for the student to consider how great is the thing achieved, when an artist invents for his background a novel order of architecture that is not alone picturesque and characteristic, but perfectly practicable, and could be actually constructed from the design. We should need to write a bulky volume to illustrate fully all the recondite and diversified labours which the artist has brought to bear upon the accessories of this work; it must suffice to designate a few only.

The reader who has followed us through the account of Mr. Hunt's progress will be prepared to find in this picture an entirely original and independent system. He adopts the idea, so earnestly sympathized with by our humanity, of representing Our Saviour in that earthly robe it pleased Him to assume. Having to deal with the earliest recorded manifestation of His divine

office, the painter could not, consistently with his principles, but show Him as a *man*, and the Virgin as a *mother*; by no means as the spiritualized idealities of the early Italian painters, and still less in the sensuously beautiful types of the later schools, which too often sank into mere portraiture of a beautiful woman and tender child. Hunt's idea of art is far more catholic and of infinitely wider appeal, in thus honouring the human manifestation of the Divinity, than if he had acted upon the older system. It followed, that devoted attention must be paid to the smallest details of surrounding circumstances, and that every accessory must be rendered with the utmost fidelity and minuteness. Accordingly, the aspect of the picture is perfectly novel, and indeed surprising. To a mind that has but one fixed idea of art, and will not tolerate that which is unusual, the result may be even displeasing at first. A more deliberate and discerning judgment will recognize the carrying out of a thoroughly English principle; not alone in the minor fact that the mere execution is of the most workmanlike and complete kind, but because the idea of devotion to duty is inculcated by the very action of the chief figure, as we shall see. We believe that there never has been a picture so thoroughly English

and characteristic of the age as this. It is based upon the national idea of thorough examination and study going before an undeviating and unflinching execution of principles thence arrived at.

Going to the East, and acquainting himself with the manners and customs of a people that have preserved the same unchanged from age to age, Mr. Hunt of simple necessity discarded the old-fashioned blanket draperies, because he found that description of costume had never been adopted in the country of our Lord. Dealing with an incident of Jewish history, he could not avoid painting those concerned therein as Jews; and, what is more, Jews of the soil, where the physical peculiarities of that people are likely to have been best preserved. His actors are therefore costumed in various and brilliant fabrics of Oriental character, much like those worn in Syria to this day; and many of them, especially such as were painted from Jews in Jerusalem, differ considerably from the common type of features known amongst ourselves. These countenances preserve the aspect of a people who still held the elements of power, and whose nationality was not yet scattered upon the earth. Thus much for the principles upon which the artist wrought, and the accessories with which he has surrounded his subject. We shall now describe the design itself;

in doing which ample evidence will arise of erudite and thoughtful preparation for his task.

Mr. Hunt has divided his composition into two groups; that of the Rabbis and their attendants, officers of the Temple, and that of the Holy Family. The first is arranged in a semicircle, partly inclosing the second. Nearest of the Rabbis is seated an old priest, the chief, who, blind, imbecile, and decrepit, sustains in his feeble arms the revered rolls of the Law, called the *Torah*, covered with a crimson-velvet case, embroidered with golden vine-wreaths and the symbol of the name of the LORD, the mystic tetragrammaton, or four triangles in an endless line: over the head of the bearer are the silver bosses and rattling pendants that ornamented the ends of the staves upon which the document was rolled. He holds this close to his shoulder, strenuously yet feebly; his sight is gone, his hands seem palsied, as his open and slaving mouth is. He is the type of obstinate adherence to the old and effete doctrine and pertinacious refusal of the new. Blind, imbecile, he cares not to examine the bearer of glad tidings, but clings to the superseded dispensation. To make this point more evident, Mr. Hunt has repeated the same emotions in the second Rabbi, a good-natured, worldly individual, with a femi-

nine face, who, holding the phylactery-box, that contained the promises of the Jewish dispensation in one hand, touches with the other that of the blind man, as though to call his attention to, and express a mutual satisfaction in, their sufficiency, whatever may come of this new thing Christ in conversation has suggested. Both of these men are dressed in white — the Pharisaical costume — and a white over-dress with the former; the last is striped on the sleeves with black, a garment worn by the chief Rabbi when bearing the Pentateuch. They are seated, like most of their fellows, upon a low *dewán*, that is covered with a broad, green-fringed carpet of many colours. The features of both these elders are markedly Jewish; both were painted in Jerusalem, as was their neighbour, a man of totally different character. Eager, unsatisfied, passionate, argumentative, his strong antagonism of mind will allow no such comfortable rest as the elders enjoy. He has been arguing with Christ, before the entrance of the Virgin and Joseph suspended the action of the whole picture (excepting with the elder Rabbis, whose slow senses have not yet received the check: let the observer notice this point, for here is evidence of the artist's thoughtful penetration into the minds of the personages he has

created, and by this also he has marked the suddenness of the entry of Christ's parents). With glittering eyes, even now he leans forward impatiently, eager to renew the dispute, fancying he has found in the Book of the Prophets his hard griping hands unroll, new weapons for himself; and is so ardent that his very feet are drawn up strenuously upon the *dewân*, as he gathers himself together for battle.

The head of the fourth Rabbi is that of a proud and self-centred man. Complacent and haughty, he would absorb the entire action of the scene, and, holding a reed pen in one hand, sums up on the fingers of the other the whole argument on either side. He assumes the judge, and would decide between the old and new. He is a Pharisee of the most stiff order. Beyond even the custom of the chief Rabbis and ordinary practice of his sect, he retains the unusually broad phylactery bound about his forehead. Whereas the wearing of this was an assumption of piety at any time, and unusual in the Temple, except during prayer, he has "made broad his phylactery," and bears the Lord's promises to the people even in the house sacred to Him. It will be well here to explain what a phylactery is and was. Anything but one of those huge placards the later Italian and Dutch painters affixed to the brows of their

Pharisees, bearing the name of the Lord in Hebrew characters ; but really a small four-square, wooden box, bound round the head by a leather belt, which contained, written on parchment, the promises of the older dispensation. The self-centred and the argumentative Rabbis are both of the middle of life, handsome men of their kind, dark, and atrabilarious. The two first Rabbis wear white caps, like mitres; the last-described two, turbans of dark colour. Between these leans from behind a somewhat older man, whose reddish beard is tinged with grey, although the twinkle of his little, selfish, mocking eyes, is undimmed, despite the crows-feet that have gathered at their angles. He seems to mock the words of Christ upon some argument that has gone before, and, with one hand clenched and supine, protrudes a scornful finger, hugging himself in self-conceit. He is a Levite, a time-serving, fawning fellow,—a musician, as we see from the harp he bears, who would ingratiate himself with his seated superiors.

A servant of the Temple stands leaning over immediately behind these last ; a gaunt, sunken-cheeked, hollow-eyed man, who pours out wine. The fifth Rabbi, who is aged, has a bi-forked beard, like that of a goat, reaching to his waist.

There is a good-natured, temporizing look about this man ; he makes himself comfortable by easily drawing his feet up on the *dewân*, and would willingly let every one else be as much at ease. He holds a glass of wine, and pours a libation on the ground, while his eyes pleasantly regard the meeting of Christ and Mary. The reader will observe how we have progressed through many forms of character, from the blindness of eye and heart of the eldest Rabbi, through the simple reposing confidence of the second, to the eager championship of the third, the self-centred complacency of the fourth, the indolent good-nature of the fifth. We now come to an envious, acrid individual, a lean man, who, apparently, having come late into the Temple, has not entered the inner row of his companions seated on the *dewân*, but kept behind it. He stretches forward to see the face of the Virgin, being, from his low seat on the floor, and the interposition of Christ's body, unable to do so otherwise. He has an obliquity of vision, and is an evil-looking, greedy-souled creature. A mere human lump of dough is the seventh and last Rabbi ; a huge sensual stomach of a man, who squats upon his own broad base, and indolently lifts his hand in complacent surprise at the interruption that has taken place. He, like the goat-bearded Elder, has a pence at his

girdle, is wrapped in a maze of shawls and robes that make his baggy body only more obese; the fat, oleaginous face is as characteristic as those of his companions.

Subordinate to all these are some personages we shall now proceed to describe, beginning in the front again. By the side of the blind Rabbi, is seated a pretty, fresh little boy, arrayed like a glittering dragon-fly, in a tunic of cloth of gold, the sheen of which is splendid and made harmonious by embroidery of green and crimson. He has in his hand a whisk made of fibres of the palm-leaf. His business is to guard the *Torah* from defilement by the flies,—incarnation of Beelzebub. His eyes wander from their duty, having a blind and decrepit master, and follow idly the flight of some doves into the Temple, that have entered over the heads of the Holy Family. There is a sweet, ingenuous sparkle about this child that is pleasant to look at. Let not the painting of his gorgeous robe alone be studied, but the tender young flesh of him compared with the dry and veiny skin of his master, through whom slow pulses seem to run; observe also the exquisite texture and colour of the hands of both patriarch and child. The *Torah*, upon the importance of which the artist has rightly insisted so much, is the centre of this group

of three, for immediately behind is another boy, furtively kissing the loose silken outer covering of the Holy Rolls, thereby invoking a blessing upon himself. He looks aside upon the meeting that is taking place. Here, again, is an incident, thoughtful in design, centring the interest upon the chief object in the picture by strictly natural means.

It is well to observe, also, the reverence paid to the mere coverings of the Book, two to guard them, and one stealing a kiss. The WORD, rolled up, and twice encased, and given to the custody of a blind man. The design again centres upon that incident we have yet to come to, by the action of three youths, musicians of the house of Levi, who are standing about the golden-shafted column that rises behind this group. The foremost two are in green dresses, with under-vests of crimson and purple, that make lovely colour in the combinations; they wear turbans of the like. One, a sneering, supercilious, but handsome personage, holding a *sistrum** in his hand; between his fingers is

* *Sistrum*, a musical instrument commonly in use amongst the Eastern nations, consisted of several loose wires that played freely through holes in a metal bow, the ends of which returned upon each other and were connected by a wooden handle, by which the instrument was shaken, with a clash; rings are placed upon the wires to heighten the sound. See example in the British Museum, Egyptian Gallery.

suspended one of the rings that run upon its transverse rods; he holds this for a moment, while with an insolent indifference looking upon the Virgin's arrival. Leaning upon the shoulder of this one is a second youth, with a more ingenuous face, that is fascinatingly sweet by comparison. He bears a four-stringed harp against his shoulder, the body of which is covered with tortoise-shell. Thrusting his face eagerly between these, and close against the column, to which he clings, is the third, an angular-profiled, round-eyed, greedy-looking youth, who, burning with curiosity, stares with all his might.

We now come to the group upon which all this is centred—the Holy Family. First, upon the physical appearance of Christ, "He is no smooth-faced boy, a valetudinarian or feminine-featured child, half-babe half-woman in aspect, but a robust youth, of splendid physique, and exactly what the poet meant when he called him the ideal of a gentleman. Divinely beautiful, he is yet humanly noble. It will be understood, that the youthful Saviour has been standing before the Elders, his feet bare, as those of a Jew within the holy precinct, his clear-muscle legs naked nearly to the knees, to which descends the *kaftán*, or dress of cotton striped

with purple and blue, the colours of the royal house of Judah: this has a broad fringe upon its edge, such as is ordained to be worn by the Levites; it is bound and lined with green within the wide sleeves and round the naked neck. Round about his waist goes a broad leathern belt, marked, as may often be seen to this day in the East, with a cross in the front, over the heart; the buckle which holds this together he is drawing close with the right hand, as one who girds up his loins and makes ready to depart for labour. The same idea of duty we have before referred to crops out here again, and, above all, in the expression of the face. We agree heartily with Mr. Hunt in not rendering this a simple type of passive holiness or asceticism, or merely intellectual power. A *man*, he is cast in the noblest mould: nobly beautiful, to express the glory of his origin and the greatness of his task—also strong and robust, to be *able to do it*. Certainly painters have erred in representing Christ as the feeble ascetic hitherto chosen, and Mr. Hunt is as certainly right in the fine Englishness of his idea of the splendid body of our Lord. A moment's reflection on the fatigue and heavy burthens he endured will at once dispose of the idea of a feeble valetudinarian Saviour;—it was no delicate frame that suffered the scourging and

the cross. His face is a sweet oval, with a broad front, widened and high-arching under the hair, that springs like a flame gathered about the countenance; its tips catch the light behind in a sunny radiance like a glory, as is ever the case with such hair so situated. Thoughtful, clear, far-off looking, and presageful, are the deep, tender, blue-tinted eyes. Radiant with purpose, though mournful and earnest, they are full of will, and do but recognize sorrow. They express the thought of his reply, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" to the question, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." The broad lids are lifted, so that the gaze is open upon vacancy, and overcast with thought. The eyebrows are straight and intellectually resolute, the nostrils full without breadth, the lips sweet, small, yet pulpy and compassionate in their expression, the chin a rounded square, the complexion fair, yet rich with sunny tan. Of the action of Christ—he is standing well balanced upon his feet, one forward, as it is with one who proposes to start upon a journey. He would be about his Father's business. The left hand rests almost passively upon the wrist of Mary, and is pressed by her ardently against the maternal breast.

