

THE ART OF PAINTING IN THE QUEEN'S REIGN

BEING A GLANCE AT SOME OF THE
*PAINTERS AND PAINTINGS OF THE BRITISH
SCHOOL DURING THE LAST SIXTY YEARS*

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fain they did, but the scythe of Time interposes and they pass on, followed by a day of adversity, whose pathway is over the thorny briar, and who with bowed head sheds tears as she passes. And so the days, one after another, follow. At one end is the pleasant winding river and the fruit-tree in blossom; at the other, leafless tree and the tolling bell.

Others of Mr. Imrie's are the "St. Cecilia" (37 × 25, 1882), "The Ten Virgins" (1884), "Thy Tuneful Strains wake Melodies" (1885), "The Ramparts of God's House" (24 × 34, 1889), and "Elaine" (1891). The "Isabella" (39 × 23, 1879), illustrative of Keats's poem of "The Pot of Basil," is in the possession of Mr. Graham Robertson; and the single figure with the distant group of seven, illustrating the text from the Song of Solomon "My beloved is gone down into his garden," belongs to Lord Wharncliffe (28 × 15), and was painted in 1879. The exquisite little work, too, called "The Golden Thread" found its purchaser in the Royal Academy, and is now in the Chantrey Collection. The design of "The Ten Virgins" is a very comprehensive one. The five wise and the five foolish are all seen, the former being discerned through a window standing around the figure of Christ, the latter at or hurrying up to the closed door, through a landscape of pleasant paths and amid trees of enticing fruit.

Freer in his handling, and perhaps more intense in poetic feeling, but setting not so great a regard upon finish, is Simeon Solomon, from whose hand it is to be regretted so few examples comparatively have come. Between 1860 and

1870 appears to have been the time his best work was produced. Mr. William Coltart has several, most of them of that period. "Love in Winter" (33 × 26), painted in Florence in 1866, gives the effect of the rude winds, whose chill breath scatters the dead leaves and roughly handles the crimson wings and raiment of the figure of Love as, forlorn of aspect, he passes on his way. This is in oil, but most of his work has been in water-colour. Unquestionably among the finest of these "A Greek High Priest" must be ranked (17 × 13), painted in Rome in 1867. It is a superb piece of water-colour art, strong and brilliant, the handsome bronzed face standing out from the rich vestments in its dark manly beauty, the tall candlesticks on the altar behind him serving well to relieve the shadowed background. "The Elevation of the Host," painted in 1870, shows a younger priest in white gold-embroidered robe. The painter's power of expression, weak as the drawing may sometimes be, is exceptional. In a small work entitled "He shall give His Angels charge over Thee" this power is particularly instanced. It was formerly in the collection of the late Mr. James Anderson Rose, and shows, in a room carpeted with dark green, an aureoled angel, with red wings and habited in green, receiving with infinite tenderness a frail white-robed figure that hurries in dire distress towards it. All the works that have been mentioned hitherto are in Mr. Coltart's collection. Mrs. Salaman, of Mill Hill, also has several, but none of them in very mature condition; and the late Mr. Craven, of Bakewell, had one of the best examples, "The Sleepers and the One that Waketh" (14 × 18), showing three almost

life-sized heads, but painted with much feeling, although the hands are a little wanting in their modelling.

One of Rossetti's pupils, John William Knewstub, seems, like Windus and one or two others, to have been overlooked, forgotten, as it were, in the hurry of events; but, as many people know, there are works of his extant which in their poetic meaning and also in their execution call for a recognition of his ability in the present work. Mr. Wills, of Denmark Hill, has several of his best, chiefly in water-colour. One, "The Violin Player" (24 x 20), though quiet in colour, is rich and firm in execution, with a skilful background of full though not obtrusive detail. Another, a little larger, entitled "My Lady," with a deep maroon shawl, has a dark background of leaves which is worked out most carefully in its intricacy of form and shadow; and "Lady Bird" (oval, 24 x 16), "The Schoolgirl" (14 x 10), and "Rain-Cloud" are worthy specimens of his work. But the best example possessed by this gentleman is unquestionably "Will he come?" (about 20 x 16); it has a true touch of Rossetti feeling in it, and yet of sufficient originality to disclose an independent aim: a feature of this work is the truthfulness of drawing and colour with which the hands are passionately clasped together as they hold in their grasp the locket that is attached to a necklace; one of the fingers has on it a blue-stoned ring, which is noticeable and of value in its colour. Masses of leaves and roses in full bloom form the background, and an open book turned downwards is discernible. The passion and feeling in this picture are well expressed, with a degree of control that greatly refines and elevates the beauty of the work.