Joseph and Mary have entered in haste: but, reverent of the laws of their people, made bare their feet; the shoes of both, the former bears over his shoulder by a thong in one hand. The other had been upon the shoulder of Christ, until the eager, trembling fingers of the mother slid beneath, displacing it in her passionate haste. Half faint with the three days' travel, her garments loaded with the dry dust of the road, eager-hearted Mary pressed to her Son the moment she saw him standing before the Rabbis. What was the reverence to be paid to them then! She tenderly embraces, and with trembling lips presses her mouth towards His face. Lovely is the eager yearning of her eyes, the lids dropped, the irides dilated and glittering with tearful dew that has gathered itself to run down her cheek. She is fair and tall, has been pallid and worn, but the flush of joy that breaks over her face gives a newer youth to its looks, and with its blush makes bright the countenance that has already begun to fade with time. Observers who, as some do, declare the Virgin is too juvenile, forget how gladness will give a momentary youth again, soften the trenches time is drawing, and fill the slowly-dimming eye with new light. Her features are moulded appropriately in the purest Jewish type, in its

finest and tenderest character. "The bold, fine nose, the broad, low, straight brow, straight eyebrows—a royal feature; wide-lidded eyes, reddish with anxiety; the pure fine-lined cheek, a little hollowed, but a very little; and rounded, clear-cut chin,—make a countenance as noble as it is fair. But far beyond the mere nobility of structural perfectness, the expression is the tenderest of the utmost outpouring of a heart that has yearned, and travailed, and hungered long. Those long, long three days have marked her cheek and sunk her eyes, and, although the red blood of joy runs now to its surface, this does but show how pale it was before. Could I but in my poor words show how her mouth tells all this, how it quivers with a hungry love, arches itself a little over the teeth, its angles just retracted, ridging a faint line, that is too acute for a smile, upon the fair, sweet maternal cheeks! Forward her head is thrust, the whole soul at the lips, urgent to kiss. There is a spasm in the throat, the *singultus* of joy. The constricted nostrils breathe sharply; but all the glad agony of the woman—the intensity of the maternal *storge*—seeks at the lips the cheek of her Son. For this the eyes sheathe themselves with level lids, for this the body advances beyond the hasty feet. It is but to draw him nearer that one eager hand

clasps his shoulder, and the other eager hand raises that which the Son has put upon its wrist, pressing it against His mother's bosom."

The reader will see the unusualness of the idea, that so earnestly appeals to our nature, of representing the Virgin as no tender smiling beauty, blandly regarding a pretty infant, a theme of mere grace; but the trembling, tearful, eager, earnest *mother* finding the lost Lamb and the devoted Son. Rightly has he nationalized her features in the Jewish type:—should not a daughter of the royal house of Judah bear the physical aspect of her race? She is dressed in a pale-grey robe, with an under-dress of white, has a girdle with an orange-red fringe. These are the colours of sorrow and purity. She wears a head-dress of elegant form, warm-white, with purple and red lines upon it, bound by a scarlet cord across the brow. Holman Hunt has departed, as was to be expected with a thoughtful man, from the conventional idea of Joseph. Ordinarily represented as an aged person, bent with time and white bearded, it has been so done without the slightest authority in Holy Writ. The tradition expressed in the later Italian pictures,—for this is an invention not sanctioned by early art, is but the gross idea that the Virgin's husband must be an old and decrepit individual.

It is characteristic of the state of religion, that we find the purest-minded painters representing Joseph as a man in the prime of life. We may instance that exquisite work by Fra Angelico, which was originally painted for the plate-cases of the library of the convent of the Serviti, Florence, called S. Annunziata (now in the Florentine Academy), of the "Flight into Egypt," where Joseph is an active man in his early prime, with a short curled beard. It was not till the pure high spirit of art fell under the hands of painters who were showy men of the world, and made their art a trade, that Joseph began to be painted as an old man. This is significant of more than meets the eye. According to the better thought, Hunt, the modern master, has represented Joseph here, a tall and stalwart man, dressed in the same kind of robe as the Son; upon his head a deep crimson-coloured turban; pendent from his girdle a string of figs,—provision for a journey, even as now made by the Arabs. Over the robe is a white and brown *abáyeh*, striped. His action we have already described.

It will be well now to enter upon the minor figures of this picture. Seated just without, by the jamb of the door, is a lame and blind beggar, vociferously chanting for alms; he is dressed in

sackcloth, and balances his crutch ostentatiously upon his arm. The labourers in the courtyard have been before referred to. Within, some doves have entered the Temple over the heads of the Holy Family: a boy is driving them out with a long scarf he has taken from his dress. An attendant is busily lighting the lamps. The idea of the main subject, obedience, devotion, and sacrifice, as well as the pre-symbolization of the rite itself, is supported by a group in the distance, near the bronze lattice-work:—a father has brought his first-born to the Temple, accompanied by his wife, who bears the child in her arms: the man has across his shoulder the lamb of sacrifice; a seller of lambs, from whom this has just been bought, counts the price upon his open palm of one hand, while, with the other, he presses back the anxious ewe who would follow her offspring. A boy with a harp goes before a priest, bearing a smoking censer,—the priest is to make the offering. At his counter is seen a money-changer, weighing gold in a balance.

We have now only to deal with the general aspect of this work. The richness and magnificence of colour it exhibits is such that the spectator becomes overwhelmed by the brilliancy and vigour gained by that quality. Yet all is splen-

did without glare, deep-toned without dulness, and varied without a diffused effect. The finish is so thorough, that whenever we look, new incidents meet the eye, of effect, colour, texture, or character. The flesh-tints are solid, rounded, pure, and various. Contrast the complexions of any of the personages for the variety of this. Study also the great diversity of textures given to the various fabrics: the stiff angularity of the cloth of gold; the light fullness of the woollen draperies, when they are of a thin substance; their bulkier rotundity when their body is denser; the sheeny volatility of the silk, and rich lustre of velvet. Notice the accessories, and see how careful has been the study that brought them together. Even the very frame was not without its demands upon the thought of the painter. One side of this, occupied by the cross-staff that sustained the brazen serpent, which twines itself about the head, is typical of the olden Law of Moses,—of the sacrifice and substitution of an animal; on the other a cross of thorns, with a garland of flowers about it, expresses the New Law. The centre is surmounted by the sun at full glory, and the moon eclipsed; the space from this to the corners is filled up with stars. At the foot a diaper of heartseases, the symbols of

peace,—and daisies,—of humility, devotion, as well as universality.

This picture, which is undoubtedly the great artist's *chef d'œuvre*, was purchased by Mr. E. Gambart, for the unprecedented sum of 5,500 guineas. We say unprecedented, because, as far as it is recorded, no such sum was ever given for any work by the Old Masters; in modern times, the largest amounts so paid that have come to our knowledge, are £4,000 by the Emperor Nicholas of Russia, to Horace Vernet, for the portraits of himself and the Imperial Family; also, Mr. Frith, R.A., received 3,000 guineas for the well-known "Derby Day." Under the personal inspection of Mr. Holman Hunt, "The Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple," is to be reproduced in line by one of the most distinguished engravers in Europe. Let us hope with a like success to that which has attended Mr. Simmons's work from "The Light of the World." Indeed, a national service is rendered by the publication of really noble transcripts from noble pictures like these. Where the pictures cannot go, the engravings penetrate. Their appeal is infinitely extended, the artist's fame is justified and heightened, and all the good which such thoughtful and purposeful art can effect—and certainly this is incal-

lable upon the minds and actions of men—is multiplied a thousand-fold.

After a sojourn of two years in the East, Mr. Holman Hunt returned to this country, bringing with him, besides "The Scapegoat," and the masterpiece we last described, a number of drawings and sketches, as well as a small humorous picture of an incident of Egyptian life (not yet exhibited). In 1856, three of the above-mentioned drawings were in the Royal Academy, being Nos. 873, "View from the Mount of Offence, looking towards the Dead Sea and the Mountains of Moab—Evening;" 885, "Jerusalem by Moonlight, looking over the Site of the Temple to the Mount of Olives;" and, 1,002, "The Sphinx, Gizeh, looking towards the Pyramids of Sakhara." The last was remarkable for intense brilliancy and variety of colour; the second for poetic truth of effect; the first for atmosphere and grandness of view. Our subject has become a member of that distinguished body of artists, the Etching Club. His last contribution to the Royal Academy Exhibition was in this current year; a portrait of "Henry Wentworth Monk," an eccentric friend with whom he became acquainted in the East.

From the account we have here given of the early life and works of William Holman Hunt, it

will be seen that he has steadfastly pursued one idea, and wrought upon its execution with all the energy of a powerful intellect. Every thing and subject that has passed through his hands received the whole strength of this potent concentration. The result is before the world in the great picture, which we do not hesitate, and are no partial or single witness thereto, to pronounce not only the most elaborate and perfect example of English art that has yet appeared, but one so peculiarly national;—because, as we said before, “it is based upon the national idea of thorough examination and study, going before an undeviating and unflinching execution of principles thence arrived at,”—that there can be no doubt but it will have such influence on art in this country as to give an impetus to its course, to result, we hope, in still grander successes and glories. For the first time, in high art at least, we have in our own pictorial language a great poem, one thoroughly original, and so based upon the national soul that it cannot fail to mark an era in the art of all time. Mr. Hunt has shown an example of English Art; it is for others to do likewise. The enormous popularity of the picture, which, although exhibited through one whole season of London life, shows no diminution, but brings fresh crowds daily to see it, testifies how genuine

and heartfelt *work* and noble thought is understood and appreciated by the public amongst us. For eight months the rooms have been constantly filled with new crowds and new admirers.

In conclusion, we have only to deprecate any assumption that the object of this pamphlet has been merely the lauding of a living man; to no one would such an act be more offensive than to the painter himself. We have really purposed to give an explanation of his principles of Art (while calling attention to the efforts of the modern English school) and to urge their importance, without intending to detract from the merit of others. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that, while confined to our special subject, we have not been so through ignorance that there are other painters of great reputation most assiduously devoted to carry out similar convictions, who, while pursuing them in special directions, still remain bound by sympathy in Art and warmest friendship to one another. The diverse roads by which these men have sought a common goal do but prove the inherent vitality and value of their common principles. The influence which has been exercised by these works upon modern English Art in general, is too obvious to need pointing out. We doubt if, in the history of Art,

principles so uncompromising and of need at first so unpopular, especially when the youth of their propounders is considered, have ever produced such an effect upon the labours of their contemporaries as those of the "Pre-Raphaelite Brethren" have done.

December, 1860.

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 so unpopular, especially when the youth of their
 propounders is considered, have ever produced
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 poets as those of the "Pars Radialis Bactrian"
 have done. It is to be regretted that the
 author has not given a full and complete
 account of the origin of the work, and the
 reasons which induced him to undertake it.
 It is to be hoped that the author will
 give us a full and complete account of the
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APPENDIX.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"THE ATHENÆUM," *April 21st, 1860.*

AFTER eighteen months spent at Jerusalem, and nearly five years of study, Mr. Hunt places this work before the public, in the German Gallery, and we are called upon to consider if it be worthy of the immense amount of time and labour employed upon it. No one will deny that the result is, in all respects, a grand one, and almost unequalled, in our time, for power of design or splendour of execution, such, indeed, as the interest of the subject and the nature of the artist's genius would lead us to expect.

Mr. Holman Hunt is essentially an English painter, and has taken a thoroughly national idea of his work, by representing both Christ and the Virgin from a point of view which has seldom been attempted before; in showing the former, not as the ideal youth, whose countenance is a mere exponent of the painter's thoughts respecting psychical or physical beauty; but, while giving full heed to these qualities, expressing the English idea of duty to be performed, by the very action of the principal figure in his work.

This view of the subject is worthy of our consideration, for it comes nearer to humanity than the impassive or idealess representations of the theme. Christ is thus made part of us, and the purpose of High Art better answered by thus enlisting our human sympathies, and showing the Redeemer in the perfection of his earthly robe, than by ignoring the very conditions under which he presented himself to men. Thoroughly English and Protestant is the thought of showing the Virgin as the *mother*, and not as the spiritualized ideality of the early painters, or in the sensuously beautiful type of those who succeeded them. This has been the artist's conception of the characters, and herein lies the gist of his method of treating the subject, as well in the design as the execution of every part of the picture. For thus honouring the human manifestation of the Divinity, it followed that devoted attention must be paid to everything surrounding it; and, therefore, he has elaborated every detail to the utmost; and, while preserving the whole in due subordination, part to part, has yet enabled us to inspect the texture of every robe, and see the reflexions of the light in every jewel.

The spectator is surprised to observe that the dresses and accessories of this picture are by no means those ordinarily found in Scriptural subjects.

terful as it is novel and beautiful. The extreme care that has been given to every detail seems no more than has been warranted by the artist's idea and the requirements of the subject. Of course, in examination of such a work as this, it would be very possible to find faults and errors. No man is infallible or omnipotent; but, with the reservation of a few minor points, some of which are but matters of taste, and idiosyncratic in themselves, we must felicitate Mr. Hunt upon his success, which is honourable to him on account of the novelty of his system of Art. He has proved the soundness of this by his own achievement, and, attempting a great thing, has done it grandly.

“MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE,” *May*, 1860.

All persons conversant with Art matters of late, have been aware that this distinguished artist has for five or six years past been engaged upon a work entitled, the “Finding of Christ in the Temple,” in executing which he had spared neither time, labour, study, nor expense, in order to put before the world a picture produced exactly in his own ideal,—such a one, indeed, as should display those convictions respecting Art which he is known to have made the rule of his life, and has followed out, notwithstanding difficulties and real dangers, such as would have utterly defeated most men, or at least modified an ordinary strength of purpose. Conceiving an idea of the great advantages that would result from painting any picture in the very locality where the incident chosen happened, and choosing a Scriptural theme such as this, Mr. Hunt was fortunate in the circumstantial immutability of character and costume which has prevailed to a great extent in the East, from the time of the Saviour until now. In the East, traditions linger for ages, such as in this more mutable West would have vanished long ago. By the light of this irregular history, many customs have been elucidated, the comprehension of which is highly essential to the faithful and observant study of a subject relating to the life of Christ. That a picture to be duly honoured in execution should be painted on its own ground, so to speak, being the leading conviction of the artist's mind, there remained nothing for him but to proceed to Jerusalem, when he decided upon this subject. Accordingly, this was done; and during a stay of more than eighteen months, Mr. Hunt's whole attention was devoted to the study of the material he required, to the getting-together of accessorial matter, and actual execution of a considerable part of this picture. The greater portion of four succeeding years has been given to its completion, and the result is now before the world.

It will be right to premise that Mr. Hunt's opinions in Art, which opinions were convictions, and, what is far more, convictions put into action, led him to journey to Jerusalem, not only to study the best existing examples of the physical aspect of the race he had to paint, but to obtain such material, in the way of costume, as could only be obtained there. To do this fully, he acquired, before departing, a sound knowledge of the very history he had to illustrate. Thus prepared, his journey was so far profitable, that, we believe, there is not one single incident in the action of the picture, or single point of costume shown—from the very

colour of the marble pavement of the Temple, the jewellery worn, or instruments carried by the personages represented—for which he has not actual or analogical authority. How deep this labour has gone, will be best conceived when we say, that the long-lost architecture of the second Temple has been brought to a new life in his work. Based upon the authorities existing, the whole of the architecture shown in the picture may be styled the artist's invention, not in any way a wild flight of imagination, but the result of thoughtful study, and the building-up of part by part, founded upon the only true principle of beauty in such designs—that is, constructive fitness. The whole edifice is gilded or overlaid with plates of gold; the most minute ornaments are profoundly studied, extremely diversified, yet all in keeping with the characteristics of Eastern architecture, that derived its archetypes from an Oriental vegetation, and decoratively employed the forms of the palm, the vine, and pomegranate. But let it not be considered that these mere archaeological matters have absorbed the artist beyond their due; so far from this is the case, that the design itself is not without a modern instance of applicability to the life of every man; and the "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" is as much an exhortation to us as it was a reply to the parents of Christ.

The unflinching devotion shown by the painter, and the inherent nobility of his principles of art, have, then, this great merit in them, that the result stands before us almost with the solemnity of a fact. It seems life that has been lived, and a potent teaching for us all, not only to show the way in which our labours should be performed,—by that by which Mr. Hunt has executed his,—but, by the vividness and vitality of his representation, the first step of Christ's mission produces a fresh, and, it may be, deeper impression upon the mind, than that which most men have to recall the memories of their youth to enter on. This he holds, and we also, to be the true result of Art. Let us consider to what purpose he has applied these principles, and how the end of this long labour can be said to fulfil them.

The distinguishing executive character of the picture that strikes the eye at first, is luminous depth and intensity of colour, the perfect truth of *chiaroscuro* that gives relief and roundness to every part—to which its solidity of handling aids potentially—the whole truthful effect being enhanced, when, upon examination, we discern the minute and elaborate finish that has been given to the most trifling details. The whole has the roundness and substantiality of nature, utterly unmarred by that want of balance in parts observable in the productions of the less accomplished painters of the Pre-Raphaelite school, whose shortcomings in this respect have, notwithstanding the earnestness and energy displayed by many among them, rendered the title "Pre-Raphaelite" almost opprobrious. Let us now turn to the picture itself.

The Temple.—A brief vista of gilded columns, closed at the end by a latticework screen of bronze, open to the external air. The immediate locality, an outer chamber of the building, one valve of the entrance door put wide back, showing without the courtyard, with masons at work selecting a stone, may be the "stone of the corner;" over the wall the roofs of the city, and far off the hill country. Within, and seated upon a low *devân*, scarcely raised from the floor, are the elders of the Temple, seven in number, arranged in a semicircle, one horn of which approaches the front of the picture. Behind them stand four musicians, whose grouping repeats the generally semicircular disposition of the figures. A flight of

doves gambol in the air without ; several have entered the building, and fly over the heads of the family of Christ, who stand by the doorway facing the priests and elders. Mary, who has just discovered her Son, tenderly embraces, and with trembling lips presses her mouth towards his face. Lovely is the eager yearning of her eyes, the lids dropped, the irides dilated and glittering with tearful dew that has gathered itself into a drop to run down her cheek. Her skin is fair and young, her features moulded appropriately on the pure Jewish type in its finest and tenderest character. The bold fine nose ; the broad, low, straight forehead ; straight eyebrows—a royal feature, wide-lidded eyes, reddish with anxiety ; the pure fine-lined cheek, a little hollowed, but a very little, and rounded, clear-cut chin, make a countenance as noble as it is beautiful. But far beyond the mere nobility of structural perfectness, the expression is the tenderest of the utmost outpouring of a heart that has yearned, and travailed, and hungered long. That long, long three days of searching has marked her cheek and sunk her eyes, and although the red blood of joy runs now to its surface, this does but show how pale it was before. Could I but tell you in my poor words how her mouth tells all this, how it quivers with a hungry love, arches itself a little over the teeth, its angles just retracted, ridging a faint line, that is too intense for a smile, upon the fair, sweet maternal cheek ! Forward her head is thrust, the whole soul at the lips urgent to kiss. There is a spasm in the throat, and the nostrils breathe sharply ; but all the joyful agony of the woman—the intensity of the maternal *storgé*—seeks at the lips the cheek of her Son. For this the eyes sheathe themselves with levelled lids ; for this the body advances beyond the hasty feet. It is but to draw him nearer, that one eager hand clasps his removed shoulder, and the other eager hand raises that which the Son has put upon its wrist, pressing it against his mother's bosom.

The feet of all these are bared. Joseph stands looking down on both ; Mary's shoes, held by the latchet, are slung over Joseph's shoulder by one hand ; his other hand has been upon the arm of Jesus, until the eager, trembling fingers of the mother slid beneath, displacing it in her passionate haste. Christ has been standing before the elders when his parents entered, and then turned towards the front, so that we see his face full. It is an oval, broadened at the top by a noble, wide, high-arched forehead, surmounting abstracted and far-off seeing eyes that round the eyelids open, wistfully and thoughtfully presaging, yet radiant with purpose, though mournful and earnest. They express the thought of his reply : " Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business ! " He is heedful of his mission—half-abstracted from the embrace. The action of his right hand, drawing tighter the broad leathern girdle of his loins, and the almost passive way in which his fingers rest upon the wrist of Mary, express this, while the firmly-planted feet, one advanced, although his body sways to his mother's breast, indicate one roused to his labour, and ready to enter upon the journey of life. The beauty of the head of Christ takes the eye at once, not only through the totally original physical type the artist has adopted, but by the union of healthy *physique* with intellectual nobleness, fitting the body for the endurance of suffering. There is a marked difference between Hunt's idea of the corporeal appearance of our Lord and that usually chosen by the painters, who have shown him as a delicate valetudinary ; for such is the character imparted by their allowing a certain feminine quality to overweigh the robustness required for the simple performance of his labours. He is here a noble, beautiful boy of about twelve, broad-chested, wide-shouldered, active-limbed, and strong to bear

and do. The head sustains this character, the forehead being as we have before said, the eyes blue, clear, yet tender, with all their strength of purpose that does but recognize sorrow. The mouth, pure, sweet, small, yet pulpy and full, is compassionate and sympathizing. The nostrils are full, without breadth. The complexion fair, yet rich, and charged with healthy blood. If we give attention to the eyes, their beauty and nobility become distinct: the broad lids are lifted, so that the gaze is open and upon vacancy. From the forehead the hair springs like a flame gathered about the countenance, parted at the centre, and laid back to either side; the sunlight from without is caught amongst its tips, and breaks in a golden haze like a glory. So placed, this is ever the case with hair of that character. There remains for us to point out one exquisite subtlety of expression in this head: it is this, the near warmth of the Virgin's face causes the side of Christ's countenance to flush a little, and one eyelid to droop and quiver, almost imperceptibly, but still plainly enough to be read.

Let us point out that this is no tender, smiling Virgin, like that of many of the old masters, blandly regarding a pretty infant—a theme of mere beauty—but a tearful, trembling, eager, earnest mother, finding the lost Lamb and the devoted Son. Rightly has Mr. Hunt nationalized her features to the Jewish type. Nor is Christ like the emaciated student usually chosen for a model. Here the intensity of the artist's thought appears. He has been penetrated with the idea of service, use, and duty; no making of a pretty picture has been his aim, but rather, in showing us how the noblest and most beautiful submitted to duty, he would teach us our own. This is Christ of the preaching, Christ of the crown of thorns, Christ of the cross, Christ of the resurrection and the life eternal, the soldier and the Son of God. Beautiful is the Son of the King: he is dressed in the colours of royalty of the house of Judah; even his poor robe is a princely garment of stripes of pale crimson and blue—the ordained fringe is about its lower hem. The broad leathern belt that goes about his loins is of blood red, and marked with a cross in front,—an ornament in common use in the East from time immemorial, being the symbol of life even with the ancient Egyptians; it is placed appropriately upon the girdle of Christ. These three form the principal group placed towards the left of the picture. Facing them are the Rabbis and elders, to whom we now turn.

These are arranged in a sort of semicircle, as was said above, one of its horns retreating into the picture. The men are of various ages and characters; all the principal heads were painted at Jerusalem, from Jews whose countenances suggested to the artist the character he wished to represent. The eldest of the Rabbis sits in front, white-bearded, blind, and decrepit; with his lean and feeble hands he holds the rolls of the Pentateuch against his shoulder; the silver ends of the staves on which this is rolled, with their rattling pendants and chains, rise beside his head; the crimson velvet case is embroidered with golden vine-wreaths and the mystic figure of the Tetragrammaton; over this case is an extra covering or mantle of light pink, striped with blue, intended to protect the embroidery. As all appurtenances of this holy roll of the Law were held sacred and beneficent, there is placed a pretty little child at the feet of the Rabbi, armed with a whisk to brush off the flies—that is, Beelzebub, from the cover of holy rolls. Behind stands an older boy, furtively invoking a blessing on himself by kissing the mantle of silk. Blind and half imbecile is the oldest Rabbi; but he who sits next to him, a mild old man, with a gentle face of faith, holds a phylactery in his hand. Let us here

explain, that a phylactery is not at all one of those placards which it was the custom of the old painters to put over the foreheads of the Pharisees, &c., inscribed with huge characters, but really a small square wooden box, bound round the head by a leathern belt, and containing the written promises of the old dispensation. Such is the phylactery the second Rabbi holds in one hand, while he presses the other upon the wrist of his neighbour, and seems to be asserting that, whatever might be the nature of the reasonings of Christ, they at least had these promises that were written within the phylactery upon which they might both rely.

Next comes another, in the prime of life, who, having entered eagerly into the dispute with the Saviour, unrolls the Book of the Prophecies of Daniel, whereby to refute the argument. He is interested, disputatious, and sceptical; leans forward to speak passionately, half impatient of the interruption caused by the entrance of Joseph and Mary, to which the attention of several of the other Rabbis is given. His feet are drawn up close beneath him upon the *dewán*, a characteristic action of such a temperament when excited: those of the elder Rabbis are placed at ease upon the floor, but with varying and appropriate attitudes. There is a hard look upon this man's face,—set passion in his mouth, resolute anger in his eye, and a firm, sharp gripe of the hands upon the roll he holds; this is finely in keeping. Over his shoulder, from the second row, leans a musician, one of the house of Levi, speaking to him, and, with pointed finger, making a comment on the words of Christ, at whom he is looking. The fourth Rabbi, who is also concerned in this dialogue, wears a phylactery on his forehead. We presume Mr. Hunt intended by this to indicate a supererogation of piety in this individual, the phylactery, in strict propriety, being only worn at time of prayer. He recounts the arguments, and, holding a reed-pen in one hand, presses its point against a finger of the other, as one does who is anxious to secure the premises before he advances further. The overweening character of this man is thus indicated; let the observer note how the artist makes the action of each person to be with an entire consent of the attitude of his whole body, by this man's assumption of repose and dignity, shown in his leaning back on the *dewán*. The fifth Rabbi, an old, mild-visaged man, whose long white beard, divided in two parts, falls nearly to his girdle, sits more erect; his feet, drawn up beneath him, are planted flatly before. He holds a shallow glass vessel of wine in his hand that has been poured out by an attendant behind. He looks at the reunion of the Holy Family, and suspends his drinking to observe them. A sixth elder leans forward to look also, placing his hand upon the back of the *dewán*. The seventh, and last, is as distinct in character and action as all the rest. Like the fifth, he has an ink-horn in his girdle; he is corpulent, self-satisfied, and sensuously good-natured; he raises his hand from his knee to express an interest in the transaction before him; he sits coss-legged, and quite at ease, nevertheless. This individual completes the semicircle of the Rabbis, and brings us again to the figure of Christ.

Returning now to the other side of the picture:—Immediately above the disputatious Rabbi, and leaning against one of the gilded columns, is a youth holding a sistrum in his hand—one of the rings strung upon its wires about to drop from his fingers. He is handsome, supercilious-looking, and fair-complexioned. Leaning upon his shoulder is another youth, also a musician, bearing a four-stringed harp; the face of the last is quite in contrast to that of his companion, having an ingenuous sweetness and gentleness of character about it that is almost fascinating. Eagerly thrusting

his face against the column, and peering over the head of the last, is a third youth, whose large, well-open eyes, broad features, and inquisitive look, support his active anxiety to see what is going forward admirably.

In the extreme distance of the vista of columns, a money-changer is seen weighing gold in a balance. A father has brought his firstborn to the Temple, accompanied by his wife, who bears the child in her arms; the husband has across his shoulder the lamb of sacrifice, while a seller of lambs, from whom this has just been purchased, counts the price in the palm of one hand, and with the other presses back an anxious ewe that would follow her offspring. In another part, a boy is seen with a long scarf, driving out the fugitive doves that have entered the Temple. At the door, a lame and blind beggar is chanting a prayer for alms.

Thus far we have spoken of the incidents of the design, the character and expressions of the personages, and general appearance of this marvellous picture. We have endeavoured also to indicate what have been the artist's purposes and motives, and the difficulties of its execution. It remains now to speak of the manner in which he has carried this out, especially in regard to the noble qualities of colour and drawing. For the last, let it suffice that the minutest detail has been wrought out; the very hands of the men are a perfect accompaniment to their eyes and physical aspect; those of the oldest Rabbi are pallid, full-veined, and slow pulses seem to circulate in them. Mary's are elegantly slender—a little sunken, but very beautiful. Each fold in every garment is "accounted for," and duly studied from nature. The Virgin's dress is grey, dust-stained with travel. She has an under-garment of white, and a girdle, whose red fringes show at the open side, tossed up with the eagerness of her actions. An elegant head-dress of white, striped with red, falls back on her shoulders. Joseph's body-coat is like that of Christ—crimson and purple, in very narrow stripes; over this is a brown and white burnoose, such as the Arabs wear to this day. The provision for a journey—a row of figs—is strung to his girdle. The Rabbis have all the over-garment proper to Pharisees of pure white, except that worn by the chief, which is barred with broad and narrow bands of black upon the sleeves; a dress styled the "*Tillith*," worn only when bearing the *Torah*, or Rolls of the Law. The most removed has his under-garment amber-coloured, striped with blue, and a deep-blue robe beneath all. He that is about to drink wears an exquisite turquoise green-blue vest of sheeny texture, that gathers brightness in the shade; this is girt to him by a girdle of white and red. The young musicians wear green garments, and turbans of rich crimson, and purple and green, harmoniously blended so as to create exquisite colour. The roof of the Temple is gilt, like the columns, elaborately decorated with alternate pines, vine-branches, and pomegranates, and lighted from without by small openings, filled with stained glass. The door of the Temple, visible over Joseph's head, bears plates of hammered gold riveted upon it: upon these is discernible a great circle, from whose centre radiates an ornament of papyrus-plant, the intersections filled with the unopened buds of the same: *guttae* of gold are drawn on the flat surface of the door. The pavement of the Temple is of a deep-tinted marble, in broad veins of a palish blood-colour and white.

It is now time to announce our conviction, that Mr. Holman Hunt, who has ever been the steadfast centre of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, has in this noble work successfully laid down his idea of art; that by so doing he has put a crown on to his previous labours; and that the result is likely to be a great extension of those principles—now, perhaps, for the first time fairly elucidated—to which is mainly due the remarkable and inestimable advance that has of late years taken place in English Art.

FREDERIC G. STEPHENS.

OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS :

HOLMAN HUNT'S PICTURE OF "CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX."

O Christ-child, Everlasting, Holy One,
 Sufferer of all the sorrow of this world,
 Redeemer of the sin of all this world,
 Who by Thy death brought'st life into this world—
 O Christ, hear us !

This, this is *Thou*. No idle painter's dream
 Of aureoled, imaginary Christ,
 Laden with attributes that make not God ;
 But Jesus, son of Mary ; lowly, wise,
 Obedient, subject unto parents, mild,
 Meek—as the meek that shall inherit earth,
 Pure—as the pure in heart that shall see God.

O infinitely human, yet divine !
 Half clinging, child-like, to the mother found,
 Yet half-repelling—as the soft eyes say,
 "How is it that ye sought me ? Wist ye not
 That I must be about my Father's business ?"
 As in the Temple's splendours mystical,
 Earth's wisdom hearkening to the all-wise One,
 Earth's closest love clasping the all-loving One,
 He sees far off the vision of the cross,
 The Christ-like glory and the Christ-like doom.

Messiah ! Elder Brother, Priest, and King,
 The Son of God, and yet the woman's seed ;
 Enterer within the veil ; Victor of death,
 And made to us first fruits of them that sleep ;
 Saviour and Intercessor, Judge and Lord,—
 All that we know of Thee, or knowing not
 Love only, waiting till the perfect time
 When we shall know even as we are known,—
 O Thou Child Jesus, Thou dost seem to say,
 By the soft silence of these heavenly eyes
 (That rose out of the depths of nothingness
 Upon this limner's reverent soul and hand),
 We too should be about our Father's business,—
 O Christ, hear us !

Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, our Lord !
 The cross Thou borest still is hard to bear ;
 And awful, even to humblest follower,
 The little that Thou givest each to do

Of this Thy Father's business ; whether it be
 Temptation by the devil of the flesh,
 Or long-linked years of lingering toil obscure,
 Uncomforted, save by the solemn rests
 On mountain-tops of solitary prayer ;
 Oft ending in the supreme sacrifice,
 The putting off all garments of delight,
 And taking sorrow's kingly crown of thorn,
 In crucifixion of all self to Thee,
 Who offeredst up Thyself for all the world.
 O Christ, hear us !

Our Father's business :—unto us, as Thee,
 The whole which this earth-life, this hand-breadth span
 Out of our everlasting life that lies
 Hidden with Thee in God, can ask or need.
 Outweighing all that heap of petty woes—
 To us a measure huge—which angels blow
 Out of the balance of our total lot,
 As zephyrs blow the wingèd dust away.

O Thou who wert the Child of Nazareth,
 Make us see only this, and only Thee,
 Who camest but to do Thy Father's will,
 And didst delight to do it. Take Thou, then,
 Our bitterness of loss,—aspirings vain,
 And anguishes of unfulfilled desire,
 Our joys imperfect, our sublimed despairs,
 Our hopes, our dreams, our wills, our loves, our all,
 And cast them into the great crucible
 In which the whole earth, slowly purified,
 Runs molten, and shall run—the Will of God
 O Christ, hear us !

“FRASER'S MAGAZINE,” *May*, 1860.

Five years' thought and observation concentrated on one canvas by a capable man, will hardly have failed to produce a work very little adapted to rapid eyes and off-hand criticism. Something, if possible, of the nobler mind, some energy of the higher judgment, some stress of thought, in fact, to grasp the thoughts presented, must come with the spectator, if such a picture as Mr. Holman Hunt's "Christ in the Temple" is—let alone to be seen with understanding and pleasure—to be seen in any true sense at all. And even to an audience fit to learn its lesson, the primary impression will probably be that of strangeness. Let the world ever so loudly announce its desire, love, and recognition of Genius, yet every original work, by the very fact of its originality, is sure to be first seen with a surprised displeasure. There is nothing wonderful in such a result. We have been cast in our mould, and the new thing will not fit it. It shocks perhaps our most determined laws of taste, our finest prejudices, our best bosom

associations. It wishes, in a word, to make us think And when, added to this most painful of all requirements, the conventionalities of most noble art in earlier days are boldly set aside, it may be feared that much spectators will rather hold Mr. Hunt's work a feat of skill for a season's exhibition, than the treasure for ever it is. But the days to come will best authenticate its real value.

How far the artist has dared here in original treatment may be shown by a brief notice of some earlier pictures. The subject, ill-named often the "Dispute" (for the Discussion) in the Temple, has not been a favourite of art. We may probably assume that its real significance was unfelt, and that its want of symbolical or miraculous circumstance was felt to be unattractive in the Middle Ages. I do not think it was touched by Raphael or Titian; it is absent alike from the frescoes of the Vatican, and from Tintoret's great cycle of scripture illustration, now mouldering on the deserted walls of the Scuola di San Rocco. Giotto, in the little series of the Florentine Accademia, has framed or followed the type usually presented. A group of old men, who all exhibit more or less advanced conviction and respect, are listening to a boy enthroned above them within a niche; an arrangement suggested perhaps by the disposition of the seats for bishop and clergy which closes the apse in some early churches. One hearer points to the child, as if asking the Virgin, who with quiet unmoved looks enters the circle, Is this indeed your son? The admirable straightforwardness of Giotto has not failed him, and (the date considered) every feature of the work is perfect: he could put in nothing more; yet the whole is unimpressive. Why? Let us take two more attempts. Ghiberti's on the gate of the Florentine Baptistery is arranged like Giotto's, but adds little, except that in attitude and expression it is at once more dramatic and more conventional. Neither goes beyond the presentment of awakened or submissive conviction. Perhaps a little more truth of feeling, some sense of realization, was aimed at by Leonardo da Vinci (if the picture be rightly named in artist and subject) in the well-known work at the National Gallery. Yet the whole is again unsatisfactory, and shows no definite advance in idea. The stamp of eager inquiry or awe-struck conscience is scarcely set on these clever but unimpassioned heads, much less is any dramatic character attempted; whilst the expression and bearing of Christ, though far beyond Giotto's work, would better suit the preacher than the child, and are thus inferior to the earlier rendering in the essential point of veracity.

Now, call to mind not only the few simple words in which St. Luke tells the story, but the position of this event in Our Lord's life. It is the single moment between the birth and the baptism noticed in the sacred narrative: the one recorded fact which gives individuality to the youth of Christ, and unites the wonderful circumstances of his nativity to the career of the Son of God. In the authentic "Gospel of the Infancy," it stands, we might truly say, as the turning-point from prophecy to fulfilment; the child's first consciousness who he is, the earliest call to his mission, the revelation of himself to himself. To seize this must be the essential point for art. Not in the premature wisdom, not in the attention of the Rabbis, not in the parents' distress, not in the peculiarly *human* feelings of the drama, lies the vital interest;—in the reply, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Here is the heart of the incident: the words we may fancy spoken have really an inferior importance. Looking at the facts of Christ's life and the spirit of his nation, it is impossible that any distinct expression of his own claims or doctrine could have been

heard in the Temple except with cries of alarmed hostility; far less could it have been heard with conscious and discipular deference. Hence the failure of early art: it has not rendered the central interest of the scene, and missing this, has tried to give a false bearing and importance to the minor point selected. It has antedated the Saviour's career, and given to the child an influence not attained by the preacher. Nor indeed is this the only scripture subject of which the real force has been wholly overlooked by the greatest mediæval artists.

It is, in truth, by aid of the deeper judgment and higher insight which so many diverse causes have rendered possible for us towards the story of the Evangelists, that Mr. Hunt has been able to paint this subject for the first time in its essential verity. We think this the most remarkable of modern Scripture paintings; but it is the age in which he lives that has placed the artist at the point of view for a genuine evangelical treatment of scripture. Rendering all the other circumstances of the scene with an accuracy rarely reached in art and rarely aimed at, what he has mainly brought before us is the crisis in Our Saviour's earthly career, the first sense of superhuman nature and illumination, the ecstasy (to take a noble phrase from Sir Thomas Browne) of "ingression into the Divine Shadow." And it will easily be felt why such treatment could not be attempted whilst the symbolical and the miraculous elements, or again the ecclesiastical and theological, were the main aspects contemplated in the life of Christ.

Knowing the limitations under which the art lies, Mr. Hunt has spared no effort to give his subject the most realization. By choice and careful study of Oriental figures, dress, and architecture, the outward circumstances have been reproduced, if not with absolute certainty, yet with what is probably by far the nearest approach to fact attained in any Bible-picture. It is well known that to secure vivid fidelity the painter made a long visit to Syria and Egypt, and we see that besides the acquirement of innumerable minor veracities in costume and landscape, he was fortunate enough to obtain in Jerusalem some noble types of the Oriental Jewish features, which are at once in the whole aspect more ethnologically characteristic, and yet in complexion and other points more European, than the type of Hebrew head to which modern art has accustomed us. There was of course much risk that in this sphere of the work the artist would fall into mere antiquarianism, rest satisfied with splendid surface, or be crushed beneath the pressure of his own gathered ornaments. Many a traveller has visited strange lands only to become more a stranger to their inward spirit; there is a sense in which the Scriptural East may be far better comprehended in England than in Jerusalem. Yet even had Mr. Hunt, like the untraveller painters of earlier date, clothed and surrounded his figures with the scenery and the dresses of his own or of some ideal age, although he would thus have thrown away one most legitimate source of interest, his figures would not less have told their story with the grandest and most varied dramatic vitality. A few of the audience, indeed—the beautiful child bending downwards, the youth gaily smiling behind a trellis of harp-strings with simple pleasure in his own gaiety, the boy below who looks on in childly wonder to see another child the centre of so much attention,—these hardly share in the drama, or more or less break its intensity by a sweet contrasting repose. But in the countenances of the synod seated around we trace not the feelings only which may have been in fact awakened, but those that the Preacher of new truths will at all times be destined to encounter. It is a truth they have

been hearing (we may suppose in the silence of St. Luke's narrative), as strange as it might have been anticipated—the fulfilment of ancient prophecy—unwelcome and new, the more almost because it was so old and so familiar. Thus, in the group nearest on the left, we see two men who, belonging now to the past alone, cannot grasp the novel wisdom of which they are reluctant listeners—one blind and in extreme old age holding the Rolls of the Law which he symbolizes, and hearing as if in a dream what he scarcely knows, with the one thought that from such trouble and terror he will be soon at rest ;—while the second, less decrepit, but unable to reply to those awe-striking words, turns and presses his hand to give him strength and consolation. “The truth will outlast their time : the texts written in the casket or phylactery which he grasps assure him that the law will outlast all time.” We too may have heard such arguments Opposed directly to these representatives of the former world is the vigorous youth who, satisfied apparently that this was He of whom the Prophets spoke, is yet determined, in the noble spirit which sacrifices all for truth, to try to the uttermost the doctrine announced, and with fixed eyes and closed lips anchors himself, as it were, on the countenance and the voice not again, perhaps, to be heard, till in the due season it calls him and finds him ready to leave all and follow Christ. Next are two, the late leaders (we may fancy) in this discussion, the logicians to whom the scene has been only a subtle fence of argument as in some mediæval or Athenian academy, and who still reckon on their fingers the points raised, or omitted, or answered by the youthful disputant. There are others : one who has hardly grasped the meaning of the discussion ; one who looks from behind with a keen malignity ; a third who, alarmed simply for a child so beyond his years in the favour of God and in wisdom, seems to entreat him to desist before an earnestness to the world so distasteful shall bring him the risk of the world's reward :—my list is long, yet it will be seen that I omit several persons in this wealthy drama. Whilst none of the audience can be considered as disciples, the accessories everywhere, in strong silent contrast announce the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets :—the first-fruit wheat-straw by the gateway, the cornerstone the builders are raising below, the purification scene with the lamb and the doves behind, the warning letters on the door :—the Lord whom they sought has suddenly come to his Temple. And one would search far and wide in art to find representations of more majesty and tenderness than those which the artist, rising to the central point of interest with equal force, has given of the Child and the Mother. The sword for the first time has gone through her heart at his mysterious absence, but she has found him now, on what business she knows not, but is surrendered to the one thought, she has found him. By the caress of the left hand and the gentle inclination of the figure towards his Mother, we are made aware that the son answers the appeal of her affection : by the firm self-restraint of the attitude, the glow and flush of the face and lucid depth of the eyes, that his thoughts are with his Father's mission—who should try to look into that future as it may then have presented itself? Through the open door we see the first slopes of Olivet ; we know we are near the earthly scene of the Death. I leave such considerations in silence, as is best : indeed Art, when so lofty and employed thus, suggests many thoughts too serious to be here more than suggested—

Signor mio Gesù Cristo, Iddio verace,
Or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra ?

—At least, I think none of the great masters of inspired expression—Angelico or Leonardo or Michelangelo—have surpassed our English artist in the most arduous aim which art can set herself.

If the truth of thought which this work displays had not been united with correspondent excellence in the rendering, we should have felt the regret which so many modern pictures raise, that the painter had not chosen some other means than colour to set forth his story. It would have fallen into the large class of which Germany and France supply frequent examples, much excellent logic and philosophy unfortunately laid on canvas. But Mr. Hunt's picture is not less remarkable in art than in idea. Space fails, or it would be curious to compare it as technical work with the earlier representations; to point out how far this passes Giotto in absolute truth to fact, Ghiberti in grace of line and arrangement, Leonardo in subtlety and force of human character—the mastery over colour raised to its highest key, and disposed in tropical variety and wealth of combination—the tremulous accuracy of drawing—the mysterious skill and governed gradation of the finish. There is an even balance of power which seems to unite in one work the excellences which have singly given glory to many great pictures. Or again, looking at the conception of the scene in its auxiliaries of dress, architecture, and ornament, what a difference is here, in the amount of toil and observation laid on the men of our own time, compared with the narrow requirements under which the early painters worked! They were blameless in the simplicity of their representation if they took what dresses they chose, and in place of the gorgeous temple gave a vague hint of Gothic or Romanesque building, for to conceive of the scene as it really stood was in those ages simply impossible. Like the deficiency in historical criticism which pervades mediæval chroniclers, their work was careless on these matters, not from contempt of anachronism, but because when they lived the bare idea of anachronism was not in being. For us who can study the East, and know how unbroken a tradition the arts of life and manners have there persisted, to return to that earlier phase of feeling would be really anachronistic. Their utmost realization would not be such to us. What in truth we have is the power (at least) to make our pictures as much beyond the old Italian in truth of detail, as from other causes, in depth of conception. That this procedure brings with a higher aim a higher difficulty, that the intensity of the painter's power must be proportioned to the arduousness of his attempt, is also manifest. It should therefore be at once a pleasure and a noble pride to Englishmen, that the first conspicuous step in this new sacred art has been taken by one of us, that an artist capable of the intellectual mastery required for a great Scripture subject should have been able to realize it also with a fidelity not less perfect than before unthought of.

How great a sum of the best manly virtues is embodied as it were in such a work as this! How much the artist has painted beside his picture! What wakeful diligence, what intelligent observation is here! What deep religious feeling, and better yet, love of truth how devout and admirable! It seems to me but a petty criticism which would complain that Mr. Hunt has given too much to one work, has lavished over-thought and over-care on a few feet of surface. Such a judgment is, in fact, only that the picture is too good for the critic. Perhaps it might be better for art, better for mankind in every sphere of action, if every one gave his whole best to all he set his hands to; but if an aim so high be indeed too severe and intense for human nature, it is one which any great soul will assuredly strive after once at least in his career. There must

be some one thing, some *Parthenon*, or *Ædipus at Colonus*, or *Speech on the Crown*, some *Jerusalem Taken*, or *Paradise Lost*, or *Cenacola*, or *Messiah*, or *Freischutz*, in which the man shall show himself in his farthest force and plenitude, touching it and retouching perhaps for many years, putting here his brightest, truest, and longest treasured thoughts, and stamping the work as his bequest for ever to his fellow-creatures. Many a gifted man has died too soon for us and for himself, and, like Thucydides, or Virgil, or Shelley, or that one but the other day whose name will hold with these a place of "high collateral glory," has left his master-piece unwritten or uncompleted, and the world to wonder what never-conquered height of genius the accomplished poem, or picture, or history, might have attained. One would not say of a man yet young, that in this picture Mr. Hunt has given the whole measure of his strength; but let us be glad that we have here so much thought and forcible characterization, and loving fidelity and splendid painting, that he has concentrated himself through several years on a single effort, and by his own work carried further what has been hitherto the landmark of English art, and that into regions trodden how rarely!—and only by the really great artists of their generation. He has shown in truth (to point out once more the highest lesson of the work), not that religious art is exhausted, but rather that it has never yet reached its full and fair perfection; not that it is now beyond our reach, but now for the first time rather by the course of man's thought and knowledge rendered possible, and this with a force and feeling worthy of an aim so exalted. One such picture, like Van Eyck's "Adoration Altarpiece in Ghent," would properly make the city possessing it a centre of pilgrimage for those to whom truth and poetry, and the high achievements of man, have any interest. It is true that this, and every such typical effort of the human mind as I have just alluded to, even the highest and most perfect utterance of the whole man, suggests another lesson also—that the "thus far, and no farther," is stamped on what at first sight, or to unjudging believers, may seem beyond all bettering. Yet, I think it will be found, — without pretending to balance man against man, the great artist of the last two centuries here and abroad, yet after weighing carefully what has been done throughout Europe,—that Europe has produced no one work of equal force and compass since the great soul of Velasquez was fretted to death by the frivolities of a court-festival, or Rubens laid in the chancel of S. Jacques beneath the glory and the glow of his own masterpiece.

"ONCE A WEEK," July 14th, 1860.

The picture commenced by Mr. Hunt at Jerusalem, in 1854, is finished at last. One picture, and that not very large, is the fruit of more than five years of a painter's labour. This is worth thinking about, not as affording curious data for calculating the number of pictures a man might produce at such a consumption of time, during the comparatively short period wherein he possesses his greatest powers; because, if we desire great pictures, or any other thing which is really great, we must not be over-anxious for speed of production. This labour of five years evidences the possession of those very faculties which are needful for the creation of

the greatest works—patient labour, unwearied devotion, tenacity of purpose, a willingness to forego immediate fame,—these are the means by which the highest creative power receives its fullest development.

For the last year or two, rumours have come from the artist's studio that the picture was all but finished; the lucky few who had seen it were full of satisfaction; but the painter himself was not satisfied,—the idea was still too far above the embodiment; much that seemed very good had to be painted out, and the labour begun anew.

I think that we who are not artists are too apt to under-estimate the artist's labour. We accept the beautiful outline and splendid colours as a sort of holiday-work wrought in perpetual joy of heart. We do not bear in mind that if the work is truly great, it has been executed at the full tension of the artist's powers; that there has been, in all probability, a bitter struggle with doubt and uncertainty before the easel, till the man grew disgusted over his brightest thoughts, and had to leave his painting awhile and seek fresh strength ere he could return to his labour. We know that authors are forced to put down the pen. Recollect the grim way in which "Jane Eyre" was written—long intervals when it was not in the heart to work. When we look on a great painting, let us sympathize with the stern labour which is hidden beneath its loveliness.

The Pre-Raphaelites will point to this picture in absolute vindication of their principles; it was a reproach to them that the force of their accessories destroyed the main interest of their pictures. You must paint *down* your objects of still life was the cry. Not so, they replied; we must repair our error by striving to paint our countenances *up*; if all parts of the picture are *truly* painted, the interest of the human face will give it due dominance in the composition.

It is curious to observe how this adherence to truth of detail has led the Pre-Raphaelites to create a principle in religious painting opposed to previous methods. Great religious painters hitherto have striven to attain their aim through idealization—the countenance was idealized until it had almost lost its human interest—to mark the divineness of the subject the surrounding accessories were generally of a purely conventional character—the heavenly host introduced; by making the picture *unearthly*, it was sought to make it divine. With the Pre-Raphaelites, the reverse; their principle is realization: in showing us as truly as possible *the real*, we are to behold the wonder of the divine.

So on this principle it was necessary for Mr. Hunt to strive for the utmost possible truth. It was necessary to resuscitate an architecture whereof all records beyond certain traditions have passed away—the Temple, of which not one stone remains upon another, had to be reproduced in its *most probable* aspect. According to tradition, one portion of that Temple yet remains—the natural-rock pavement, reddish limestone fading at the edges into slate-colour, over which is now reared the mosque of Omar. This pavement forms the foreground of the picture, and above it is raised, as of old, one of the covered outer courts or cloisters of the Temple—slender golden columns in the form of palm and pomegranate stems conventionalized, supporting a series of low arched roofs which run horizontally with the picture: this roofing is of gilt fretted work, the interstices filled in with ruby, purple, and other coloured glass. So by the law of perspective, as we look up, we behold ridge below ridge of jewel-work resting on the golden columns, and glowing with transmitted light. The background, shutting in the court, is a screen of delicate metal-work, the details standing out against the bright glare of day. There is an opening in the screen

which shows the distant country, clear outline in the noon-day heat, untempered by the slightest mist. To the right of the picture, in the foreground, is a brazen gate opening from a flight of steps which leads down to the court of the Gentile. Now, the architecture of this court follows the fashion of the Greeks,—marble columns and Corinthian capitals, in strong contrast with the distinctive Hebrew character of the holier portions of the Temple. According to a tradition, this court was constructed during our Saviour's childhood; and the association at such a period of Gentile art with the architecture of the exclusive Jew in the great edifice dedicated to the worship of Jehovah, possesses a strange significance. The builders are still at work; the space for the "corner stone" is unfilled. Beyond the wall of this court rises Mount Scopus, cypress trees, and olive gardens; a long range of barren hills in the furthest distance.

After this manner was the glory of the second Temple which Herod the Great had rebuilt with great magnificence to flatter the pride of the Jews, and in the thought of that glory they made their angry retort, "Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

Although this representation of the architecture of the Temple may not be quite historically true, yet, as regards the other portions of the picture, the unchanging character of Eastern life has retained till now the old forms of costume and other common objects as they existed at the period of our Saviour's life on earth. Almost every detail of the present, truly painted, becomes a fact of the past.

But, more wonderful than this, the old customs still continue; the learned Jews still sit together in places of public resort, to talk of doctrine and tradition; the Roll of the Law is as sacred, and as zealously to be kept from profanation, now that the Moslem holds the sacred city, as it was before the Roman had destroyed the Temple of Jehovah.

On its naturalistic principle, the picture aims at showing us one of the ordinary days of religious life in the courts of the Temple. The Doctors are sitting together on a semi-circular bench, and some matter of strange interest animates their discussion. A peasant boy has joined himself to their company, sitting at the feet of one of the youngest of their number,—tradition says Nicodemus; and this boy has been listening to their arguments, and has asked them certain questions, and has astonished them by his understanding and answers. The questions of the boy have sounded strangely in the ears of these learned men. The blind High Priest holds with nervous grasp the sacred Rolls of the Law, as the Rabbi at his side repeats in his dulled ear something that the boy has said. No wonder the old man holds the Rolls of the Law so tightly in his feeble hands, for it may well be that the words which he hears contain the germ of those questions which on another day were to put the chief priests to silence and confusion.

God's words at both periods, but spoken now in the voice and timid manner of childhood, to be spoken again in the lapse of years with the force of Perfect Man.

"Only the strange questions of a precocious child," think these learned Doctors, and the whole occurrence will presently pass from their minds. Not so with Him: the questions which had arisen in long communings on the hill-side at Nazareth are answered now. He has spoken to the men of highest intellect in the land. Their answers to his questions, given with the weight of authority, and the dignity of age, will abide in his mind. The hollowness and falsehood of those answers will grow more and

more apparent with his *increase* in wisdom during those after years that he dwelt in Nazareth subject to his parents.

"Gifted with extraordinary mind, yet only a peasant boy!" think these learned men. Those are his parents—humble folk, who have sought him, and are standing there amazed, as well they may be, at the position in which they have found their Son; and he, seeing his parents enter the court, has broken suddenly from his thoughts, and risen to meet them; but in a moment every feeling is absorbed again in the great idea which is forming in his mind, and though his mother draws him anxiously to her arms, he is lost to all *earthly* consciousness—one hand is passive in her tender grasp, and the other, with purposeless energy, is twitching at the fastening of his girdle. Presently his reply to their expostulation—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

I said we were to see in the *real* the wonder of the Divine.

We behold him in the picture as they beheld him that one day at Jerusalem, clad in an ordinary garment, the son of a poor carpenter; but we know that he is the Son of God. The occurrence, which a few days will efface from their recollection, is sacred to us—merely the wondering eyes of an intelligent child, as they beheld his earnest gaze,—unfathomable depth of divine spirit to us. The sadness of that young face, which would be scarcely perceptible to them, deepens, in our eyes, a foreshadow of that sorrow which was to cling to his life on earth. They thought it was the surprising talent of a child; we know that it was the development of that wisdom which is divine.

With regard to Mr. Hunt's conception of the Holy Family.—As far as I am aware, the Virgin and Joseph have been generally painted as conscious of the real nature of their child,—that they did not comprehend it is certain. "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them."

There is the mother's tender love in the Virgin's countenance, troubled with amazement—amazement, too, and deep feeling, in the father's countenance: but there is the absence of that responsive sympathy which arises from comprehension and appreciation. He stands isolated even in his mother's arms. Alone, as regards *human* sympathy, in this great era of his childhood, though in the midst of the busy life of the Temple, as he was so often to stand alone, without the solace of human sympathy and love, in his after life.

When we turn from the group of the Holy Family, a unity of purpose binds together the separate details of the picture, and insensibly draws our thoughts back again to Him. The consecration of the firstborn; the lamb without blemish borne away for sacrifice; the table of the money-changer; the seller of doves; the blind cripple at the gate; the superstitious reverence for the Books of the Law, shown by a child who is reverently kissing the outer covering; the phylacteries on the brow; the musicians who have been assisting in the ceremonial of the Temple, and are gazing curiously on the scene, little witting that the Boy before them is the descendant of the Royal Psalmist. So it comes to pass that this truthful rendering of detail strikes the chords of those feelings which vibrate in our heart with every incident of his sacred career. A grand prelude to the after ministry of Christ—conceived in a fine spirit—as the great musician places the theme of his leading ideas in the overture, which ideas are to be wrought to their fullness in the after portions of his work.

It has not been my object to consider the picture technically; that question has been already very fully discussed in other critiques. Everybody

must acknowledge the marvellous finish of the execution—utmost delicacy combined with power of effect; the harmony and richness of the colouring; the brightness, true to Eastern climes, though dazzling to Western eyes; the wonderful painting of the countenances. There is no danger that the technical merit of the picture will be overlooked; but the high position that it holds stands on other grounds than manipulative skill. We must bear this in mind, that the picture, to be fairly judged, must be judged by the principle of realization—not hastily condemned because it does not follow the commonly-adopted method of idealization. Looking at it solely from the ideal point of view, the meaning and purpose of the picture would be utterly misunderstood. And, after all, with regard to this question of idealization, it is evident, in a system of treatment which is based upon the principle of embodying the greatest possible amount of truth, that in the highest parts of this picture the very power of realizing necessitates the fullest powers of idealizing; and so, in painting the head of Christ, the terms realize and idealize become almost synonymous. In his earnest desire to represent our Saviour with the greatest possible truthfulness, Mr. Hunt has attained by his method a result which, in holiness of feeling and depth of tenderness, rivals the efforts of the greatest masters of religious art.

I will urge this in conclusion. We may appreciate either principle of religious painting, without depreciating the other. We may admire the examples of both methods. It is especially an error in art-criticism to become a vehement partisan. There is an appropriateness and a value in both these principles, and we miserably narrow the kingdom of Art if we condemn Raphael because he was not a realist, or Holman Hunt because he is not an idealist.

“THE CRITIC,” *May 5th, 1860.*

A picture which has been in hand six years, and has occupied three or four of hard thinking and hard painting, might well make the most off-hand critic pause before delivering judgment. And there is as much in the work itself to give him pause as in the well-known circumstances of its production. Moderate in dimensions, it is nowise moderate in its demands on the spectator's attention and thinking power. Running in none of the old grooves, helped or impeded by none of the old familiar conventions of historic or religious art, Mr Hunt's conception, so far as it expresses itself by means of convention at all, as every work of art must do, is in a new convention of its own.

If, fifteen years ago, it had been suggested that on a journey to Jerusalem, and resultant correct grasp of oriental externals there hung a chance of attaining a wholly fresh and original realization of themes at once sacred and stale, it would have struck us as an unpromising speculation. Wilkie had made the journey with some such motives and hopes; but, had life been spared him, what in this field was to have been rationally looked for from his hand? A brilliant rhetorical exhibition of the mere surface of Oriental life; old conventions under a picturesque, novel aspect. Much depends on the spirit in which such a journey is undertaken; whether the novelties furnished by it be themselves made the aim, or used as a help to other deeper purposes.

What has been Mr. Hunt's plan of action? What the secret of his rare and startling success? Apart from high artistic power in the mere language of his art, such as in a modified degree is possessed by many a contemporary, it appears to us to lie in the singleness of his aims and the passionate earnestness with which he has followed them out. To discard all the ordinary conventions of so-called High Art, long worn out, never very authentic or living,—to depart even from the naïve naturalism, with its quaintness and anachronisms, of the Early Schools: this was his first step. To try and relive, or invoke anew, the absolute facts of the scene he had to represent: this was his second. To which end are painted, with strict fidelity and unwearied diligence, all come-atable accessories: landscape, architecture, costume, type of face. In the unchanging East, where tradition rules all things, and two thousand years make less difference in the externals of life than two centuries in the West, such authentic vestiges of the far Past are to be found. A happy discovery this, which renders archæological accuracy possible; makes it a study of life, not of dry bones, the Promethean art of bringing back life to which has not yet been found. In the last place, still adhering to reality as the basis of every part of his conception, of every figure, every incident, every detail; to feel his way, by long, successive, tentative effort, towards truth of spirit as well as of letter, and ultimately work out a coherent, self-consistent, authentic whole: such (we speak inferentially) seems to us to have been the artist's plan of action.

Signal success has crowned it. We know no picture of modern historic or religious art so earnest and intense; so solemn in the depth of its realism; grand without affectation or pretension; serious and high in feeling without pietism, or asceticism, or sectarianism. The picture is one to mark an era not alone in the career of its painter, but in that of English art. It is one we, as Englishmen, may well be proud of, as showing what solid and high achievement English force of character can strike out in a most difficult and (but lately) despaired-of field of enterprise.

The figure of the youthful Christ, standing and saying to his mother, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" has all that mingled elevation and open-air unsectarianism we hinted at. It is clearly the Son of Man: an inspired Peasant boy—such lodgings as Inspiration oftenest chooses. Divine, but human, intelligence speaks from out that fair, candid, earnest face. There is little occasion here for the conventional material *nimbus*, which is suggested, rather than painted, in the fringe of glory his chestnut hair assumes at the edges in the cross light. Of the Virgin leaning over Him, one arm around His neck, it has been complained that her aspect is not of a mother chiding her truant child, and saying, "Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." No! the more enduring aspect of the mother is signified in the half-listening, half-rejoicing, half-beatific face of her who "kept all these sayings in her heart." The noble beauty of her face, the grace of line in her gesture and figure, have been universally recognized. Joseph, a grand, manly figure, attired in the splendid garments of an Oriental artisan, who stands behind, also with an arm around the Divine truant, is somewhat impassive, but is sufficient to his secondary part in the drama. As for the sitting Doctors, all real, all varied, seldom has there been such painting of human heads. The extreme age of this nearest one who holds the Laws—age which has long outlived knowledge or discourse of reason; the comparatively living youth of the aged Doctor who sits next; the grand dignity and pride of intellect of the black-bearded Rabbi beyond, mature in years and mental

power; the contrasted characters of vulgar shrewdness and mere curiosity of the others: all are evident transcripts of actual models, but all are made to serve a purpose, to assume their due position in an earnest and convincing drama. Wonderful beauty and *living* power, as well as mere physiognomic truth, have the intensely Jewish face of him who behind pours out wine to one of the Doctors; the musicians who press forward to listen, the little boy who kisses reverently yet eagerly the covering of the Law, and again the little blue-eyed one who in golden raiment kneels beside the aged Rabbi. Similar vitality—for all has been *felt*, on all has conscientious, loving labour and art been bestowed,—animates the dim yet palpable figures in the middle distance sacrificing; the doves flying into the open Temple; the figure who flaps her mantle to arrest their passage; the beggar who sits outside; the figures beyond working at the unfinished Temple, over whom a Roman centurion keeps ward with drawn sword. No figure is too distant or too insignificant, but it has been studied and *thought out*. The very glimpse of landscape, over which the brief twilight of the East is casting its bright light, reveals, like the whole picture, qualities new to art. There is no compromise anywhere. The truth, the whole truth of Nature, so far as art in its limitations can reach it: the truth of the East is given. "It is not like painting, it is like reality," observed a lady in our hearing. No! gentle lady, you are wrong. It is more real than reality—to speak paradoxically—more than you or I in Nature would observe: it is reality emphasized and *selected*. And in our last word we indicate the great advance presented on the artist's early manner. There is no crudity now, no ugliness. It is true, there is little going out of the way to get Raphaellesque beauty of composition or of line in the picture as a whole. But look at any part, and you will observe beauty of grouping, of line, has arisen naturally, while the artist was striving to realize other things, and taking no special heed of that.

As for the power and truth of painting, it is almost absolute; such as art has scarcely seen since Van Eyck, Mabuse, and the early Flemings. There is no such finish (finish, too, without rigidity) even in the early Italians. Its parallel must be looked for in the men just named. The intensity, combined with harmony, of *colour* has, perhaps, never been given before in so high a key; the white light (though it is nearly twilight) of the East streaming in not only from the open side of the Temple, but through the open lattice-work in the background, and sustained by the gilded architecture in the foreground, by the polished-marble floor of the living rock, and by the white garments of the priests. It is an evidence of the truth of Mr. J. F. Lewis's Oriental scenes, that the only pictures of which one is in the least reminded (partially), while looking at this, are *his* wonderful water-colour drawings. Technically, the firmness of hand, the masculine vigour, the mingled depth and precision of painting, are beyond all praise. But, great as we know the labour it has cost to be, this labour is not demonstrative. And there are no traces of *wiggling*, or of infirmity of hand. It has cost time to produce. Time is logically required to master its significance: there is no seeing it all at a glance.

We have only one word to add: if this style of painting be right, as we believe it to be,—though, of course, it is not every subject which deserves such a one,—there is very much in our Exhibitions which is radically wrong. Let our painters look to it, and learn of this picture the lessons it can so well teach them. Let them consider the words, and above all these things—*reality, belief, conscientiousness, fidelity*.

"EDINBURGH NEWS," *June 23rd, 1860.*

At first sight of this remarkable painting we are apt to be startled, and almost offended, it is so different from all the usual embodiments of the theme. For example, in the London National Gallery is a fine picture, "Christ Disputing with the Doctors," by Leonardo da Vinci (or probably by his accomplished pupil Bernardino Luino, from the design of the master). It shows the graceful beauty and tenderness, the quiet earnest thoughtfulness of Leonardo's favourite style. It is not very impressive beyond the pleasing effect of its loving simplicity, dignity, and repose. In treatment it is wholly Italian, of course. At Belyoir Castle we find one of Benjamin West's ambitious failures, in attempting to show the "Finding of Jesus." We need scarcely say more than that it is pitiable, utterly worthless, both artistically and as an evidence of ability to comprehend the sublimity and beauty of the Scripture narrative. It is a weak imitation of the conventionalized Italian grand style, which is so powerful in the hands of a master, but so tame and soulless for any man who follows in the beaten track without enthusiasm.

Holman Hunt has chosen the moment when the Virgin Mary has advanced towards her Son and is about to kiss his cheek, pressing one of his hands against her heart, while Joseph stands behind, and the youthful Saviour has uttered these words of tender rebuke. "How is it that ye have sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Beautiful in features, and in its holy earnestness of expression, the face of Jesus is one that will haunt the memory of beholders. The large eyes are directed towards us, but looking far beyond, away through the present and into the coming hours that bring sadness. Lovely and loving is Mary; the noblest type of Jewish grace and majesty, with traces of recent grief and anxiety, during three days of search for him whom she has found and clasped again. Eagerly she leans forward, joy flushing her cheek, her soul speaking tenderness and gratitude through her eyes. In Joseph we see calm dignity, emotion but not passion. The accessories have been studied with unusual care; the artist having spent eighteen months in the East, including two journeys to Jerusalem, was enabled to accumulate accurate studies of whatever promised to enhance the value of his picture. He has toiled hard to make this a faithful representation of the scene in its historical completeness.

We are supposed to stand in the inner court of the Temple, at the head of a flight of steps which lead from the outer court. The distant prospect and the adjacent gardens and housetops of Jerusalem are seen in the clear, healthy atmosphere. A lame beggar sits at the portal, repeating prayers and waiting for alms. Further away are workmen engaged in repairing the Temple; but near to us, and forming a semicircle around the principal figures, sit seven Rabbis, each distinct in character. They are of various ages, from the blind old man who holds the rolls of the Pentateuch in their sheath of crimson and gold, crowned by silver ornaments, to the more impetuous disputant, in middle age, who opens the book of Daniel's prophecies for confirmation of his own opinions, newly declared. Boys are near, one bearing a brush of feathers to keep away the flies from the sacred rolls; another stands behind the eldest Rabbi, pressing to his lips a portion of the silken mantle which incloses them. Musicians with the

sistrum and the four-stringed harp stand behind, attentive but not convinced. The interior of the temple is seen, with its golden columns, its rich lattice-work and the stained glass of its roof. A woman passes onward, carrying her first-born, and followed by her husband, who has the lamb of sacrifice on his shoulders. Doves are flying above, and some are being driven out from the temple by a youth. No minutest portion of detail has been neglected. The colouring is brilliant throughout; and both for the insight into Jewish customs which it yields, and for the artistic beauty of execution, this picture may safely be pronounced the most remarkable that has been lately shown to the public.

Many an hour might be spent before it without exhausting its suggestiveness. The grandeur and the beauty of the three chief faces are apt to be forgotten for awhile, whilst the multitudinous details of costume and architecture are studied. We see the character of the men who sit there, some of them startled and inquiring, others scarcely aroused from out their customary superciliousness and Pharisaical pride. We are here led away from merely classical treatment into closer contact with Jewish habits and traditions, so that an antiquarian interest is superadded to the fascination of the subject.

It is not, perhaps, until the picture has had time to impress itself fully on the memory of the spectator, after repeated and calm perusal, that its high value becomes apparent. Then the vivid peculiarities sink into due subordination, the details are massed together, and the chief objects are recognized in their beauty and impressiveness. We are in danger of neglecting these, of failing to read the sublime meaning in the face of Christ, already occupied with his divinemission—his Father's business—compared to which all other is as nothingness.

Of solemn interest is that brief record in St. Luke's Gospel, of the child Jesus, in his twelfth year, on the visit to Jerusalem. We have not heard of him from infancy, when he was borne away to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod, soon after the Wise Men had brought their offerings to the manger where the shepherds had earlier come. Nothing had been told of him those twelve years, except that "in their own city, Nazareth," with his mother and Joseph, "the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." When he is twelve years old, the curtain is lifted from his history, and we see him accompany them on the annual visit to Jerusalem, where he remains behind three days, and is found in the Temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." And when he has mildly but firmly intimated the cause of his stay, although they understand him not, he returns with them to Nazareth, "and is subject to them." We are only told that "his mother kept all these sayings in her heart," and nothing more. The curtain is again lowered, and when it is next raised Jesus is "about thirty years of age," and has come to John the Baptist to be baptized—a visible commencement of the ministrations which were to reveal the divinity of Christ. Surely it was not a mistaken belief in the importance of the incident selected which made Holman Hunt dedicate six laborious years to the production of such a picture as this, in which he endeavours to show the Saviour in his early recognition of the necessity of being "about his Father's business."

"MORNING CHRONICLE," April 21st, 1860.

"The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple."—Although we feel that nothing we could say would convey an adequate idea of this picture, we must attempt in some way to describe it. In dimensions it is about 5ft. by 3ft., the canvas being almost entirely filled by the interior of the Temple. The moment chosen is when the Mother and Joseph have found their cherished Son, after having made a day's journey in search of him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, saying, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." The principal group of the youthful Christ and his parents is just within the entrance of the Temple, and a little in advance of the extended company of Rabbis, who are seated in a half-circle on the polished jasper pavement. The Christ appears as if completely wrapt in thought, scarcely noticing his parents—the countenance full of beauty, and breathing an expression of the sweetest benevolence and goodness, as if just uttering the words, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The mother, with a tearful face, presses his hand to her heart, and joins with Joseph in placing their hands on the shoulder of their Son, as if to urge him away. There is wonderful art in this group, whether in the drawing, the expression of the heads, or the colouring,—all are of the highest order. It will be said, probably, that the youthful Christ and his parents are too human; but the artist would not have been true to his intention, had he followed the many conventional representations which were done to accommodate special religious opinions—which made haloed saints of Joseph and Mary, who were in reality the very simple Galileans we see in this picture. There is none of the flatness of the school, and no want of depth in the transparent shadow and rich tones of the flesh and draperies. The feet seem rather large; but they and the hands are exquisitely modelled, and so true to nature, that we forget this trifling fault. The large group of doctors is next in importance; and we have not the least hesitation in saying, that such an assemblage of living and thinking heads has never before been painted. We see at a glance how this truth and diversity of character could only have been got by that devoted study of years with which Mr. Hunt entered upon his work, when he took his canvas to Jerusalem, and painted these Jewish sages in their own home. Less earnest men, and weaker painters, would have satisfied their consciences with a trip to the Synagogue of the East, in London. The aged Rabbi holding the Book of the Law, and the younger one, who has unrolled the Book of the Prophets, are most striking figures. Behind this group are several attendants and musicians of the Temple, young men with thoroughly Eastern faces, and bearing their curiously-formed instruments. The robes, and all the detail of phylacteries and distinctive head-ornaments, appear to have been most accurately studied from the real objects; and, indeed, the evidence of historical research is seen throughout the picture. The temple would seem to be both smaller and less lofty than usually conceived; but we suspect Mr. Hunt is more correct in representing it according to its most ancient form. Outside, and on lower ground, the workmen are seen building a newer part of the temple in the Roman style. The structure is shown as of wood, richly carved, plated with gold, and inlaid with precious stones. The step of the Temple is carved with Nineveh patterns, and seated at the outside of the entrance is a beggar. The effect of

open-air daylight is rendered here with admirable skill, and the view over Jerusalem, with the calm air of the evening, is very beautifully painted. A second subject, as it were echoing the principal one, and typical, in a very beautiful manner, of the grand theme of the picture, is seen in the inner part of the Temple. A mother brings her first-born in her bosom, in company with her husband, who bears on his shoulders a lamb, as the sacrifice of thanksgiving, while the priests are receiving their offering. This group, though small, is beautifully drawn. Another episode is noticeable in one of the servants of the Temple, who is throwing his scarf in the air, endeavouring to drive away the dove that has settled to build its nest in one of the golden columns.

It would be easy to expatiate upon other parts of the picture, but we must content ourselves with a description which fails necessarily to present anything of that perfect beauty which delights the emotions, elevates the thoughts, and gratifies the senses, in looking upon this remarkable picture—a work of which it is not too much to say, that it marks a new era in art.

“DAILY NEWS,” *April 23rd*, 1860.

So much for the body of this wonderful picture; it is time to say a word about its soul. For in a work of this character it is truly the spirit that giveth life, though not the less in the dry letter of the Art it may be found excellent. It was said of Leonardo, that he could never add a touch to the head of the Saviour (in “The Last Supper”) but with a trembling hand. One of his biographers even supposes that he left the head of Christ comparatively unfinished, for fear of marring his high conception in the handling. We take these stories for what they are worth. Leonardo was probably not a man of fervent religious convictions, but he was too ardent and too susceptible to conceive such an ideal without emotion, or to execute such a design without religious awe. Standing before this scene in the Temple, as Mr. Hunt presents it, we seem to discern the meaning of the old monastic adage, that “Labour is worship.” There are works of men’s hands and of men’s minds which are unconsciously acts of prayer and praise, and this is one of them. Mr. Hunt has made a marvellous advance in his art in the last few years. Like the great Italian of whom we are speaking, he began as a copyist, and has become an interpreter of nature; he has passed from blind and painful imitation to ease and mastery; he has traversed in his own experience the history of the Art itself, from its infancy to its rich maturity; and, in gaining freedom, he has won truth and beauty. There is nothing in this picture of the old Pre-Raphaelite apprenticeship, except the strength and sincerity which it taught. The artist is destined, we trust, to do a long life’s work, and to enjoy a long life’s honours and rewards; but it may be that the “Finding of the Saviour in the Temple” will never cease to be accepted as the highest and most complete expression of his genius. We do not envy the beholder who can gaze on the Son and Mother without emotion. The Rabbis are consummate studies of what we may call idiosyncrasy in expression. These readers of the law are representatives of the unabated pride and bigotry of a strong-willed and strong-brained race: there is the sneering bigot, the indifferent bigot, the

fretful bigot, the self-complacent bigot, the bigot dead to thinking, and the bigot not yet hardened against thought, the sly bigot, and the easy-going bigot; but on the faces of all, the seal of Sacerdotalism is set, as it were, in parchment. All these heads are actual portraits, we hear, of Rabbis now living at Jerusalem; and certainly no conventional models could have furnished the artist with types so real, and so eternally true. But the face of the Saviour! How shall we describe the more than mortal radiance of those unfathomable eyes; the ineffable tenderness, the infinite compassion, the foreshadowed sorrow, the guileless ardour, the sweet submission, the gentle, but subduing majesty! Mark, too, the Virgin Mother's rebuking love and saddened joy, struck with a secret presentiment of awe and wonder, in the pleading droop of the eyelid and the tremulous contraction of the lips, as she draws her child's unresisting hand to her bosom; is there not something more than a mother's love, and even than a mother's worship? In the Italian school of the Renaissance, the face of the Virgin was full of noble grace, dreamily and voluptuously languid and disdainful; in Mr. Hunt's picture, the *morbidezza* of the drawing is not to be surpassed; it is a woman's face, but it is the face of womanhood in its divinest purity. The head of Joseph is more conventional than the rest. It must be confessed that the Joseph of sacred Art has been a somewhat supernumerary, and not always dignified figure; he too often appears with a bewildered air of resignation. Even Mr. Hunt repeats this tradition; but he softens the displeasure away into something more like deprecating wonder. On the whole, we congratulate Mr. Hunt on the courage and sincerity he has shown in emancipating himself from the traditional treatment of these figures. He puts away the old dogmatic and sectarian conventionalisms, and (as all Art is but the expression of the deepest yearnings of man's heart) he paints for us, as Luther, had he been an artist, might have painted, the Son of Man. Nay, not as Luther, or as Ignatius, but as any man with a Christian heart, within or without the fold of any Church or sect, would paint the sinless idea of human sorrow and heavenly love.

"THE EXAMINER," *May 19th, 1860.*

The masterpiece of Mr. Holman Hunt, *The Finding of Our Saviour in the Temple*, forms an exhibition by itself in Bond Street. It is the work of well-spent years, and, although not large, may furnish even careless visitors with matter for an hour or two of study. Full as it is of delicate and noble thoughts, it hardly once has failed in their expression. To the first glance the picture is a disappointment. There is a riot of bright colours that attack the eye and threaten to deny it all repose. But the eye does find rest. The bright colours are legitimately used, for they are those of Eastern costumes, furniture, and vestments of the Temple set in the midst of the glory of the Temple in its day of splendour. The work is free, also, singularly free, from one fault of the school through which Mr. Hunt has passed. There is no defect of perspective, and no absence of atmosphere. The faithful rendering of different atmospheric effects is, indeed, one of the great charms of the picture, considered merely as a work of art. There are objects seen in outer air both near and distant, and

there is wonderful truth in the expression of the distances and shadows under the beautiful arches and among the painted glass within the temple roof.

We are tempted, perhaps, during the first minute or two to turn from figure to figure, but it is not very long before the unity of the entire design is strongly felt. There is the vacant place among the Rabbis, from which the boy Jesus has but an instant before risen to meet Joseph and his mother. The two Rabbis with whom especially he had held argument, have his words yet in their ears; one, with the gesture of attentive mental noting still upon his hands, considers deeply, while the other, of acute and eager temperament, grasps tightly the Book of the Law, and in his heat of argument, unmindful of the interruption from without, still zealously directs his answer towards the boy as he now stands before his parents. Exquisite in its conception is that central group of the Holy Family. Joseph had laid his hand on the boy's arm, and at the instant which the picture represents, the mother, who has sought for her child sorrowing, has slipped her hand, with a double endearment, under the hand of Joseph, and is drawing her Son to her bosom. At the same time, she bends to kiss him with lips upon which the quiver of sorrow is yet passing into a smile of ineffable tenderness and mother's eyes that tell of the day's tears. Behind the Son and mother Joseph stands, and looks down with benignant face upon the love and satisfaction of the mother, whose grief now is at an end. The child, with eyes that look beyond the scene, with one foot advanced, as for determined travel upon a way not that of his mother, is with his right hand mechanically tightening his girdle, while his left hand lies, not passively, but with a loving pressure, on his mother's arm. Behind them, and behind the Rabbis, in the airy distance of the Temple, a natural incident of the place foreshadows what shall come. A child is being carried up for consecration, and the lamb of sacrifice is taken from the ewe, who is restrained from following.

The vigorous form of the boy Jesus, whose thoughtful eyes look out as upon centuries to come, is in the middle of the picture. On the left there is a door leading to an outer court. Outside the door sits, after the old manner, a blind and crippled beggar. Blind Ignorance, sitting outside the Temple on the left of the scene, is balanced on the right with a fine study of blind learning within. It is the figure of the chief Rabbi, blind with age, indifferent to what is passing, while he holds the sacred Roll of the Law in its rich cover, and knows that a youth at his feet defends it from the flies that, but for his busy fan, might settle on it with their desecrating touch. Between the outer and the inner ignorance, the Spirit of the Gospel stands. Beyond the outer court is the great entrance to the House of God, and builders are at work upon it. All but the beautiful crowning stone is there, and that we see the builders fashioning.

We might dwell at much length upon details such as these, but we have said enough to show how worthy Mr. Hunt's work is of close and careful reading. Let us add, that whatever allegory or spiritual suggestion there is in the picture, is obtained without the aid of one forced incident. A natural scene is presented, upon the surface of which nothing appears that might not very probably be happening. Even the hovering of a dove over the Saviour's head is obtained by the simple introduction of a flight into the Temple of the doves kept in the court for sale to those who make offerings. A servant of the Temple is perceived in the middle distance waving a shawl to drive them out, and some fly, while some flutter in the act of turning.

"DAILY TELEGRAPH," *April 23rd*, 1860.

It is religious in spirit, however, and is illustrative of a Scriptural incident—the finding of the Saviour in the Temple by his parents. Mr. Hunt's devotional tendencies have thus full development, and his appreciation of sacred themes is made more directly and clearly manifest than it had been in previous compositions. His famous picture, "The Light of the World," was open to the objection of obscurity in treatment, and at the same time to a literality in its symbolism opposed to the exalted character of the subject. Against the present work no such objection can be advanced, a page of Holy Writ being reproduced in it by the most direct pictorial embodiment. It is easy to see that the "Finding of Jesus in the Temple" is a picture upon which Mr. Hunt has spent much time and thought, and also that he has laboured at it with the energy of ardent sympathy. Indeed, it was commenced, we learn, so far back as 1854, in Jerusalem, and though it has not of course engaged the artist continuously ever since, there can be little doubt that it has absorbed many months of his time, and much of his creative faculty.

"LITERARY GAZETTE," *April 21st*, 1860.

We were amply repaid for the visit by the sight of one of the finest Scriptural conceptions which it has been our lot to witness for many years among the productions of modern painters. Whether it be considered as a splendid specimen of design or harmonious colouring, it is equally entitled to meritorious commendation. The tracery of the drapery and the attention to the elaborate ornamentation of the Temple wherein the scene lies, could scarcely be equalled, while the variableness of expression portrayed on the faces of the doctors, is a perfect interpretation of the surprise and amazement, which they must have evinced when our Saviour astonished them all by his answers. The blind beggar seen on the right of the picture is most artistically posed; but for true effect and expression, in our opinion, none equal the figures of Mary and Joseph, who are life itself.

"THE DIAL," *May 4th*, 1860.

The first impression received from this work is of a blaze of colour—gold and purple, crimson and green—with many figures vividly painted, and one bright boy standing forth from all, the focus of interest, the eye of the picture. A momentary effort of reflection tells you this first impression is appropriate; for you look into that Temple built of old upon Mount Moriah, which the zeal and reverence of the whole Jewish race, never flagging from generation to generation, had made, for costliness of beaten gold and beauty of jewelled adornment, the wonder of the whole earth. A second glance recalls you from the material glories of the scene to the higher spiritual glory which distinguished the second Temple, and which was derived from that Boy on whom your attention is now fixed.

Mr. Hunt has painted this picture upon Pre-Raphaelite principles.

These are, in brief, that everything in a picture ought to be painted as well as it can be painted; that nature is the grand instructress of the artist; and that it is only by such knowledge of natural colour, form, and expression as can be acquired in no other way than by resolute and conscientious study, that imaginative realization of ideal beauty can be anything else than vapid and worthless. Mr. Hunt decided, wisely we will allow, that if he could set before us, as it actually occurred, the meeting of Christ and his parents in the Temple, he would have produced a true work of Art. To do this he bent all his energies. He studied the history of the period. He proceeded to Jerusalem to see the Jewish race in its best types, and to be guided, partly at least, in his selection of colour and costume, by the present appearance of men in the comparatively unchanging East. He remained in Jerusalem a year and a half. He devoted five or six to the completion of his work. The result is, that the picture instructs while it delights; that it promotes the vividness with which all devout men must wish to realize the scene portrayed; that it brings a real addition to our knowledge; that it refines, elevates, and invigorates our taste.

So far as we know, Mr. Hunt's treatment has never been, on the whole, so felicitous and unexceptionable as in this picture. It is an essential part of the Pre-Raphaelite doctrine, that education must be long, and that consummate power is attained only after innumerable comparative failures. The public has taken offence at Pre-Raphaelite studies, mistaking them for the achievements at which the school aimed. The Pre-Raphaelites were learning to paint. Mr. Hunt's picture marks, we think, the stage at which their multiplicity of detail is combined with breadth, their skill in imitation made accordant with power of expression, their perfection wedded with grace. The power of expression in this work is only heightened by its richness of detail. Its breadth is admirably, yet subtly secured by the disposition of the sight. The group on the right throws nearly half the figures into shade, while half are in full light. Were these last alone, the effect would be hard, raw, and glaring, but the shade softens and cools the whole, while affording to the masterly colourist an opportunity to delight us with every kind of hue. We shall be surprised if this Pre-Raphaelite picture is not *popular*.

“THE ATLAS,” April 21st, 1860.

The most interesting event of the week is the exhibition of Mr. Holman Hunt's picture, which is now shown in the German Gallery, Bond Street—the “Finding of the Saviour in the Temple.” We were amongst the first to draw attention to this very remarkable work of modern Art (vide *Atlas*, No. 1752); and much as we attempted to say, expressive of our admiration for the genius of the painter, and the surpassing excellence of the picture, in a technical point of view, we must now own that, in its finished state, the work is even more impressive in the highest influences within the reach of the painter's art, and more delightful to the senses, than when we saw it some time ago, and when, to our untutored eye, it even then appeared a marvel of painting. No one should omit seeing and studying this picture, for, in our estimation, it is, both in aim and execution, a masterly, instructive, and deeply interesting work of Art; true, natural, and noble, in treatment; elevated, yet sympathetic, in sentiment, and beautiful as a picture.

"MANCHESTER GUARDIAN," April 24th, 1860.

Perhaps the most exciting topic, at all places where pictures are talked about, is in Holman Hunt's "Christ found by his Parents in the Temple," which is now being exhibited in the German Gallery, in Bond Street. No picture of such extraordinary elaboration has been seen in our day, or, I should think, at any earlier period in the history of Art. Draperies, architecture, heads, and hands, are wrought to a point of complete imitative finish, which has never yet been approached by any member even of Mr. Hunt's closely imitative school. But, if this were all, one would not be justified in spending much space in praise or criticism. Perfection of imitation is but the letterpress of Art. But Mr. Hunt has something to say, as well as a mastery over the caligraphy of his art. His picture is replete with meaning, from the foreground to the remotest distance. Indeed, it absolutely overflows with significance. There are symbols everywhere, from the stray ear of corn, in the nearest of the foreground, which indicates the feast of first-fruits, to the money-changer and the man who sells animals for the sacrifice, in the extreme distance. Nay, the symbols have overflowed the picture, and expanded themselves all over the frame. Then, in point of expression, and telling of a story, there have been few groups ever painted that can surpass Mr. Hunt's doctors of the Sanhedrin. For distinct individuality, and the rendering of various modes of thought, resulting from the questions of the young Christ, they deserve to be compared with the Athenian listeners on Mars Hill, in Raffaele's cartoon of "Paul Preaching at Athens." There will be little difference of opinion on this part of the picture. About the group composed of the young Christ, his mother, and Joseph, there will be more question and discrepancy of judgments. But one thing may safely be said, that the picture is not unworthy of the six years of labour which the painter has spent upon it, and that it is a work in every way creditable to the English school, as the example of the largest amount of patient, reverent, and thoughtful labour, put into a canvas of some 4ft. by 3ft., which I can call to mind. The picture is one which needs long and respectful attention before even its technical merits can be appreciated. To master its secret allusions, and its subtleties of expression, will need still more time and mental effort.

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